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Sustainable Development and Participation in Estate Regeneration: A Mixed Methods Case Study

Thesis presented by

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for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

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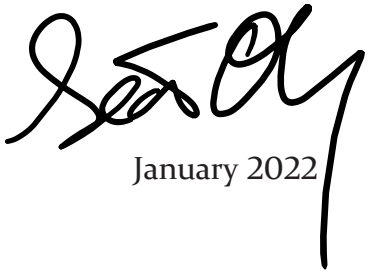
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Declaration

This is to certify that the work I am submitting is my own and has not been submitted for another degree, either at University College Cork or elsewhere. All external references and sources are clearly acknowledged and identified within the contents. I have read and understood the regulations of University College Cork concerning plagiarism and intellectual property.



January 2022

Abstract

The concepts of 'sustainable development' and 'participation' share much in common, and, though contested, they are normative features of estate regeneration. This thesis explores how both concepts are understood and have influenced regeneration policy and practice and whether opportunities exist to integrate them further. This is achieved through a case study of the regeneration of Knocknaheeny, Cork, Ireland, utilising a novel exploratory sequential mixed methods research design with qualitative (22 interviews and a focus group) and quantitative (content analysis of 18 multi-scalar policy documents) components.

The thesis shows that given sustainable development's long term focus on policy coherence and integration, effective governance, and careful use of resources to address social, economic and environmental issues, there is clear potential for its closer integration in regeneration, with participation necessary to ensure equitable, locally relevant and practical outcomes. However, overall, it was found that this is not reflected in national and local regeneration policy and practice. Sustainable development is interpreted in a limited way in the regeneration of Knocknaheeny, with little attention to the vision of residents, while several barriers to community participation exist. The thesis finds that Irish policy has not provided a firm conceptual foundation for either sustainability or participation in regeneration, and regeneration policy is biased towards physical regeneration, which limits the possibilities for holistic sustainable development.

The thesis shows how sustainable development and participation present challenges and opportunities for Ireland's traditionally centralised and managerial regeneration institutions and decision-making processes. To address this, an empiric reflexive, multi-level regeneration governance taxonomy for Knocknaheeny is proposed.

The thesis concludes with four interrelated recommendations, proposing (1) the reorientation of local government regarding regeneration, (2) increased attention to sustainable development as a foundation for regeneration, (3) review of 'traditional' consultation methods and (4) the adoption of reflexive, multi-level regeneration governance. It represents a possible reform agenda for further operationalising sustainable development and participation in regeneration and is relevant to communities, policy makers and the academy.

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Abbreviations

BERA	British Educational Research Association
CASP	Cork Area Strategic Plan
CNWQR	Cork North West Quarter Regeneration
DCCAE	Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment
DECLG	Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government
DEHLG	Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government
DELG	Department of the Environment and Local Government
DRCD	Department of Rural and Community Development
ISO	International Organization for Standardization
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources
NESC	National Economic and Social Council
NOAC	National Oversight and Audit Committee
ODPM	Office of the Deputy Prime Minister
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PPP	Public Private Partnership
RAPID	Revitalising Areas through Planning, Investment and Development
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
UN	United Nations
UNCED	United Nations Conference on Environment and Development
WCED	World Commission on Environment and Development

The future was a beautiful place, once.

—Simon Armitage, *A Vision*

Chapter 1. Introduction

1.1 Chapter introduction

Discussing the challenges of realising democracy in an increasingly complex world in 1927's *The Public and its Problems*, Dewey (as cited in Putnam, 2000: 337) said that concepts of 'Fraternity, liberty and equality isolated from communal life are hopeless abstractions...Democracy must begin at home, and its home is the neighborly community.'

This thesis is concerned with how sustainable development and participation—two other normative but abstract concepts—manifest when the 'neighbourly community' in question is undergoing regeneration. Therefore, it is located at the nexus of three concepts—regeneration, sustainable development and participation—and it draws on sociological, urban planning and political theory and literature to explore them in the context of a case study of the regeneration programme in Knocknaheeny, Cork City, Ireland.

Each of the three concepts are contested but politically potent (Evans and Jones, 2008; Furbey, 1999 and Day, 1997). They are also interrelated, and this thesis seeks to further their understanding by considering these relationships. Participation and local empowerment are normative aspects of sustainable development, just as participation and sustainability are normative features of regeneration. This is also reflected in United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goal 11 (United Nations, 2015) which links participatory planning to delivering sustainable and inclusive urban outcomes. It has been suggested that, though there is complementarity between the aims of urban regeneration and sustainable development, they have emerged in parallel with little interaction (Turcu, 2012; Winston, 2008).

Lombardi et al. (2011: 275) consider that given debates over the interpretation of sustainable development, how it is made 'real' in policy and decision making becomes crucial. Similarly, Evans and Jones (2008: 1421) remind us that sustainability in regeneration is a 'grounded phenomenon, situated in places and performed by actors and institutions, rather than as a formalised ideal'. This

thesis, therefore, explores how ideas like sustainable development and participation are 'made real' using the regeneration of Knocknaheeny, and its actors and institutions, as a case study.

A three-phase exploratory sequential mixed methods case study research design was adopted to undertake the study. The three phases began with the qualitative component, including interviews (the priority component), followed by one focus group (a supplemental qualitative component), followed by supplemental quantitative content analysis. Methods were integrated in two ways—at the research design level and then in the interpretation and reporting level of the discussion chapter, Chapter 6.

Case study is particularly suited to mixed methods research (Yin, 2003: 8), and Lalor et al. (2013) have discussed the appropriateness of case study within an exploratory sequential mixed methods research design such as the one used here. Merriam (1998: 27) suggests that the defining characteristic of case study research is in the case as 'a thing, a single entity, a unit around which there are boundaries' allowing the researcher to 'fence in' what they are going to study. Muir and Rhodes (2008) recognise the suitability of Irish regeneration projects for case study research, given their spatial and temporal bounds. Section 1.5 below describes the case study area in more detail, while Chapter 3 discusses why the area was selected and the case study approach in more detail in the context of the research methodology.

Urban spaces are notable for the 'propinquity' and closeness of actors and their 'numerosity' (John, 2009: 21-22). Both factors are relevant to a regeneration case study such as this. Propinquity means the Knocknaheeny regeneration provides an opportunity to consider real-life phenomena with real-life actors at the coalface. Numerosity ensures that there is a literature of the experiences of regeneration schemes in Ireland and elsewhere to consider and that lessons from this thesis may prove useful and applicable in other settings.

Given these factors, and its intimacy with citizens, the local level is also considered a site with significant opportunities for public participation and

collective action, institutional innovation and sustainability (Lowndes and Wilson, 2001: 663; Kearns, 2003: 45; Redclift and Sage, 1994; Quinlivan, 2017). Also relevant is Dahl's (1967) classic Chinese box analogy of nested units of democracy where the local level represents the greatest potential for participation, with perhaps limited power but also significant capacity to impact individual and community wellbeing and happiness. However, Stone (2009: 257) reminds us that local government typically presides over a high level of apathy and, in some cases, mistrust. The implications of this in historically marginalised and structurally disadvantaged communities is pertinent to this study.

1.2 Background and rationale

The primary aim of this thesis is to integrate sustainable development and participation with regeneration, thus furthering the conceptual understanding of the three ideas and particularly considering the implications for regeneration theory and practice.

Sustainable development and participation are terms with political and civil society resonance, but they are also difficult to define (e.g. Redclift, 1994; Bridger and Luloff, 1999; Cornwall, 2000). Despite this limitation, they are regularly applied in the context of regeneration, a concept which itself has been critiqued as incoherent (Furbey, 1999). Definitional ambiguity around concepts such as these may initially allow for inclusive dialogue and innovation (Connelly, 2007). However, it can also lead to a poor understanding of interlinkages and interdependences (Lyons et al., 2001) and risks stifling action and permitting their co-optation by political agendas (Matthews et al., 2015).

This may already be evident in Ireland. For example, Galvin and Mooney Simmie (2017: 818) identify a dominant neoliberal 'official centripetal transformation discourse' in regeneration policy in Ireland, which pathologises areas and individualises disadvantage. Such an approach deflects from structural issues (Furbey, 1999) and funnels participation into state-defined 'invited spaces' (Cornwall, 2004) for the delivery of the top-down centripetal

transformation agenda, thus limiting opportunities for communities to set their own vision and priorities. Bissett (2008: 127) discusses the need to 'conscientize' communities to the potential impacts of regeneration and the importance of active community involvement. Should communities also be conscientised to the importance of active community involvement in sustainability? All this confirms the need for a thesis such as this to consider power in terms of both obvious conflicts and its latent exercise (Lukes, 2005).

Ilott et al. (2016: 8) consider that intellectually contested issues are a challenge for policy implementation. While achieving a 'sustainable community' regularly appears as a goal of Irish policy[1], the interpretation of this has been 'rather shallow and somewhat constrained', dominated as it is by a housing and built environment emphasis (Russell and Redmond, 2009: 638). Winston (2010) identifies the lack of clarity surrounding the concept of sustainable community as a barrier to sustainable housing and regeneration. Though the literature (e.g. Bridger and Luloff, 1999; Mischen et al., 2019; Roseland, 2000; Redclift and Sage, 1994) suggests that considering sustainable development at the local level provides more opportunities for tangible and practical implementation, Irish local government 'generally speaking consider themselves "too busy for that kind of stuff"' (Ellis et al., 2005).

Regeneration is area based and therefore should provide an ideal level for promoting tangible visions and examples of sustainable development. Lombardi et al. (2011) argue that the conceptualisation of sustainability operating within urban regeneration schemes should powerfully shape how they do or do not make manifest the principles of sustainable development.

[1] For example, the vision of the Government's Housing Agency is 'to enable everyone to live in good quality, affordable homes in sustainable communities' while its tagline is 'promoting sustainable communities' (Housing Agency, n.d), and national housing policy and guidance refers to 'quality housing for sustainable communities' (DEHLG, 2007b). The stated objective of national housing policy is that every household should have access to secure, good quality housing suited to their needs at an affordable price in a sustainable community (DHLGH, n.d.). The aspiration of the 2011 Knocknaheeny regeneration masterplan is 'the development of a high quality, sustainable community' (Cork City Council, 2011: 24).

However, their study found that the definitions and conceptualisations of sustainability in urban regeneration policy are fundamentally limited.

According to Hearne (2013: 177) participation is central to best practice social regeneration and 'A well-planned and effective regeneration project should create and support sustainable community development. This could lead to the empowerment of the local community as it participates in regeneration decision-making processes, estate modernisation and social renewal.' O'Connell et al. (2015: 20) find that though a commitment to holistic regeneration is present in Irish policy—such as *Delivering Homes, Sustaining Communities* (DEHLG, 2007a)—'it is arguable whether this is implemented in practice'.

Such a disconnect between policy and implementation in public administration is well known (Pressman and Wildavsky, 1984); as Stone (2009: 259) puts it 'policy is not what is formally enacted. Policy is what is implemented' through the complex interactions of citizens and government. Participation and ensuring communities are involved in defining the sustainable development of their area may have a key role in bridging these gaps in regeneration. Therefore, the study is not only of academic interest, but it is also relevant to policy makers and communities.

I came to this study as a result of my academic and professional experience. I trained as a spatial planner following an undergraduate degree in political science. My first 'real' job post Masters (via a summer working in an area-based programme for disadvantaged estates in Drogheda, attempting to put Davidoff's (1965) advocacy planning theory into practice) was as a community development worker in a recession-hit West Dublin. I have worked across scales in national planning policy, rural and regional community and economic policy roles, and in central government. I have written a history of Irish spatial planning (O'Leary, 2014), delivered community development and communications training to rural community groups, and lectured on planning and sustainability at third level. Working in Cork, I also sat on the citywide steering group for a youth employment programme targeting those at risk of

long-term unemployment which began in Knocknaheeny. This experience has confirmed my interest in urbanism and the social, economic, environmental and institutional facets of sustainability, particularly at community level. My background significantly informs my interest in the institutional dimension. I have chosen to explore these in this research through the lens of regeneration. The stance of the researcher is discussed further in Chapter 3.

In summary, the basic premise underlying this thesis is that while the three concepts of sustainable development, participation and regeneration inherently share much in common, and are widespread in policy and political discourse locally, nationally and internationally, they may be integrated further. It considers, in a detailed way, how sustainable development and participation present both challenges and opportunities for Ireland's regeneration institutions and decision-making processes as well as the communities involved.

1.3 Specific research aims and objectives

This thesis explores how the concepts of sustainable development and participation have influenced regeneration policy and practice, and also if opportunities to more deeply integrate them exist, thus furthering the conceptual development of these three concepts by relating them to each other. It is intended to be both evaluative (appraising current policy and practice) and generative (identifying strategies for how regeneration might engage with sustainable development and participation in the future). To achieve this, the regeneration of Knocknaheeny, Cork is used as a case study and the thesis asks the following four research questions:

1. How do actors in the regeneration programme conceptualise sustainable development? How do these understandings relate to each other and how have they been applied?

2. Has Irish policy from national to local level defined 'sustainable development', 'participation' and related terms with sufficient rigour to

support a shared understanding and consistent use in the regeneration of Knocknaheeny?

3. Are there specific barriers to community participation in the Knocknaheeny regeneration?
4. Learning from the case study, what strategies or instruments can integrate participation and sustainability in regeneration?

Roberts' (2000: 17) influential definition sees regeneration as 'a comprehensive and integrated *vision and action* [emphasis added] which leads to the resolution of urban problems and which seeks to bring about a lasting improvement in the economic, physical, social and environmental conditions of an area that has been subject to change'. Therefore, the first research question asks how sustainable development has been both conceptualised and applied in the regeneration, i.e. both the vision and action dimensions of Roberts' definition. Overall, the sustainability literature assigns a positive role to visions as a necessary part of system change (Kemp and Martens, 2007). However, the widespread adoption of the concept of sustainable development in policy making despite its ambiguity raises questions about the suitability of the concept as a praxis orientated decision guiding strategy for policy makers and the public, and thus highlights the importance of clarifying it (Hugé et al., 2013).

While the first research question related to regeneration practice, the locus of the second question is policy relating to regeneration and how important, but contested, terms are used and conceptualised. Public participation—summarised by Rowe and Frewer (2005: 251) as the involvement of the public in the affairs and decisions of policy-setting bodies—is a growing feature of national and local government, and it is a normative aspect of regeneration and sustainability. The third question seeks to examine any specific barriers to community participation in regeneration in Knocknaheeny, considering both policy and practice. To do this the results of the research are discussed with reference to the relevant literature. Then the final question will consider lessons from the case study to identify suitable strategies or instruments to integrate

participation and sustainability in regeneration. The potential utility of ideas such as multi-level governance and reflexive governance is relevant to this.

The research questions consider the complexity of policy processes which extend from how issues are socially constructed, to how they are legislated for across policy domains, to implementation across a range of actors and levels of government (Sabatier, 1999; Hupe and Hill, 2006). In answering these research questions, the following four themes were used to assess the qualitative and quantitative data generated: Regeneration, Housing and the Built Environment; Sustainability; Participation/Democracy; Governance and Policy.

This work generates fresh insight into three potent, but contested, concepts and explores the relationship between policy and implementation in regeneration. The thesis seeks to better understand an undertheorised area with transferable findings that demonstrate 'applicability' 'through real action in the real world' (Dallimore, 2000: 176)—while mindful of Maxwell's (2009: 246) emphasis on local context in policy making.

The study confirms the need for a revised approach to participation in regeneration. One resident interviewed described Cork City Council's 'jackboot' approach to decision making in the regeneration, while others interviewed described insensitive official language and ineffectual, top-down consultation techniques that harbour discontent and lead to apathy, frustration and a disconnect between policy objectives and the communities affected by them. Similarly, with its long term focus on policy coherence and integration, effective governance and careful use of resources to address social, economic and environmental issues, there is a clear role for the closer integration of sustainable development into regeneration, with participation again necessary to ensure equitable, locally relevant and practical outcomes. The qualitative and quantitative data makes clear that these opportunities are currently not significantly reflected in local and national policy and practice generally, and regeneration policy and practice specifically.

Part of sustainability policy should be learning, assessment and adaptation, requiring reflexivity on the part of the actors which is embedded in approaches and governance (Kemp and Martens, 2007). Treadwell Shine (2006: 78) encourages regeneration to explicitly engage with the complexity of housing management, especially with the concepts of uncertainty, unpredictability, turbulence and temporality, noting this rarely takes place in practice despite an awareness amongst local authority practitioners on the interconnected nature of the work. Following on from Treadwell Shine's use of complexity theory to show that embracing the unknown in self-organising regeneration across multiple levels can lead to innovative, holistic and inclusive outcomes, the thesis culminates in a proposal to further the integration of the concepts by presenting a taxonomy of reflexive, multi-level regeneration governance in Knocknaheeny. This is proposed as a participatory form of governance that actively facilitates sustainable development and coordinates outcomes and policies. Such a reflexive arrangement as proposed here—with its high levels of autonomy, self-determination and interaction and acceptance of uncertainty and difference—goes beyond current approaches to participation and consultation. It is considered an opportunity to challenge the dominant market led and centripetal discourse in Irish regeneration and shift regeneration from the state-dominated 'invited spaces' to more citizen-led 'popular spaces' (Cornwall, 2004).

The thesis concludes by explaining opportunities to address the subjective and contested nature of sustainable development and participation in regeneration by reorientating local government under a national regeneration policy, increasing attention to sustainable development as a foundation of local and national policy, reviewing traditional, top-down consultation methods and adopting reflexive, multi-level governance.

1.4 The research in context

This research is embedded within the political and socioeconomic context of Ireland. This section introduces aspects of Ireland's political system and social

and housing policy relevant to the thesis. Section 1.5 then describes the case study area of Knocknaheeny, which sits within this context, in more detail.

Housing is one of the most pressing policy issues facing Ireland (Duggan, 2021), with a persistently 'fragile' social housing sector where the delivery and maintenance of housing for those who cannot afford it from their own resources is vulnerable to a 'boom/bust' funding pattern, driven by neoliberal ideology and other social and economic factors (Norris and Hayden, 2021; Norris and Byrne, 2021). Meanwhile, sustainability is a complex concept engaging with existential challenges facing society today, including inequality and environmental degradation. Systemic change is needed for Ireland to pivot to sustainability across a range of indicators (Environmental Protection Agency, 2020).

Regeneration is seen as a way of addressing both housing and sustainability issues, but the dominant conceptualisations of regeneration and sustainability are fundamentally limited. In Ireland, it is considered that both regeneration (Winston, 2010) and sustainable development (Mullally, 2004) policy have been deployed in a limited, technocratic way, neglecting, for example, their social aspects. Meanwhile, participation and local governance as prerequisites for social sustainability has been discussed in the literature (e.g. Stren and Polèse, 2000; Cuthill, 2010). Discussing the Irish state's approach to progressing sustainable development, Mullally (2013: 158-159) highlights a preference for establishing 'facsimile institutions for sustainable development without fundamentally challenging the prevailing narrative, norms, values and understandings at the core of the Irish development model'. Such a culture is also relevant to how regeneration is conceptualised and governed, particularly at the local level which is important in this study.

In 2002 Ireland ratified the *European Charter of Local Self Government* (Council of Europe, 1985), which commits Parties to guaranteeing local authorities 'a wide degree of autonomy…and the resources required for their fulfilment' based on the 'principles of democracy and the decentralisation of power'. However,

legislative, organisational and funding constraints limiting such subsidiarity have been identified in Irish local government, which has been described as 'traditionally very weak with local authorities exercising few functions, with a limited financial base' in a highly centralised system (Loughlin, 2001: 79).

Ireland's local government system has been situated within the Anglo-Saxon administrative tradition, with an emphasis on managerialism and a restricted role for the state (Dollery et al., 2008). However, even by these standards, the role of local government in delivering services in Ireland is relatively modest (Callanan, 2020: 204) and they are 'mainly focused on providing services to properties rather than services to people' (Turley, McNena and Robbins, 2018: 8). Callanan (2020: 205) identifies a policy preference for establishing single-purpose national agencies in Ireland to deal with localised issues in a way 'which would be unusual in other jurisdictions'. Despite various reform initiatives, greater devolved authority or significant new local revenue sources has not been a priority among them (Callanan, 2020), and Irish local authorities continue to fulfil a narrower range of functions compared to many other jurisdictions (Loughlin, 2011). Larragy and Bartley (2007) note the emergence of more flexible governance approaches at local level in Ireland but argue that these are still situated in a centralised system of weak local government dominated by the central department responsible, with 'entrenched lines of communication between established levels of government' remaining intact (Ibid.: 207).

The above reflects Payne and Stafford's (2004) contention that Ireland lacks a strong, democratic system of local metropolitan governance. Instead, for them, 'Irish style' city governance is characterised by a multi-level partnership between a highly centralised bureaucracy and social partners linking with trusted, compliant, local actors during implementation, bypassing regional and local government. Furthermore, Quinlivan (2021: 84) describes a fundamental 'democratic deficit' in Irish local government, with high citizen-to-council and citizen-to-councillor ratios and where the distance between the citizen and the local council constrains opportunities for local government policy making in conjunction with citizens.

A key impetus for urban regeneration in Ireland emerged from the 'Gregory Deal' where Taoiseach Charles Haughey agreed in 1982 to allocate extra funding for housing development in Dublin's north inner city (which was characterised by widespread dereliction, rising unemployment, population loss and a range of other social problems), in return for the support of Tony Gregory TD (Moore, 1999). The main drivers of urban renewal in Dublin from the mid-1980s to the late 1990s were the Urban Renewal Act 1986 and financial incentives in the following Finance Act. Subsequent regenerations of Dublin's docklands, Temple Bar, Markets and Smithfield all focused on redeveloping inner-city sites.

Norris and Winston (2003) trace local authority housing estate regeneration initiatives in Ireland to a 1981 government-funded scheme for the upgrade of windows, bathrooms etc., followed by a wider Remedial Works Scheme in 1985, though by the 1990s government recognised that rather than just focusing on the built fabric of estates, a more holistic approach was necessary to address estate problems. Following this, regeneration projects began on suburban housing estates in Dublin such as Ballymun (announced in 1997), St. Michael's Estate (begun in 1998) and Fatima Mansions (begun in 2001).

Bissett (2008: 11) notes that since the 1980s no single regeneration model has been universally applied in Ireland. While 'the urban regeneration agenda has been pursued principally within local government structures, but those structures are historically weak and are not rooted in a model of active local democracy' a number of flagship regeneration projects have been handed over to agencies (Corcoran, 2006: 408). The regeneration of Knocknaheeny remains within the overall structure of Cork City Council, unlike in the regenerations of Ballymun in Dublin and Moyross and Southill in Limerick, where distinct regeneration agencies were established. However, Rhodes et al. (2010) conclude that despite such initiatives, in Ireland state bodies largely retain control notwithstanding the wide range of agents and consultative processes involved. Treadwell Shine and Norris (2006b) differentiate between the local authority led masterplan approach taken in Knocknaheeny and Public Private Partnership

(PPP) approaches to regeneration often used elsewhere in Ireland. However, it is not the task of this thesis to examine the role of PPPs in regeneration.

Estate decline in an Irish context has been attributed to a mix of economic issues (such as falling demand for unskilled labour), social issues (such as antisocial behaviour and residualisation[2]), poor design and weak management and service delivery that encompass local, regional and national factors (Treadwell Shine and Norris, 2006b). Therefore, effectively addressing estate decline through regeneration requires a strategy that considers all these issues across governance scales.

Bissett's (2008) community-based account of the regeneration of St. Michael's Estate finds that the state sought to maintain and consolidate dominant-subordinate inequalities of power vis-à-vis the community, rather than addressing them through dialogue and consensus, with residents finding the 'rules of engagement for the regeneration game were being written and modified from a distance' by central government in particular (Ibid.: 11). Relevant also is Norris and O'Connell's (2010) description of a hierarchical, paternalistic and desk-bound property management culture amongst Irish local authorities towards public housing estates in the 1990s—one incompatible with partnership working with residents.

Although Ireland lacks an overall regeneration strategy (Treadwell Shine and Norris, 2006b; Kintrea and Muir, 2009), the purpose of Irish regeneration policy found on the website of the central government department responsible (as also found by Rhodes et al., 2010: 51) indicates that 'The aim for regeneration projects is to build sustainable communities through a combination of social, educational and economic initiatives and also by rejuvenating the built

[2] Residualisation can be said to have been accelerated by the £5,000 (€6,350) tenancy surrender grant established in 1984 to encourage some 'tenants who wanted to buy, but were not prepared to buy their local authority dwelling, to move, thereby freeing up a low cost unit for more needy households on the waiting list. They were given a £5000 grant to do this' (Power, 1993: 345). This resulted in households, many of whom were in employment, relocating from local authority estates thus destabilising community structures and reducing average incomes in the area (Norris and Winston, 2003: 60). The then chair of Knocknaheeny's Community Development Project is quoted as saying 'The £5000 grants were terrible for our community' (Meagher, 2008).

environment by a mixture of demolition, construction and refurbishment of dwellings having regard to urban design guidelines.' (Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, n.d.).

Ireland's national spatial policy, the *National Planning Framework*, includes an aim of 'Tackling legacies such as concentrations of disadvantage in central urban areas through holistic social as well as physical regeneration and by encouraging more mixed tenure and integrated communities' (Government of Ireland, 2018a: 28)—indeed the *National Planning Framework* is notable for the widespread use of the term regeneration. This perhaps reflects Minton's (2012: 5) description of its political appeal over the more 'prosaic' term 'redevelopment'. The proliferation of the term regeneration in recent government schemes includes the Urban Regeneration and Development Fund and the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund, and the National Regeneration and Development Agency (though later retitled as the Land Development Agency), all established under the *National Planning Framework*.

The Government's National Regeneration Programme aims to target the state's most disadvantaged communities, including those defined by the most extreme social exclusion, unemployment and antisocial behaviour, through the provision of holistic physical, social and economic regeneration (Farrell and O'Callaghan, 2020: 9). The National Regeneration Programme currently supports a programme of large-scale regeneration projects in Dublin, Cork (the Knocknaheeny study area) and Limerick and smaller projects in Tralee, Sligo and Dundalk.[3] It remains, however, a funding programme for regeneration works rather than a comprehensive strategy or overarching framework for regeneration.

[3] These are the Cork North West Quarter Regeneration Programme under study here; Moyross, Southill, Ballinacurra Weston and St Mary's Park in Limerick city; Cox's Demesne in Dundalk; Cranmore Regeneration Project in Sligo; Tralee Regeneration Programme in Co. Kerry; Pearse House, Constitution Hill and Matt Talbot Court in Dublin city.

1.5 Area of study—introducing Knocknaheeny

This section introduces the case study area of Knocknaheeny. The case study was chosen as a typical example selected from the broader category of 'socially deprived' areas undergoing regeneration in Ireland and thus 'provides an apt context for the working-through of…research questions' (Bryman, 2012: 70).

Knocknaheeny is a predominately social housing estate located in the north west of Cork City and was constructed in the 1970s as 'an economical short term response to an urgent need for low rent housing stock' (Wain Morehead Architects-Frappoli Green Chatin, 2001).

Figure 1.1 Location of Knocknaheeny in north west Cork City. Map data: Google, Maxar Technologies.



Knocknaheeny was built by Cork Corporation (now Cork City Council) who began acquiring land in 1966 to construct housing. Plans for the estate were described as the 'most forward piece of social planning ever done by Cork Corporation' and 'one of the most modern developments in Ireland after Ballymun' (Irish Press, 1969).

Newspaper articles across the 1970s describe an active community association agitating for a co-educational primary school, reflecting local parents' preferences against the wishes of the diocese. However, a 1977 newspaper article (Musgrave, 1977) already reflects its marginality and 'territorial stigmatization' (Wacquant, 2008), describing the area as an estate 'with few basic services, where the planners apparently gave little thought to the needs of its problem-ridden young families' continuing that 'In every sense of the cliché, Knocknaheeny is becoming a problem area' and a 'breeding ground for trouble'. A priest is quoted as saying 'unless Knocknaheeny is tackled now, it will have huge problems in a few years'. Inadequate shopping facilities, no play spaces and unemployment are listed as issues of concern in the article. The 1977 newspaper article also refers to Cork as 'a city more deeply affected by social prejudice than most'.

The estate has seen the loss of employment as a result of the closure of manufacturing industries from the 1980s (O'Sullivan et al., 2020). Today Hollyhill Industrial Estate to the west of the regeneration area accommodates businesses, including the Apple campus with over 6,000 employees and which serves as Apple's European headquarters. The south east corner is defined by St. Mary's Health Campus (formerly St. Mary's Orthopaedic Hospital). Other significant locations include Terence McSwiney Community College and St. Mary's on the Hill primary school.

There is a small neighbourhood retail centre which includes a SuperValu supermarket. The Knocknaheeny Community Building and the library is also in the area. Other services in the regeneration area include the CityNorth College of Further Education, a National Learning Network (NLN) learning centre for children and adults with intellectual disability, the Barnardos Brighter Futures prevention and early intervention initiative, and NICHE—the Northside Initiative for Community Health—which is core funded by the Health Services Executive (HSE).

Figure 1.2 Knocknaheeny Community Building, Foyle Avenue



The area also formed part of four designated areas in Cork City under the Revitalising Areas through Planning, Investment and Development (RAPID) programme launched in February 2001. RAPID was an area-based Government initiative directing state resources that ultimately targeted 51 of the most disadvantaged urban areas in the country. Overseen locally by a coordinator and Area Implementation Team (AIT), RAPID ceased in 2012 and was recast in 2018 in a different structure organised through the relevant Local Community Development Committee. Knocknaheeny is also a designated Learning Neighbourhood.[4]

Knocknaheeny's regeneration began in 1997 when Cork City Council commenced a series of refurbishments of local authority housing blocks in the area. However, in light of other problems facing the area, that initial project was

[4] Learning Neighbourhoods aims to benefit residents by taking the UNESCO Learning City concept to the neighbourhood level. For UNESCO (2015) 'sustainable learning cities' are linked to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including specifically SDG 11 'Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable', and, *inter alia*, seek to encourage more resilient and inclusive communities while empowering people to participate in decision making. The Learning Neighborhoods project in Cork officially began in September 2015 (Ó Tuama and O'Sullivan, 2016).

quickly expanded to include a much more ambitious regeneration programme for Knocknaheeny and the preparation of a 2001 masterplan (Treadwell Shine and Norris, 2006b: 69).

1.5.1 2001 regeneration masterplan

Knocknaheeny is currently being regenerated under a 2011 masterplan, however this was preceded by *A Masterplan for the Knocknaheeny District* in 2001. A design team of Wain-Morehead Architects and Frapolli-Green-Chatin (WMA and FGC) began work on this first plan in 1999 and it was published in April 2001. Though the plan noted that 'social problems are rife' and acknowledged the area's stigmatisation, it prioritised housing, infrastructure and new roads, footpaths, and public spaces (WMA and FGC, 2001). It was nominated for the Grand Prix de l'Urbanisme 2002, a major international urban design award.

The 2001 masterplan found that the estate was 'monotonous and in poor condition', 'isolated', 'labyrinthine' and 'chaotic and bleak', though it also identified a relatively strong social network and sense of pride amongst residents (WMA-FGC, 2001).

Characteristic of the residualisation of public housing explained earlier, the masterplan found that Knocknaheeny demonstrated 'a tendancy to concentrate the poorer and most vulnerable people into the least popular housing estate in Cork' with a 'ghetto' image (WMA-FGC, 2001). The 2001 masterplan did recognise that 'the possibilities for influencing social life through spatial arrangements are limited' and 'Not all the problems can be solved by urban design proposals, but must be approached on a "people" level' though, significantly, addressing these was beyond its scope (WMA-FGC, 2001). The 2001 masterplan noted that residents were dissatisfied with the way they were treated by the local authority, adding that rather than dealing with the community's needs 'alot of defensive fencing and wall building has taken place' (WMA-FGC, 2001).

The 2001 masterplan is not a very accessible or easy to read document, it is esoterically laid out, and, as if to underline this, it begins with a section entitled

'How to read this document'. Also notable is that when the local community appear in organograms they appear at the bottom or listed at the same level as, for example, 'commercial interests'. Referring to consultation, it discusses its importance but the decision to limit some consultation to avoid 'consultation fatigue' and to 'front' consultation with local authority officials is notable (WMA and FGC, 2001: 10). An article in 2008 discussing the regeneration under this first plan reported local opinions that while the regeneration had gotten off to a promising start, the Council was basing the regeneration scheme around the requirements of central government funding, rather than needs identified by the community (Meagher, 2008).

In the so-called Block D phase of the regeneration process, the 2001 masterplan saw the upgrading of 78 dwellings, the construction of a sheltered housing complex, urban design and traffic management interventions, and the construction of a new community centre (O'Connell et al., 2015).

1.5.2 2011 Cork City North West Regeneration Masterplan and Implementation Report

The limitations of the first masterplan and the need for a revised approach were acknowledged and it underwent a review at the request of the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government, with the responsible Minister Phil Hogan TD explaining 'The revised masterplan presents a much broader view, beyond a simple upgrading of the housing stock, to address the underlying issues of social exclusion and socio-economic disadvantage' (Hogan, 2011).

Prepared by the National Building Agency and adopted by Cork City Council on 14 November 2011, the second masterplan extended the regeneration area to become the North West Quarter Regeneration (CNWQR) reaching beyond the specific catchment of the Knocknaheeny estate and Electoral Division (ED) to other areas of the north west of Cork City. The regeneration area now comprises just over 80 hectares (207 acres), extending over 1.4 km from west to east and 900 m north to south. Funding for delivery by the Regeneration and Capital Delivery Unit in Cork City Council's Housing and Community Directorate is

provided by the central Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage in accordance with the masterplan.[5] In its most recent report of compliance with state bodies' obligations regarding the spending of public money, the National Oversight and Audit Commission (NOAC) (2020: 29) concludes that the regeneration project 'is well managed and it is reasonable to conclude that Cork City Council is in compliance with the Public Spending Code.'

The 2011 masterplan begins by noting its place in a legislative hierarchy, from national plans, to regional and local spatial planning and housing policies. (Cork City Council, 2011). The aspiration of the masterplan is 'the development of a high quality, sustainable community' (Ibid.: 24). A Social, Environmental and Economic Plan (SEEP) has also been developed under the masterplan which required agreement by central government.

The masterplan proposes a strategy of demolition, refurbishment and new build (primarily of replacement housing for those it is intended to demolish) and the promotion of greater tenure mix and the incentivisation of private housing. It proposes the demolition of 434 houses and the construction of 656 new houses and apartments over 10 to 12 years. A number of the homes to be demolished are owner occupied and the masterplan proposes offering these owners a similar sized property nearby or the property's market value to allow them to purchase a home. Existing local authority residents are to be offered tenancies nearby to allow demolition to take place with the possibility of returning to a newly constructed house or accommodation in previously completed phases. This approach differs from the 2001 masterplan which promoted a policy of

[5] This government department, colloquially known as 'the Custom House' after its James Gandon designed Dublin headquarters, has been renamed five times since the 2001 masterplan. Initially also responsible for national sustainable development and community development policy, these functions were transferred to the Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment (since renamed the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications) in 2016 and the Department of Rural and Community Development in 2017, respectively. These three departments are prominent in this thesis and are referred to by their name at the time in question.

refurbishment of houses while residents remained in place with a view to maintaining community coherence.

Figure 1.3 Infill housing site, Ardmore Avenue, Knocknaheeny



The 2011 masterplan commits that 'Each resident will be kept fully informed regarding the regeneration process and will be consulted extensively regarding their preferences' (Cork City Council, 2011: 61) later saying 'At all times the aim will be to maintain and enhance existing community integrity and structures'. However, newspaper reports of the regeneration suggest some early worries for residents. For example, in one article, a resident is quoted as saying 'We feel forgotten by City Hall' as they were being forced to move home for a planned demolition and rebuild (English, 2013). The 2011 masterplan is examined further as part of the quantitative analysis described in Chapter 5.

1.5.3 Area profile

A picture of Knocknaheeny is presented in this section, primarily through analysis of 2016 Census data and deprivation indicators.[6] Knocknaheeny is consistently shown as one of the most disadvantaged Electoral Divisions in Cork

[6] Based on the 2016 Census of Population, the Pobal HP (Haase and Pratschke) Deprivation Index shows the level of overall affluence and deprivation at the level of Electoral Divisions (Haase and Pratschke, 2017).

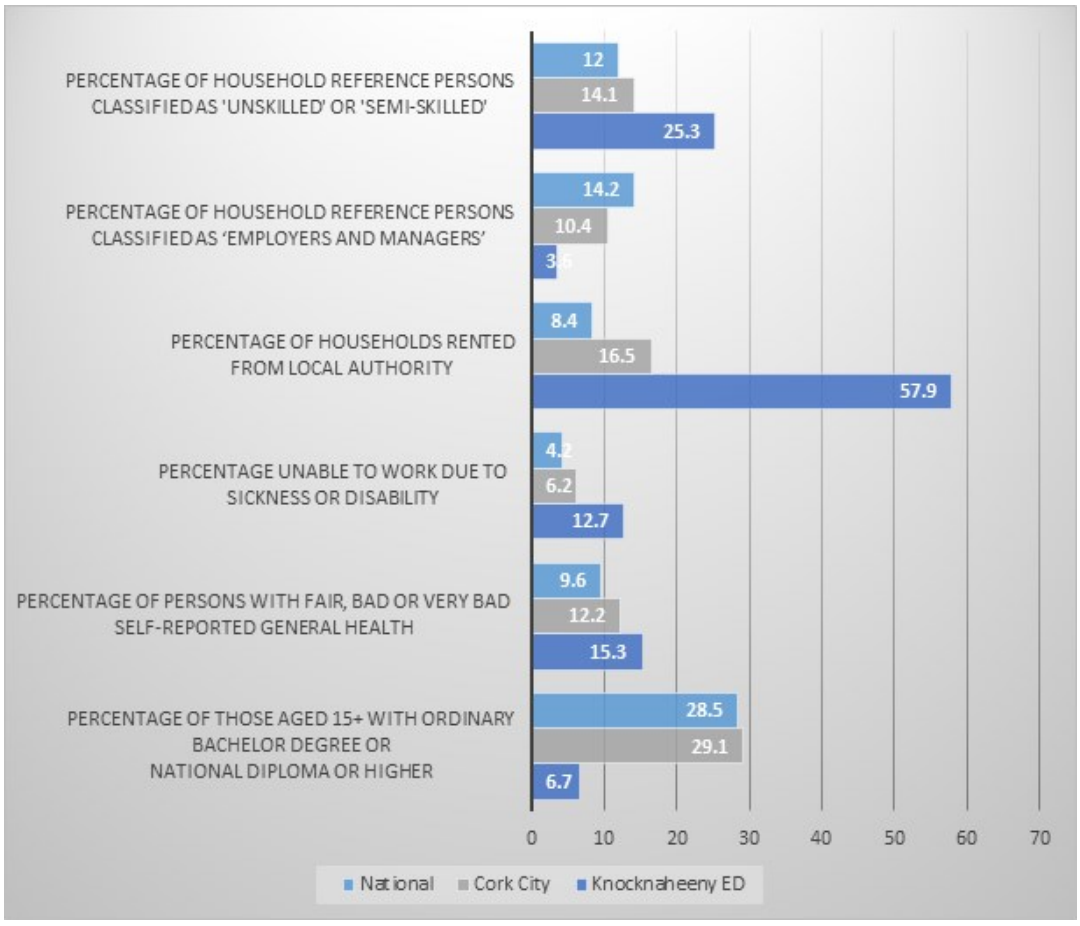
City, with high proportions of local authority housing, lone-parent families, and unemployment (Haase and Pratschke, 2017).

As noted above, the 2011 regeneration masterplan expands the regeneration area to include not only the Knocknaheeny Electoral District (ED) but also the neighbouring Shanakiel Enumerator Areas (EAs) 17/075 and 17/076. Here, figures for the Knocknaheeny ED are presented as it comprises the majority of the population of the regeneration area and census information is primarily available at the ED level, rather than the smaller EA level. The population of the ED in the 2016 Census was 4,044, a decline of 257 people or 6.3% since the 2011 census. It comprised 2,137 females and 1,907 males. The average age of the population was 34.4, this is lower than the national figure of 37.4 and significantly lower than the Cork City average age of 39.1.

Knocknaheeny ED has one of the lowest proportions of professional workers in Cork City (0.9% in 2016, which represents a decrease from 1.2% in 2011). This contrasts with 24.3% in the ED with the highest proportion of professional workers in the city. Knocknaheeny ED has had the highest proportion of unskilled workers in Cork City in 2016 at 12.1% (which represents an increase compared to the 9.7% recorded in the 2011 census). Areas tending to the 'unskilled' as opposed to 'professional' classification are more likely to be more vulnerable to recession as well as experience lower pay, poorer working conditions, poorer housing and social environments (Haase and Pratschke, 2017). The Knocknaheeny ED is classed as very disadvantaged (-20.03 on the relative deprivation index) significantly lower than both the city (-0.4) and the state average (0.6). The most disadvantaged Local Electoral Area in the Pobal HP Index 2016 is Cork City North West (-12.0) which includes Knocknaheeny (Haase and Pratschke, 2017). Knocknaheeny's index improved from 2006 to 2011 and decreased again by 2016. The deterioration in the index, rise in unskilled workers and decline in professional workers in the years following the adoption of the 2011 masterplan is notable, suggesting that it had not yet narrowed social inequality.

Figure 1.4 below presents selected socioeconomic statistics for the Knocknaheeny ED, compared against the figures for Cork City as a whole and nationally. It shows that at 57.9%, in Knocknaheeny ED the percentage of households renting from the local authority is over three times the figure for Cork City and nearly seven times the national figure. Educational attainment is lower than the national and citywide figures, while the percentage of the population of Knocknaheeny unable to work due to sickness or disability and levels of self-reported bad health are above the national and citywide rates.

Figure 1.4 Selected socioeconomic statistics (Census, 2016)



Community-based research has been conducted in Knocknaheeny since the beginning of the regeneration (e.g. Mansfield, 2011; van Lanen, 2018). This has included innovations such as participative research funded by Cork City Council to evaluate and inform the implementation of the masterplan (UCC, n.d.; Cullinane and O'Sullivan, 2020) and giving voice to children and youth in Knocknaheeny, who are typically seldom heard in regeneration (O'Sullivan et

al., 2020; O'Connell et al., 2015). Research methodologies adopted across these have included interviews, focus groups, surveys and creative methods such as rap.

1.5 Structure of the thesis

In this introductory chapter I have outlined the background and rationale of this study, set out the research aims and objectives and discussed Ireland's relevant socioeconomic context. I have also described the case study area of Knocknaheeny and the details of its ongoing regeneration. The need for a more rigorous assessment of the role of sustainable development within regeneration and the role of participation in shaping a vision for sustainable regeneration is confirmed. To achieve this, the remainder of the thesis is divided into six chapters as follows:

Chapter 2 reviews the existing literature on regeneration, sustainable development and participation, and their interrelationships, thus setting out the study's broad theoretical and conceptual context.

Chapter 3 presents the mixed methods exploratory sequential design adopted, explaining how qualitative methods (thematic analysis of focus group and interview data) were integrated with quantitative content analysis of policy through a case study. The researcher's subjectivity is also considered.

Chapter 4 is the first findings chapter, setting out the results of the qualitative interviews and focus group using four themes (Regeneration, Housing and the Built Environment; Sustainability; Participation/Democracy; Governance and Policy) and associated subthemes.

Chapter 5 is the second findings chapter, and it presents the results of the quantitative research phase using the same themes and subthemes utilised in Chapter 4.

Chapter 6 integrates the preceding qualitative and quantitative research results, considering them against the literature and the study's four research questions. The limitations of current conceptualisations of sustainable development and

participation in Knocknaheeny's regeneration are made clear, and an empiric reflexive, multi-level regeneration governance taxonomy is set out as a means of addressing these.

Chapter 7, 'Conclusion', is the final chapter of this thesis. This chapter summarises the findings of this study against the research questions, presents four policy-focused four recommendations, reflects on its limitations and outlines its contribution to knowledge.

Chapter 2. Conceptual framework

2.1 Chapter introduction

Sustainable development and participation are terms with political legitimacy and civil society resonance, but they are also considered ambiguous and contested (Bridger and Luloff, 1999; Evans and Jones, 2008; Day, 1997). Despite this, they are regularly applied in the context of regeneration—a concept that itself has been described as elastic (Furbey, 1999). This suggests the need for a more rigorous assessment of the applicability of sustainability and participation within regeneration. Therefore, the primary aim of this thesis is to integrate sustainable development and participation with regeneration, thus furthering the conceptual understanding of the three ideas and particularly considering the implications for regeneration theory and practice.

This chapter will explore the existing literature on the concepts of regeneration, sustainable development, and participation, providing an analytical and theoretical framework within which the research questions are to be considered. It has four main sections. The first section examines regeneration literature and the experience of regeneration in Ireland. The second section discusses the concept of sustainable development and social sustainability in particular. Then consideration is given to how sustainable communities are understood in Irish housing and planning policy. In recent years, community resilience has become prominent at local, national, and global levels; this is also discussed. Though there are multiple meanings of community (Atkinson and Cope, 1997), communities in this study relate particularly to communities of place.

The third section discusses participation, including participation typologies and the risks, benefits and critiques of participation. The final section then begins the process of integrating these concepts, examining their interlinkages and progressing the conceptual development of regeneration and sustainable development and communities.

2.2 Regeneration

This section explores key discussions regarding urban regeneration before specifically reviewing the literature relating to regeneration in Ireland. Sustainability and participation issues pertaining to regeneration are then discussed further in Section 2.5.

Though holistic regeneration considers issues such as urban design and the provision of social, economic and environmental programmes, the fact that it is the regeneration of people's homes and communities must be emphasised at the outset and this brings a range of values, meanings and considerations. From a materialist perspective, one must meet the basic need for food, shelter and clothing to live (Morrison, 2006). Satisfying the basic human requirement of a safe, affordable and suitable home allows access to other rights, advancing community and societal development and human dignity (Drudy, 2007). Furthermore, Hearne and Kenna (2014) argue that though contentious, a human rights based approach to housing (addressing matters such as security of tenure, allocation, standards of adequacy, habitability, affordability and suitability with measurable indicators of human rights achievements and violations) is no longer viewed as being just associated with Marxist approaches, and should be central to regeneration.

2.2.1 Urban and estate regeneration

The concept of regeneration shares some of the criticisms of participation and sustainable development, not least that it is vague and loosely defined (e.g. Furbey 1999). However, fundamentally, regeneration is a way to redesign and change existing places rather than planning new urbanisation (Puppim de Oliveira and Balaban, 2013).

Regeneration has been defined as 'a comprehensive and integrated vision and action which leads to the resolution of urban problems and which seeks to bring about a lasting improvement in the economic, physical, social and environmental condition of an area that has been subject to change' (Roberts, 2000: 17). This influential definition sees social, economic, environmental and

physical regeneration coming together to contribute to the core objective of regeneration (O'Connell et al., 2015: 18). Leary and McCarthy (2013: 9) may be said to further the 'vision' component of Roberts' definition, describing regeneration as 'aspirational', and an 'area-based intervention which is public sector initiated, funded, supported, or inspired, aimed at producing significant sustainable improvements in the conditions of local people, communities and places suffering from aspects of deprivation, often multiple in nature.' However, despite such efforts, in practice, Winston (2010) identifies a lack of conceptual clarity and a failure to recognise the need for social, as well as physical change, in estates as a barrier to achieving sustainable housing and regeneration across environmental, economic and social dimensions.

Such conceptual ambiguity is elaborated by Furbey (1999) who has described modern regeneration as 'an elastic canopy' and a confused metaphor and symbol, incoherently bringing together ideas of redevelopment, revitalisation and sustainability while imbued with spiritual implications of rebirth. Confirming such ambiguities, Cochrane (2007: 3-4) argues that the 'definition of the "urban" being "regenerated" and, indeed, the understanding of "regeneration" have varied' as it may be local people, places, economies, location 'brands' or a combination of these being seen as in need of transformation.

Colantonio and Dixon (2011: 8) identify several thematic narratives in regeneration, including property-led physical focused regeneration, cultural regeneration focusing on creative and media industries, approaches focused on changing the urban form, and liveability and community-based approaches which highlight the importance of community involvement and enhanced wellbeing. This classification may underplay the dominance of property-led, physical regeneration in practice.

Tracing the roots of regeneration to conservatism and individualism, Furbey (1999: 440) suggests that regeneration policy and practice's simplistic focus on 'poor people and poor places' deflects from addressing structural issues that lead to inequality and disadvantage and perpetuates tight central control of

resources. Wacquant (2008) describes the advanced marginality and 'territorial stigmatization' felt by such neighbourhoods and communities, which requires challenging the dominant logic of the market and addressing wider socioeconomic issues well beyond the local level. There are further warnings that a focus on regeneration risks losing sight of the structural inequality roots of economic and social problems (Oatley, 2000). Imbroscio (2006) suggests that in programmes such as regeneration, the 'inside game' of asset-based local community development has been abandoned due to market led ideology, with entrepreneurial city administrations instead focusing on market led solutions and building links between the neighbourhood, city institutions and private investment, diluting local voices and ignoring persistent and systematic inequalities and causes of disadvantage. Payne and Stafford's (2004) contention, discussed earlier, that 'Irish style' city governance sees a centralised bureaucracy bypassing regional and local government to engage with compliant local actors, is relevant here, as is Galvin and Mooney Simmie (2017: 818) description of a dominant neoliberal 'official centripetal transformation discourse' in Irish regeneration policy.

Perrons and Skyers (2003) consider that regeneration policies reflect the view that social exclusion is mostly an individual and employment-related phenomenon rather than giving attention to structural inequalities or cleavages in society. Thus, for them, in the absence of 'transformative redistribution strategies', participatory structures in regeneration, while perhaps a first step, 'can do little to redress the processes leading to the social disadvantage they are seeking to remedy' (Ibid.: 282). When considering such a view of regeneration, also relevant is Lefebvre's (1991) identification of a need for an alternative to the predominance of official, technocratic, 'representations of space' over day-to-day, lived 'spatial practices' and idealistic 'representational spaces' which limits opportunities for critical voices and challenges to the elite hegemony.

Taylor (1998) suggests that to reduce social exclusion, estate regeneration requires a comprehensive strategy with three aims. Firstly, it must build confidence and social capital and empower residents through community

development. Secondly, it should build new relationships with service providers and decision-makers. Thirdly, it should develop jobs and assets and create stronger links between the estate and the outside world.

As noted by Byrne et al. (2020) though there are problems with regeneration approaches, there remains the pressing necessity to tackle substandard housing conditions given its risk to health and wellbeing (Rolfe et al., 2020) as well as the wider social implications of poor quality housing in deprived estates.

2.2.2 Regeneration in Ireland

Kintrea and Muir (2009) explain that in Ireland there is no national urban regeneration strategy, that funding sources are diffuse, and that regeneration has proceeded in the fragmented context of other structures and strategies. As elaborated in Chapter 1, in Ireland, estate regeneration as it is currently recognised dates to the mid-1980s when concerns about social problems and poor living conditions in local authority housing estates led to regeneration measures mainly based on refurbishing the built environment, with an increasing focus on attracting private sector funding over time (Norris, 2005: 175-176).

This manifested from 2001 onwards through Public Private Partnerships (PPPs) which transferred public land to a private developer who could build and sell owner occupier housing and commercial/retail units in return for providing a quantum of new social housing and community facilities and became the dominant model for regeneration until the economic crash post-2008 (MacLaran and Kelly, 2014). Drudy and Punch (2005: 21) describe a preoccupation with Public Private Partnerships and privatised, marked based solutions to housing in Ireland. This is not unique to Ireland, as entrepreneurial, market led regeneration approaches have been a feature across Europe with a tendency for gentrification, replacing poor people with higher-income newcomers (van Gent, 2010; Imbroscio, 2006). Though the role of market-based Public Private Partnerships and their accompanying risks in Irish regeneration practice has been critiqued (e.g. Russell and Redmond, 2009;

Bisset, 2008) and is relevant to this study, the mechanism itself or its alternatives are not a central focus of this thesis.

Hearne et al. (2014: 60) argued that many local authority estates in disadvantaged urban areas suffered from inadequate and ineffective local authority maintenance and management, and deepening social and economic disadvantage in the 1990s. For Murphy (1995), the origins of this lie in the fact that construction during the 1970s and early 1980s emphasised quantity rather than quality and resulted in a 'suburban landscape characterized by monotony and devoid of necessary community facilities'.

According to Fahey (1999) early regeneration in Ireland failed to significantly affect the most disadvantaged estates because it did not address social issues such as unemployment, poverty and drug epidemics. This is also somewhat acknowledged in later policy with the housing policy statement *Delivering Homes, Sustaining Communities* (DEHLG, 2007a: 62) suggesting that, as introduced in Chapter 1, earlier regeneration projects 'can be criticised for an over-reliance on refurbishment of the buildings, rather than the development of a strong community'. A report published by the Houses of the Oireachtas Library and Research Service (2011: 1) focused on the need for a 'social (sometimes called 'soft') side to regeneration' asserting that 'Developing strong community is a core concern of soft regeneration policies'.[7]

Regeneration can contribute to or detract from the sustainable development of urban areas, but despite this it is relatively neglected in discussions on sustainability (Winston, 2008)—as is how is sustainability integrated in regeneration. This is explored further in Section 2.5.1, but first, the chapter considers sustainable development and participation literature relevant to regeneration.

[7] Such a 'soft' and 'hard' distinction may be criticised as simplistic and pejorative, implying a superior-subordinate relationship (Krueger and Casey, 2008: 201)

2.3 Sustainable development and sustainable communities

Three related ideas are considered in this section—sustainable development, sustainability (with a focus on social sustainability), and sustainable communities. In addition, given its emergence as the latest 'buzzword' in the sphere (Davoudi, 2012), resilience is also discussed and related to sustainable development. According to Baker (2006: 27) 'For concepts such as these there is both a readily understood "first-level meaning" and general political acceptance, but around a given set of "core ideas" there lies a deeper contestation'. Reflecting this, Ellis et al. (2004: 11) warn against 'getting bogged down in intricacies of defining the "true" meaning or consensual definition of sustainable development. This is neither desirable nor probably achievable'. Instead, their preference is to concentrate on where they suggest there is consensus, i.e., its general principles, the problems it seeks to address and the approaches it advocates to deal with them. Pretty (1995: 3) suggests that since Brundtland's definition of sustainable development, there have been at least 70 more subtly different definitions. Noting that 'each author presumably regards his or her effort as the best', Pretty disagrees with the 'implicit assumption' in many that there can be one correct definition since sustainability is a contested and complex concept.

With the above in mind, this section discusses sustainable development, sustainability and sustainable communities while also exploring the 'contestations' and 'intricacies'. It also considers sustainable development in Irish policy. Later in the chapter, these concepts are related to regeneration and participation.

2.3.1 Sustainable development

The 1987 definition of sustainable development from the *Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development: Our Common Future*—commonly known as the Brundtland Report after the Commission chair Gro Harlem Brundtland—has been taken as the starting point for most national and international policies on the issue. Brundtland defined sustainable development as follows:

> Humanity has the ability to make development sustainable—to ensure that it meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (WCED, 1987: 8).

Despite its seeming ubiquity, there is a second part to the Brundtland definition, which remains less well known (Hembd and Silberstein, 2010). Given its equity focus, it is particularly relevant to this study. It reads:

> It [sustainable development] contains within it two key concepts:
>
> - the concept of "needs", in particular the essential needs of the world's poor, to which overriding priority should be given; and
> - the idea of limitations imposed by the state of technology and social organization on the environment's ability to meet present and future needs. (WCED, 1987: 43).

However, for Mebratu (1998: 496), Brundtland is 'neither the starting point nor the possible end of the conceptual development process'. A German forester, von Carlowitz, introduced the term sustainable development in an environmental context in 1712 when discussing how forests could be managed on a long-term basis (Leach et al., 2010). Centuries later, the 1972 United Nations (UN) Conference on Human Environment represented 'a major step forward in the development of the concept of sustainable development. Even if the link between environmental and developmental issues did not emerge strongly, there were indications that the form of economic development would have to be altered' (Mebratu, 1998: 500). Ultimately, however, the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) takes credit for first highlighting the phrase 'sustainable development' internationally in the 1980 *World Conservation Strategy* (IUCN, 1980). Despite these eco-origins, for many years sustainability was primarily thought of in terms of economic sustainability and 'ignored the fact that these "products" were embedded in ecosystems' (Berkes et al., 1998: 349).

A later milestone in the evolution of the concept was the 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in Rio de Janeiro—also known as the Earth Summit or Rio Summit. There, *Agenda 21* was adopted as a blueprint for sustainable development policies. *Local Agenda 21* addressed to local authorities emerged from Chapter 28 of *Agenda 21* (United Nations, 1993). This is discussed further below.

Launched in 2015, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) from *Transforming our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (United Nations, 2015) are a universal set of 17 goals, 169 targets and 232 indicators that Member States are to use as a global blueprint for sustainable development and to frame their agendas and policies to achieve global transformation by 2030. The SDGs relate to climate, environmental degradation, poverty, inequality, prosperity, and peace and justice. Goal 11 relates to sustainable cities and communities and is of particular relevance to this study, and this is discussed further below. Also relevant are Goal 16 and Goal 17 which relate to sustainable development governance and policy coherence issues. The 17 goals are set out in Figure 2.1, below.

Figure 2.1 The 17 UN SDGs (United Nations, 2015)



Common heuristics to convey sustainable development are the 'three pillars' or 'triple bottom line' balancing environmental, economic, and social priorities (Peterson, 2016). However, additional pillars or bottom lines have been suggested. For example, Čiegis and Gineitienė (2008) identify a fourth 'governance' or 'institutional' dimension, suggesting that democracy, participation, and properly functioning institutions are also essential for sustainable development (reflected by the inclusion of Goal 16 'Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels'). Valentin and Spangenberg (2000) present a 'prism of sustainability' to visualise these four elements (social, environmental, economic and governance) and their interlinkages (where sustainability can be considered from any direction of the four main domains, as long as the links with the other parts are considered).

In another heuristic, Tavanti (2010) suggests a concentric sustainability framework that explores the various levels that impact sustainability. These are

nested within the environmental level and within which there are social, economic, institutional and organisational levels with personal sustainability at the core. One can conclude from the concentric sustainability framework that the sustainability of a community is contingent on building and sustaining environmental wellbeing, economic health and social equity and on engaging and participating with its broader institutional setting, its organisations and individual citizens.

Lyons et al. (2001) suggested that the vagueness associated with the concepts of participation and empowerment has contributed to a poor understanding of the relationship between participation, empowerment and the other area of this thesis criticised for lacking definition—sustainability. However, this lack of clarity has not stopped participation from being regularly identified as a normative principle of sustainable development (Jordan, 2008; United Nations, 1992). For Raco (2005: 324) 'Normative notions of SD [sustainable development] advocate equity, empowerment, and environmentally sensitive economic development.' Such a normative approach can be traced back to the foundation of much contemporary sustainable development policy and discourse—the Brundtland Report—which stated that sustainable development required 'a political system that secures effective citizen participation in decision making' (WCED, 1987: 58).

Sustainable development has also been problematised with a significant literature critiquing and reshaping the term. Redclift (1994) was one of the first researchers to deconstruct the concept of sustainable development and describe its contested nature. He has noted that 'sustainable development remains a confused topic. Like motherhood, and God, it is difficult not to approve of it. At the same time, sustainable development is fraught with contradictions' (Ibid.: 17). Not least amongst these contradictions is the differences between its emphasis and application in the global North and South, where the developed world sought to focus on environmental protection and enhancement, while the global South focused more on growth and development as 'a prerequisite for conserving resources' (Redclift and Sage, 1994: 5).

Connelly (2007: 260) describes a 'quintessential governmental approach' to sustainable development where it is presented as unproblematic in principle but complex in practice. In policy terms, for the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (2016) awareness and understanding of sustainable development by the public and across government is part of their checklist for policy coherence for sustainable development. Therefore, this contestation has implications for its operationalisation, as highlighted by Ilott et al. (2016: 8) who explain that intellectually contested issues are a challenge for policy implementation. Peters (2005) for example, discusses the importance of problem definition in the policy cycle, while Hopwood et al. (2005) argue that sustainable development requires more clarity of meaning to be useful. However, others consider that such ambiguity is inevitable and not necessarily negative, permitting creativity and innovation (Jacobs, 1999; Evans and Jones, 2008; Connelly, 2007).

Sustainable development's usefulness as a plastic, unifying 'boundary object' (Star and Griesemer, 1989) underscored by common commitment but contested understanding (Scoones, 2007) is also relevant.[8] As Scoones (2007: 594) suggested, 'While academics continue to endeavour to refine its meaning, locating it in ever more precise terms within particular disciplinary debates, it is the more over-arching, symbolic role—of aspiration, vision, and normative commitment—that remains so politically potent'. The Brundtland definition is broad, which Bridger and Luloff (1999: 377) argue accounts for its popularity with policy makers. Reflecting this, Leach et al. (2010: 10) suggest that 'the broad, normative perspectives at the core of this discourse, highlighting the intersection of economic, social and environmental objectives, are now centre-stage and barely disputed across geographical location—North and South—and political persuasion—Left and Right.' All this illustrates what Lombardi et al. (2011: 275) describe as 'The overutilisation but simultaneous undertheorisation

[8] According to Star and Griesemer (1989: 393) 'Boundary objects are objects which are both plastic enough to adapt to local needs and the constraints of the several parties employing them, yet robust enough to maintain a common identity across sites'.

of sustainability as a term means that it can lend itself to a vast array of very divergent goals.'

In an effort to bring clarity, distinctions have been drawn between the terms 'sustainable development' and 'sustainability'. Sneddon (2000: 253) argues there are 'both conceptual and practical rationales for de-linking the hitherto interwoven ideas of "sustainable development" and "sustainability", and that such an uncoupling will go some way toward clarifying specific applications of these concepts in what are often very muddled debates'. Olsson et al. (2014) explain 'if sustainable development is the process, sustainability is the goal.'

2.3.1.1 Achieving sustainability

If sustainability is the goal, how is it to be achieved? From the literature, two distinct interpretations emerge which crystalise the North/South contradiction described above. One is the constrained growth definition, and the other the resource maintenance definition. In the constrained growth definition which dominates in the North, 'growth' is still the primary objective. In contrast, in the resource maintenance example 'the maintenance of existing and future resources' is given priority as sustainable growth is seen as a paradox (Bridger and Luloff, 1999). For Bridger and Luloff (1999: 378) the constrained growth definition 'dominates official discourse' though its critics 'see it as a smokescreen' hiding environmentally damaging practices.

According to Hopwood et al. (2005) there is a spectrum of sustainability from weak (more incremental, focused on technological fixes) to strong (transformational, through political action working both in and outside the existing structures). However, the debate between strong and weak sustainability focuses mainly on environmental issues rather than socioeconomic consequences. Hopwood et al. (2005: 48) consider that globally sustainable development discourse is dominated by the weak, managerial outlook.

Sneddon et al. (2006: 254) chart a possible path through this diversity of views saying:

> Sustainability may yet be possible if sufficient numbers of scholars, practitioners and political actors embrace a plurality of approaches to and perspectives on sustainability, accept multiple interpretations and practices associated with an evolving concept of "development", and support a further opening up of local-to-global public spaces to debate and enact a politics of sustainability.

In the urban development context relevant to this study, a potential dark side of the sustainability narrative has been identified which links to the above. Marcuse (1998) argues that sustainability has focused on maintaining the status quo and the prioritisation of environmental sustainability in urban development and housing may mask continuing social injustice. Thus, for Marcuse (1998: 103) 'sustainability and social justice do not necessarily go hand in hand.'

Participation is seen as 'inextricably linked' to sustainable development as 'without a plurality of actors and approaches, sustainable development cannot be realised' (Green and Chambers, 2006: 2). For Meadowcroft (2004: 165) participatory considerations are crucial in sustainable development given the 'unique character of the problem', while Roseland (2000: 104) indicates that 'Communities must be involved in defining sustainability from a local perspective', Kates et al. (2005) argue that sustainable development requires the participation of diverse stakeholders and perspectives, with the ideal of reconciling different and sometimes contradictory values (examples of which have been discussed above). For Koontz (2006: 15):

> A key component of sustainability and sustainable development is citizen empowerment in decisions shaping social and environmental conditions. Across a wide range of settings, community participation has been found to affect sustainability prospects…In addition, the "seeds of change" approach to sustainability argues that empowering local citizens to participate and take action in their own "backyards" is a prerequisite for sustainable communities.

In an Irish context Ellis et al. (2004: 14), in their study of local sustainability in Ireland at the time of *Local Agenda 21*, suggest that allowing people to invent local sustainable development for themselves is a significant core value.

While describing the links between participatory processes and sustainable development Lyons et al. (2001) conclude that this requires an initial focus on empowerment and capacity building and a willingness of local decision makers to concede some power. Echoing this, Mullally (2013: 67) contends that 'Participation is a necessary, but not sufficient, condition for sustainable development', with policy culture, structural factors, and governance systems also at play.

The 1992 Rio Summit heralded the participative turn in sustainable development governance, as the emphasis on the participation and involvement of major groups from civil society emerged as a cornerstone of Agenda 21 (Bäckstrand 2006: 470). Discussing the Rio Summit, Mebratu (1998: 502) argues 'The most important legacy of UNCED [UN Conference on Environment and Development] was the very nature of the preparatory process, which in most countries, involved participation of major stakeholders down to grass roots level'. *Local Agenda 21* called for local authorities to enter into a dialogue on sustainable development with their citizens to encourage local action and the cultural and behavioural change required, with local authorities considered best placed to 'play a vital role in educating, mobilising, and responding to the public to promote sustainable development' (United Nations, 1993: 393). Lafferty (2001: 2) summarises the aims of *Local Agenda 21* as involving a 'strategic programme, plan or policy which has emerged from a consultative process initiative by local authorities with both local citizens and representatives of local stakeholders, with a particular interest in involving women and youth'. It thereby prioritises the process itself (i.e. the participative mechanisms used to build consensus on the social, economic and environmental issues in the area) in achieving local sustainability.

The emphasis on participation was reiterated at the World Summit on Sustainable Development held in Johannesburg in 2002, with the *Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development* recognising that 'sustainable development requires a long-term perspective and broad-based participation in decision-making and implementation at all levels' (United Nations, 2002).

For some, participation and participatory processes themselves are essentially sustainable development. Bridger and Luloff's (1999) go further than participation as a prerequisite or component of sustainability, suggesting that in fact the primary means to achieve sustainable communities is through local control over a wide range of decisions. Lyons et al. (2001: 1237) define sustainable development as 'the ability acquired and held by communities over time, to initiate and control development, thus enabling communities to participate more effectively in their own destiny.'

Participation in sustainable development has also been problematised, with Connelly (2007: 267) noting that arguments against it can be made on the grounds that only a technical elite can correctly identify and implement sustainability given its complexity.

2.3.1.2 Social sustainability

This section focuses on social sustainability which, if adequately considered alongside the other dimensions of sustainable development, may ensure sustainability and social justice align.

Though this thesis does not lose sight of the integrative nature of sustainable development, social sustainability is of particular relevance to it. Colantonio and Dixon (2011: 21) consider social sustainability to be undertheorised and often oversimplified. Though for Dempsey et al. (2009: 290) social sustainability straightforwardly asks 'what are the social goals of sustainable development?', 'there has been little theoretical debate on defining social sustainability, despite recent European policy focus on "sustainable communities" and social cohesion; an example of what might be described as the policy agenda overtaking the research agenda' (Ibid., 2009: 2).

The OECD (in Holden, 2012) determined that social sustainability was most often considered in connection with the social implications of environmental decision making rather than as an equally important component of sustainable development. Boström (2012) outlined the challenge of defining and operationalising social sustainability, arguing that sustainable development, including ideas of social sustainability, is best understood as a dynamic frame that can be used to communicate, make decisions, and evaluate progress while encompassing a variety of elements such as wellbeing, governance, and equity.

While there are various definitions of social sustainability, many agree on its main elements (Dempsey et al., 2009; Cuthill, 2010). Partridge (2005: 8) identified the following as the components of social sustainability: quality of life, equity, inclusion, access, a future focus and participatory processes. Cuthill (2010) streamlines these, suggesting that social sustainability consists of four dimensions: engaged governance (e.g. providing a methodology for participatory democracy, citizen participation and community engagement); social infrastructure (e.g. community services); social justice and equity (an ethical foundation based on addressing poverty, oppression and disadvantage); and social capital (social networks and trust). Similarly, Colantonio and Dixon (2009: 18) suggest that social sustainability 'blends traditional social policy areas and principles such as equity and health, with issues concerning participation, needs, social capital, the economy, the environment, and more recently, with the notions of happiness, well being and quality of life.'

Stren and Polèse (2000: 15) provide the following conceptualisation of social sustainability at local/city level which brings together social exclusion, spatial and participatory dimensions:

> To achieve social sustainability, cities must reduce both the level of exclusion of marginal and/or disadvantaged groups, and the degree of social and spatial fragmentation that both encourages and reflects this exclusionary pattern … Urban policies conducive to social sustainability must, among other things, seek to bring people together, to weave

various parts of the city into a cohesive whole, and to increase accessibility (spatial and otherwise) to public services and employment, within the framework, ideally, of a local governance structure which is democratic, efficient and equitable.

Dempsey et al. (2009) identify urban social equity (e.g. equitable access to services and facilities) and sustainability of community as the two ingredients of social sustainability. They identify five dimensions of sustainability of community. These are: are social interaction/social networks in the community; participation in collective groups and networks in the community; community stability; pride/sense of place; safety and security. They focus on the relationships of these to the built environment and urban form of the area.

This thesis explores the possibility that more attention to the opportunities provided to the community to participate and their capacity to do so would make these dimensions more realisable, with participatory processes themselves clearly a component of social sustainability.

2.3.1.3 Resilience and sustainable development

Another concept that has recently emerged as important to sustainable development is 'resilience'. Scoones (2007: 594) considered that the term sustainability has been 'given more conceptual depth in explorations of resilience', while Dale and Newman (2010) consider resilience a pre-condition for sustainable community development. Many connections have been drawn between resilience and sustainable development (e.g. Walker and Salt, 2006) and it has been suggested that resilience is fast replacing sustainability within the academic literature as the up and coming buzzword (Davoudi, 2012; Faulkner et al., 2020).

Davoudi (2012: 299) notes that, despite its lack of clarity there are increasing numbers of reports emanating from both government and non-government sources which 'aim to develop ready-made, off-the-shelf toolkits for resilience-building'. While this adoption of the term resilience suggests a conceptual

utility, for Bosher et al. (2014) resilience also has too many meanings, which results in it falling into meaninglessness. Its widespread application across a range of disciplines also points to its depiction as a fuzzy or elastic concept (Davidson, 2010; Pendall et al., 2010), where its substantial meaning becomes diminished or becomes mobilised to support competing policy agendas in a similar manner to sustainable development (Scott, 2013).

From its origins within systems ecology in the 1970s (e.g. Holling, 1973), 'resilience' has recently become a 'regular, if under-theorized' concept in managing change, used across a range of disciplines and policy discourses (Walker and Cooper, 2011).[9] Adger was among the first social scientists to translate the concept into the social dimension (see Adger 2000, 2003, 2006). Adger (2003) considers resilience to be the ability of groups or communities to adapt in the face of external social, political or environmental stresses and disturbances. Adger (2000: 349) argues that social resilience is defined at the community scale rather than at an individual level and is related to the social capital of societies and communities.

Importantly, and echoing critiques of regeneration, MacKinnon and Derickson (2013) contest the use of resilience within public policy as a 'top down' strategy placing the emphasis on individuals, communities and places to become more resilient rather than addressing wider structural inequalities. According to Morrow (2008: 12) such 'top-down paternalistic official activities do not lead to meaningful resilience' rather 'It requires hard work at the grassroots level to build strong community social structures and for government and officials to earn public trust'.

Recently, resilience has gained favour in political discourse regarding the post Covid-19 pandemic world with the European Union seeking to fund 'recovery and resilience' (e.g. von der Leyen, 2020) and Member State's producing 'National Recovery and Resilience Plans'.

[9] A 2012 New York Times headline announcing 'Forget sustainability. It's about resilience' (Zolli, 2012) illustrates this trend.

Defining 'community resilience' remains difficult. Amundsen (2012: 45) defined it as:

> the ability of a community to cope and adjust to stresses caused by social, political and environmental change and to engage community resources to overcome adversity and take advantage of opportunities in response to change.

Sustainability and resilience are sometimes treated as interchangeable; however, they are clearly not the same despite being related. For Scott (2013), the adoption of resilience thinking is primarily a means to further elaborate (rather than replace) sustainable development as a concept, particularly if resilience-building is seen as a transformative process in transitioning towards a more sustainable future (Holling, 2001; Leach et al., 2012). Amundsen's (2012) definition of community resilience above perhaps illustrates this as it is arguably narrower than a sustainable community given that it implies, rather than specifies, a role for inclusive participation. Robinson and Berkes (2011) considered the role of participation in building social-ecological resilience, concluding that given its potential to build community capacity it is a vital component but one that requires vertical and horizontal institutional linkages, deliberation and inclusivity.

The emphasis of resilience thinking on adaptation and capacity building in response to uncertainty and disruptions (Scott, 2013) has implications for policy making for sustainable development. For Holling (2001: 399), this emphasis on adapting can serve to clarify the meaning of sustainable development:

> Sustainability is the capacity to create, test, and maintain adaptive capability. Development is the process of creating, testing, and maintaining opportunity. The phrase that combines the two, "sustainable development", therefore refers to the goal of fostering adaptive capabilities while simultaneously creating opportunities.

It is clear then that despite its widespread use, how resilience is conceptualised and how it should be measured remains vague (Faulkner et al., 2020). For Peng et al. (2017), the concept of resilience has not yet developed to a point where a general understanding within the literature has been realised. Peng et al. (2017) call for a more precise definition of the basic concept of resilience, as well as the objectives of that concept. Moreover, according to Martin and Sunley (2015) the application of resilience as a policy tool at an urban scale is premature because the concept is not fully understood in a spatial context. Davoudi (2018) highlights the 'stop calling me resilient' campaign which emerged from victims of Hurricane Katrina (and also the 2010 Christchurch earthquake) being asked to persist and be resilient, describing the term's co-optation into neoliberal individualisation of recovery rather than addressing structures that necessitate resilience in the first place. Regeneration also faces such critiques.

2.3.2 Sustainable communities

The term 'sustainable communities' has been around since the 1980s (McDonald et al., 2009, citing Frobeen, 2006), and several definitions and interpretations have emerged in that time. This section traces the evolution of the concept and attempts to identify the characteristics of sustainable communities. As part of this, sustainable community policy internationally and in Ireland is discussed, being mindful that McGinley and Nakata (2012) and Mischen et al. (2019) have applied Rittel and Webber's (1973) term 'wicked problem' to describe top-down efforts to plan sustainable communities, arguing that its formulation, endpoint, solution, or cause cannot be defined in advance.

Similar to the other concepts discussed in this chapter, Roseland (2000: 104) says that while there are many definitions of sustainable communities, there is no single accepted definition, suggesting there 'perhaps should not be any'. This has led scholars to identify principles, components and features of a 'sustainable community'. According to Turcu (2009: 41) sustainable communities 'have been defined as an aggregate of characteristics including among others economic security and growth, environmental quality and integrity, social cohesion and quality of life, empowerment and governance'.

Mischen et al. (2019: 10) makes the community itself the active subject in their definition of sustainable communities, recognising its agency for creating the state of sustainability. Their definition reads:

> A sustainable community is the aggregate of functionally and socially connected individuals and organizations that share collective resources in such a way that engages members in self-determination governance processes resulting in the equitable provisioning of the health, educational, and material well-being among its residents while not negatively affecting future generations or other communities' uses of these resources.

Mischen et al.'s definition is useful in several respects. First, it defines community and includes individuals and organisations such as NGOs and businesses with shared interests in their relations and use of resources, while still for the benefit of its residents. Furthermore, it avoids implying growth or increased use of resources, even at a sustainable rate.

For Bridger and Luloff (1999, 2001) the ideal sustainable community has five features. Firstly, increased local economic diversity. Secondly, the closely related concept of self-reliance, especially economic self-reliance (distinct from self-sufficiency). Thirdly, reductions in energy use and waste. Fourthly, environmental and biodiversity enhancement. Then finally, a commitment to social justice where 'perhaps most important, sustainable communities strive to create an empowered citizenry that can effectively participate in local decision-making' (Young 1990: 251, cited in Bridger and Luloff, 2001). As included in Table 2.1 below, Raco (2007) identifies eight core principles of what constitutes a sustainable community and also its converse—an 'unsustainable community'.

Key to the adoption of sustainable communities in policy terms was the United Kingdom (UK) Government's 2003 plan *Sustainable Communities: Building for the Future* (Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM), 2003) which identified several key requirements of sustainable communities including 'Effective engagement and participation by local people, groups and businesses,

especially in the planning, design and long term stewardship of their community, and an active voluntary and community sector' (ODPM, 2003: 5).

Building on the above, the UK initiated *Bristol Accord*, agreed at an informal Council of European Union (EU) Ministers in 2005, defined sustainable communities as follows:

> Sustainable communities are places where people want to live and work, now and in the future. They meet the diverse needs of existing and future residents, are sensitive to their environment, and contribute to a high quality of life. They are safe and inclusive, well planned, built and run, and offer equality of opportunity and good services for all. (ODPM, 2006: 6)

The *Bristol Accord* describes eight characteristics of a sustainable community, saying that sustainable communities should be: active, inclusive and safe; well run; well connected; well served with services; environmentally sensitive; thriving with an innovative local economy; well designed and built; fair for everyone. It continues to explain that well-run communities enjoy 'representative, accountable governance systems which both facilitate strategic, visionary leadership and enable inclusive, active and effective participation by individuals and organisations' and 'effective engagement with the community at neighbourhood level, including capacity building to develop the community's skills, knowledge and confidence' (ODPM, 2006: 12).

Though Winston (2014, 2021) considers the *Bristol Accord's* definition as significant in a European context, it has been superseded by the more influential *Leipzig Charter on Sustainable European Cities* (European Commission, 2007) which was renewed under the 2020 German EU Presidency. The *Leipzig Charter* promotes 'integrated urban development' with rather abstract references to the role of participation in this (Adams and Ramsden, 2019) and with only one reference to sustainable communities. Evans (2011) attributed the reduced prominence of sustainable communities between Bristol and Leipzig to a failure

to successfully 'upload' UK (or perhaps British and Irish Isles) specific concepts to a wider European audience.

Egan (2004) identified seven key components of sustainable communities, each with a range of subcomponents. McDonald et al. (2009) confirm that Egan and the *Bristol Accord* continue to have currency by describing eight key components of sustainable communities, adding equity to Egan's typology and drawing from the *Bristol Accord*. Their eight components then are governance, transport and connectivity, services, environment, equity, economy, housing and built environment, society and culture. Table 2.1 below presents these typologies of the features of sustainable communities for ease of reference.

Why did the sustainable community emerge as a key framing for sustainable development, and what are its advantages? In their discussion of 'sustainable community development' (their definition of sustainable development at local level rather than the discipline of community development[10]) Bridger and Luloff (2001) suggest that a reason to focus on local sustainability is that terms like 'sustainable society' are too abstract to be relevant to the daily lives of most people. Bridger and Luloff (1999: 380) plausibly contend that 'By moving to the local level, the odds of generating concrete examples of sustainable development are increased' and with these tangible examples, legitimacy and acceptance can be built. Mischen et al. (2019: 3) argue that 'The focus on sustainability at the scale of the community avoids problems associated with the notion of "sustainable development"' and they suggest that the inclusion of SDG 11 focusing on sustainable cities and communities amongst the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals confirms that a local approach is more tangible.

King (2006) has critiqued sustainable communities as a 'naïve' example of governments 'wrapping' old ideas in new language to signal distinctiveness that

[10] It is recognised that community development, perhaps in keeping with other terms in this thesis, is, 'like the camel, easier to describe than define' (Powell and Geoghegan, 2004: 18), but for Connolly (2007: 117) community development involves a community—geographical or issue-based, identifying their needs in terms of development, sustainability and education, and collectively working together to meet those needs.

may not be present, explaining that at the root of the problem is an inability to actually define what a 'sustainable community' is. Instead, he suggests, 'sustainable community' policy is full of abstractions, 'unquantifiable and question-begging' (Ibid.: 99). However, it would seem likely that if considering sustainable development at the local level provides more opportunities for tangible and practical implementation, as described above, the sustainable community lens may provide opportunities to sharpen abstractions.

ODPM, 2003	Egan, 2004	McDonald et al., 2009	Bristol Accord, 2005	Raco, 2007
Safe local environment; good quality leisure facilities; diverse, vibrant and creative local culture; cohesive community	**Social and Cultural -** Vibrant, harmonious and inclusive communities	**Social and Cultural -** Active, inclusive and safe: Fair, tolerant and cohesive with a strong local culture and other shared community activities	**Active, inclusive and safe -** Fair, tolerant and cohesive with a strong local culture and other shared community facilities	Economic growth
Strong leadership; effective local engagement and participation, and an active voluntary and community sector; pride in the community	**Governance -** Effective and inclusive participation, representation and leadership	**Governance -** Well run with effective and inclusive participation, representation and leadership	**Well run -** with effective and inclusive participation, representation and leadership	Citizenship
Designed to minimise use of resources	**Environmental -** Providing places for people to live in an environmentally friendly way	**Environmental -** Environmentally sensitive providing places for people to live that are considerate of the environment	**Environmentally sensitive -** providing places for people to live that are considerate of the environment	Quality of life
Well-designed public and green space; sufficient size, scale and density; buildings that are adaptable and minimise use of resources; mix of housing types and tenures; a sense of place	**Housing and Built Environment -** A quality built and natural environment	**Housing and built environment -** Well designed and built featuring a quality built and natural environment	**Well designed and built -** featuring a quality built and natural environment	Environmental dimensions
Good public transport and other transport infrastructure; good links with wider community	**Transport and Connectivity** - Good transport services and communication linking people to jobs, schools, health and other services	**Transport and connectivity -** Well connected with good transport services and communication linking people to jobs, schools, health and other services	**Well connected -** with good transport services and communication linking people to jobs, schools, health and other services	Urban design
Flourishing local economy	**Economy -** A flourishing and diverse local economy	**Economy -** Thriving with a flourishing and diverse local economy	**Thriving -** with a flourishing and diverse local economy	Identity, belonging and safety
Good quality local public services	**Services -** A full range of appropriate, accessible public, private, community and voluntary services	**Services -** Well served with public, private, community and voluntary services that are appropriate to people's needs and accessible to all	**Well served -** with public, private, community and voluntary services that are appropriate to people's needs and accessible to all	Community characteristics
		Equity - Fair for everyone including those in other communities, now and in the future	**Fair for everyone -** including those in other communities, now and in the future	Governance

2.3.2.1 Measurement and management

Indicator sets delving into the components and subcomponents of sustainability to inform toolkits or checklists for identifying sustainable communities or monitoring sustainable development policy have been developed (da Costa et al., 2013; Mischen et al., 2019). This includes SDG 11, which consists of 10 targets. Target 11.3 'By 2030, enhance inclusive and sustainable urbanization and capacity for participatory, integrated and sustainable human settlement planning and management in all countries' (United Nations, 2015) is particularly relevant to the subjects of this thesis. However, only one indicator associated with the target (Indicator 11.3.2) is pertinent: 'Proportion of cities with a direct participation structure of civil society in urban planning and management that operate regularly and democratically'. Defining urban planning as 'the technical and political process that concerns the development and use of land' (United Nations, 2018), regeneration is appropriately considered under this.

The nesting of this goal, and associated target and indicator is visualised in Figure 2.2, below.

Figure 2.2 Visualisation of relevant target and indicators under SDG 11 (developed from UN, 2015)



Indicator 11.3.2 is intended to measure the progress and willingness of elected officials, urban managers and planners to integrate resident and civil society participation in urban planning and management at various levels, considering that 'This people-centered approach is key in guiding urban development processes for local ownership, and the implementation of community projects at citywide or local levels' (United Nations, 2018). The UN's justification for selecting this target and indicator draws on both the efficiency and empowerment rationales (which are expanded upon in the next section) for participation. Here, direct participation is defined as where 'Structures allow and encourage civil society accessing and actively engaging in decision-making, without intermediaries, at every stage of the urban planning and management process' (UN, 2018).

As noted above, components of SDG 16 ('Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels') and SDG 17 ('Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development') are also relevant. In particular, Target 16.7 to ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory decision making and Target 17.14 to enhance policy coherence for sustainable development, link to the subject of this study closely.

Ireland carried out the first voluntary national review of its progress towards the SDGs in 2018 (Government of Ireland, 2018b). Addressing each of the 17 SDGs, it outlined where Ireland is making significant progress, but also noted those goals for which it will fail to reach its targets if action is not taken to drive change. It links Ireland's achievement of indicator 11.3.2 to the implementation of the *National Planning Framework* (Government of Ireland, 2018b), a spatial planning document, which variously identifies adaptability and accessibility in housing stock, childcare and training and integration as necessary for sustainable communities. Public awareness of the SDGs has been low in Ireland (Government of Ireland, 2018b), and this has been a concern for those working in sustainability and in government. In their study of SDG indicator data

availability in Ireland, Murphy et al. (2021) find that no data is available for Ireland for Indicator 11.3.2, while also discussing a perceived lack of transparency and partnership in Ireland's SDG implementation. Overall, Winston (2021) considers that the vague definitions of sustainable communities and sustainable development which dominate discourse make monitoring their implementation problematic.

Given the prominence of international standards in decision making they merit attention (Pohle et al., 2018). In 2016 the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) published ISO 37101: 2016 *Sustainable Development in Communities—Management System for Sustainable Development* explicitly aimed at establishing the requirements for a management system for sustainable development in communities. It is intended to be implemented by an organisation on behalf of a community though the community itself can implement it. The standard is 'designed to empower communities' and aims to 'improve the contribution of communities to sustainable development', while 'fostering smartness and resilience' and allowing for the measurement of a communities progress towards sustainable development (ISO, 2016). The standard uses the Brundtland definition of sustainable development. However, for something purporting to empower, it is notable that the full standard is not freely accessible and it must be purchased from the ISO. A related guidance document (ISO 37104) aimed at local governments seeking to implement the 37101 standard was published in 2019 (ISO, 2019). Again, this is not freely available.

ISO 37101 identifies six areas where sustainability can improve a city or area, these are: attractiveness, environment, resilience, responsible resource use, social cohesion (including 'inclusiveness') and wellbeing (including 'building self confidence and collective maturity') (ISO, 2019). According to the ISO standard these can be achieved through 12 areas of action including 'governance, empowerment and engagement', 'education and capacity building' and 'living together, interdependence and mutuality' (ISO, 2019).

In 2011 the British Standards Institute (BSI) published BS 8904 as guidance for community sustainable development. Though aimed at 'communities of any size, structure and type' the standard is also not freely available, however, an abridged 'micro guide' to planning and developing a sustainable community was also produced (BSI, 2011). This includes advice on 'selling sustainability' to encourage participation with a vision of 'empowering local people to enjoy greater influence over what happens locally, preventing unwanted changes and ensuring that any outcomes are truly beneficial to the local community' though it appears to have little consideration of the differing capacities of communities and community leaders or that they may need to be built (the potential need for steering group members to 'upskill' is only included when it comes to step five of the seven step process proposed) (BSI, 2011).

Standards such as these have been identified as a manifestation of Foucauldian disciplinary technology or an example of neoliberalism, targeting perceived state inefficiencies and promoting competitiveness (Gibbon and Folke Henriksen, 2012). This would suggest they have little compatibility with more transformative interpretations of sustainable community, participation and empowerment.

In a further relevant problematisation of neoliberalism, Raco (2005, 2007) has critically analysed the neoliberal characterisation of the sustainable community as outlined in UK urban policy, suggesting that 'the shift towards communities could be construed as an attempt to institutionalise the decline of state support for vulnerable sections of society and to instil new entrepreneurial governmentalities into dependent groups.' (2005: 331). Raco (2007: 317) notes that the sustainable communities agenda has 'the potential to reinforce divisions between 'good' and 'bad' or 'sustainable' and 'unsustainable' citizens' which is 'Far from representing an all-inclusive focus on the needs of a broad range of citizens'. As shown below in Section 2.3.3.1, the UK conceptualisation of sustainable communities has been influential in Ireland.

2.3.3 Sustainable development and sustainable communities in Ireland

Comhar, the Sustainable Development Council, was established by the Irish government in 1999 as a forum for national consultation and dialogue on sustainability issues. It came after the first national sustainable development strategy for Ireland was published in 1997 (Government of Ireland, 1997). That strategy's main objective was to ensure that sustainability considerations were more systematically applied to economic policies and integrated into decision-making processes (Comhar, 2007). However, with a focus on economic and ecological issues, it had minimal emphasis on sustainable development's social dimensions (Mullally, 2004), leading to sustainable development being identified primarily with environmental issues in Ireland (Comhar, 2001).

The *Planning and Development Act 2000* enshrined sustainable development in Irish legislation, specifying it as one of its purposes; however, the term was deliberately not defined as in the view of the Minister responsible 'it is such a dynamic and all-embracing concept, and one which will evolve over time, that any legal definition would tend to restrict and stifle it' (Grist, 2012: 8).

Following a review of the 1997 sustainable development strategy in 2002, a revised national strategy was to be published in 2007 (Comhar, 2007). Ultimately, it was to be another five years before one emerged with the publication of *Our Sustainable Future: A Framework for Sustainable Development in Ireland* (*Our Sustainable Future*) (DECLG, 2012). In the meantime, Comhar was wound up in 2011 with the National Economic and Social Council (NESC) adopting some of its sustainable development functions.[11]

Our Sustainable Future (DECLG, 2012: 20-21) sets out the following nine principles for sustainable development:

[11] Established in 1973, NESC advises the Taoiseach on strategic policy issues, including those related to sustainable development across social, economic and environmental pillars. It puts the topic of sustainable development on the agenda as an item for consideration for future government policies and initiatives (NESC, n.d.).

- **Economy** – Promote an innovative, competitive and low-carbon economy with the aim of achieving smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.
- **Satisfaction of human needs by the efficient use of resources** – Prices should reflect the real costs to society of production and consumption activities and polluters should pay for the damage they cause to human health and the environment.
- **Equity between generations** – The needs of current generations should be addressed without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs. Resources should be used within the capacity for regeneration.
- **Gender equity** – Women have a vital role in environmental management and development and their full participation is therefore essential to advance sustainable development.
- **Respect for ecological integrity and biodiversity** -The abundance of wildlife and extent of habitats should be maintained, improved and restored where necessary, through sustainable management.
- **Social equity** – Social inclusion should be promoted to ensure an improved quality of life for all.
- **Respect for cultural heritage/diversity** – The quality of landscapes, the heritage of the manmade environment and historic and cultural resources should be maintained and improved.
- **Equity between countries and regions** – Promote fundamental rights, by combating all forms of discrimination and contributing to the reduction of poverty. Promote coherence between local, regional, national, EU and global actions in order to increase their contribution to sustainable development.
- **Good decision making** – Guarantee citizens' rights of access to information and public participation procedures. Ensure access to review mechanisms. Develop adequate consultation with stakeholders,

including citizens, businesses and social partners, and participatory channels for all interested parties.

In April 2018, Ireland's *Sustainable Development Goals National Implementation Plan 2018–2020* (Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment, 2018) was released. The implementation plan includes four strategic priorities, including supporting communities to contribute to the SDGs, policy alignment and participation in SDG monitoring and implementation. A successor to the 2018-2020 national SDG implementation plan covering the period 2021-2023 is overdue.

Sustainable development and participation are linked in *Our Sustainable Future* (DECLG, 2012: 64) which states, 'Communities are at the heart of everything the State does and they must be enabled to identify and address social and economic issues in their own areas. In particular, we must support communities that are vulnerable, disadvantaged or under threat and adhere to the values of local participation.' Later *Our Sustainable Future* discusses the need for 'local and community engagement in tackling poverty and social exclusion, including greater alignment between local government and the wider public service to enable more integrated and cost-effective responses to target the needs of urban, peri-urban and rural communities, in particular the most vulnerable' (DECLG, 2012: 72) which suggests more top-down alignment than facilitating bottom-up transformation.

The local government level is particularly important for participation and also for sustainable development. However, Irish local government is relatively weak compared to other countries and may present limited opportunities for meaningful citizen participation and decision making for sustainable development or in regeneration as a result.[12] Indeed, Quinlivan (2021) bluntly

[12] Section 46 of the Local Government Reform Act 2014 states that local authorities 'may take such steps as it considers appropriate to consult with an promote effective participation by the local community in local government' and requiring that they adopt a 'Framework for Public Participation in Local Government' which created the Public Participation Network (PPN) in each local authority area.

describes a 'democratic deficit' in local government. O'Hara (2011: 2), notably, attributes the lack of public engagement in urban development decision making in Ireland to a 'deeply parochial and political culture of local government, alongside a strongly centralised system of administration' where the relationship 'between the state, market and voluntary sector is not part of any proactive discourse or strategy to address local needs'.

A 2004 study of sustainability on the island of Ireland (Ellis et al., 2004) found that while local authorities had begun engaging with a wide range of stakeholders on discussions of sustainability in the preceding decade, there was a continuing reliance on local authority leadership rather than more bottom-up efforts and that the language and communication of sustainability by local authorities was a barrier to community engagement. Mullally (2013: 158-159) also highlights that Ireland's consensus-driven approach to social partnership may have inhibited, rather than encouraged, participation in sustainable development due to a preference for establishing 'facsimile institutions for sustainable development without fundamentally challenging the prevailing narrative, norms, values and understandings at the core of the Irish development model'.

2.3.3.1 Sustainable communities in Irish policy

The stated objective of national housing policy is that every household should have access to secure, good quality housing suited to their needs at an affordable price in a sustainable community (DHLGH, n.d.). However, the literature considering sustainable communities in Ireland focuses on housing and the built environment. When Irish sustainable communities' policy has looked beyond these components, we see that it borrows heavily from UK conceptualisations, the limitations of which were introduced above. Russell and Redmond (2009) found that Irish housing policy has used the discourse of sustainable development to argue for sustainable communities with a very similar interpretation to UK policy while also pointing out that sustainable community policy in Ireland lacks a definition of a community.

Although Ireland's first *National Sustainable Development Strategy* was published in 1997, it was not until the 2002 *National Spatial Strategy* that Irish policy outlined the characteristics of sustainable housing (Winston, 2007). The discussion of sustainable development in the *National Spatial Strategy* (DELG, 2002) includes consideration of 'socially integrated communities'. However, it primarily relates to physical and environmental issues, claiming that 'a high quality environment is a prerequisite for economic success, social cohesion and sustainable development' (Ibid.: 41). As in later policy, it identifies a number of benefits arising from 'socially diverse' local communities (DELG, 2002: 104). Though the Taoiseach's foreword to the policy mentions 'continuing public participation', participation in the document is generally used to refer to labour force participation or obliquely to growing the regions.

Following this 2002 publication, the Irish government issued a series of policy documents on housing that stress the centrality of developing sustainable communities and neighbourhoods. They include the housing policy statement *Delivering Homes, Sustaining Communities* (DEHLG, 2007a: 21) which states sustainable communities are:

> ...places where people want to live and work, now and in the future. They meet the diverse needs of existing and future residents, are sensitive to their environment, and contribute to a high quality of life. They are safe and inclusive, well-planned, built and run, offer equality of opportunity and good services for all.

Russell and Redmond (2009) again highlight the parallels between British and Irish policy in this definition, which is taken from the *Bristol Accord* (ODPM, 2006). A further refinement is also supplied in the previously considered Irish policy however: 'Sustainable communities have a high quality natural and built environment, with a dynamic and innovative economy, good transport, supportive community and voluntary services and are environmentally sound' (DEHLG, 2007a: 21).

The Irish application of the term also drew from a NESC (2004) discussion on sustainable neighbourhoods and sustainable settlements that concentrated on the physical characteristics of streets and housing, the 'social integration of different income groups' (Ibid.: 126), and density issues. Discussing the impact of this definition in *Delivering Homes, Sustaining Communities,* Redmond and Hearne (2011: 5) conclude that 'In practice this translates into a policy which favours higher residential densities, integrated neighbourhoods of responsible citizens, and modern urban design.'

Irish housing policy has narrowly defined unsustainable communities as self-contained social housing estates or neighbourhoods, where the majority of tenants are welfare dependent (Russell and Redmond, 2009). This is much narrower than Raco's (2007) discussion of what constitutes the opposite of a sustainable community described above. In her study of sustainable housing in Dublin, Winston (2010: 325) found that 'there is no shared vision of sustainable housing. Current Irish housing policy defines it in terms of sustainable communities...However, interviewees outside the DEHLG complained that sustainable housing means different things to different people.'

Russell and Redmond (2009) consider that while the physical or environmental components of what constitutes a sustainable community are clearly outlined in *Delivering Homes, Sustaining Communities* and subsequent detailed planning and design guidance (DEHLG, 2007a, 2007b), the policy document is less clear about the social elements of a sustainable community. Despite what they identify as the 'rather shallow and somewhat constrained' view of sustainability in *Delivering Homes, Sustaining Communities*, Russell and Redmond (2009: 638) can identify three elements of a socially sustainable community from an Irish government perspective. These are: integrated communities (mixing income groups and tenures), responsible and committed residents and stable communities. The limitations of these will be considered below in turn.

Regarding integrated communities, it is notable that the use of the term integration itself is significant as it implies conforming and fitting in, rather

than accommodating difference and diversity (Russell and Redmond, 2009: 640). This discussion of responsible residents and stable communities in the statement is less holistic than it might appear and sets limiting criteria for participation, focusing as it does on home ownership, individualisation and personal responsibility, seeking to 'encourage a sense of personal autonomy and responsibility that underpins good community participation' (Russell and Redmond, 2009: 640). In Ireland, as in the UK, mixed tenure is conflated with sustainable communities. As Raco (2007: 317) notes in sustainable community planning 'processes of "mixing" and "balance" take on particular forms which are shaped and defined by powerful interests and groups'. Colantonio and Dixon (2011) have considered the importance policy places on mixed tenure for social sustainability despite what they consider to be a lack of empirical evidence.

This is reinforced by the statutory backing of 'sustainable communities' in the *Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2009* which required local authorities to have regard to promoting sustainable communities in their housing services plan, with tenure mix and social mix specified (though it is not necessarily limited to these). Redmond and Norris (2005) considered that government policy to prioritise private housing provision for owner occupation was also intended to meet other policy objectives such as stable communities, suggesting that Irish sustainable communities' policy wants 'ideal citizens' whose home ownership encourages responsibility, which ultimately contributes to the creation of sustainable communities (Russell and Redmond, 2009: 640).

Beyond discussing sustainable communities in terms of housing tenure and mix, there is some focus on the carbon footprint of settlements as the measure of their sustainability but this also misses the idea's intended integrated approach. In order to 'promote sustainable communities in Ireland' and 'support communities in taking sustainable development actions', O'Regan et al. (2020: 12-13) developed an online decision-making tool as part of their research. They also recommend the creation of a national intermediary for community involvement in sustainability-related action, accompanied by an online platform. However, the research is focused on sustainable communities

in the context of reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Lawton (2015) has examined the role of housing in sustainable urban communities but again, this focused on matters such as design, tenure and mix. An exception, however, is in the regeneration of Fatima Mansions in Dublin where sustainable communities was linked to safety and issues of antisocial behaviour and policing (Dorman, 2007:18), which is a rare reflection of some of the broader characteristics of sustainable communities set out in Table 2.1 above.

Given the limitations described, the suitability of the concept of sustainable communities merits further attention by policy makers and those impacted by their decisions because of the implications of its adoption as a political and policy aim in Ireland.

2.4 Participation

Participation has had 'a long and chequered history' (Cornwall, 2000: 281) with particular criticism surrounding its application and effectiveness. This is not helped by the fact that it is generally recognised that 'Participation defies any single attempt at definition or interpretation' (Oakley, 1991: 6). Nevertheless, this section explores these attempts at definition (including through typologies of participation) as well as its application, benefits and criticism. The related—though also often poorly understood and conceptualised (Lyons et al., 2001)—idea of empowerment is also discussed. Participation specifically in the context of sustainable development and regeneration is explored further in Section 2.5.

For some, participation 'is a matter of principle; for others, a practice; and for still others, an end in itself' (World Bank, 1996: xi). It has been described as 'a process through which stakeholders influence and share control over development initiatives and the decisions and resources which affect them' (Ibid.). For Bishop and Davis (2002: 14) 'participation is the expectation that citizens have a voice in policy choices', acknowledging that this may take many forms. However, the participation agenda has also been problematised, and such concerns (particularly that it is used to legitimise official actions without challenging structural issues) are considered in more depth in Section 2.4.2.

Clearly then participation is a broad concept that can be defined in different ways, depending on the circumstances or the ideological or political context of those seeking it. The result is a variety of views on how participation is defined, whom it is expected to involve, what it is expected to achieve, and how it is to be brought about (Agarwal, 2001). In these ways, participation faces similar pressures to sustainable development and regeneration.

For Rowe and Frewer (2005) public communication (or information), consultation and participation are different typologies of public participation, though they acknowledge that imprecise definitions of these terms have hindered their research. Meadowcroft (2004), also describes three forms of participation, namely citizen participation (through joining a political party or responding to a public consultation, for example), community-centred participation (more targeted consultation with organisations and groups in the community, particularly directly targeting excluded groups) and stakeholder participation by representatives of stakeholder organisations. Another view sees participation as a political process, rather than a technique—one that requires understanding the dynamics of those involved and where efforts to engage communities must be situated in their context, including the motives of those seeking community engagement (Cornwall, 2008: 281). Participation typologies are discussed further in the next section.

Mohan and Stokke (2000) consider that participation and empowerment manage to be attractive to both neoliberal and post-Marxist actors, with Dagnino (2007) similarly describing a 'perverse confluence' between participation's presentation as deepening democracy and influence on one hand and being associated with shrinking state responsibilities in favour of broadening personal responsibilities on the other. In either scenario, however, governance is about who decides and how, and questions of participation and inclusivity are therefore important (Robinson and Berkes, 2011).

Rowe and Frewer (2005) describe an international trend towards increased public participation in local and national government, while Smith (2011)

discusses an 'institutional turn' in democratic theory which offers practical examples of how institutional design affects democratic practice. Smith argues that the 1990s and 2000s saw an exceptional period of democratic experimentation by public authorities ranging from participatory budgeting to referenda, citizens' juries, constitutional conventions and citizen assemblies. Keane (2009) considers such mechanisms to be part of a shift to 'monitory democracy' characterised by the increased scrutiny of government power. Jenkins and Hague (2005: 218) locate such efforts as a reaction to the tension between political party whips' domination of modern representative democracy and constituent demands, alongside increased economic and societal fragmentation at local level.

As noted in the introduction to this chapter, communities in this study relate particularly to communities of place. A commonality in discussions of participation is the role of community in decision making, and as such, this section could also be titled 'community participation'. However, this must bear in mind the warning that communities are not homogeneous but, in fact, heterogeneous, shifting and overlapping (Cleaver, 1999). We must also be alive to Head's (2007) suggestion that the term 'community' is vague and often misleadingly seeks to impose identity or inclusiveness. Similarly, Nelson and Wright (1995: 15) observe that 'Community is a concept often used by state and other organizations, rather than the people themselves, and it carries connotations of consensus and "needs" determined within parameters set by outsiders'. The methodological considerations for the study associated with this are discussed further in Chapter 3.

2.4.1 Participation typologies

There is a broad range of typologies of participation within an extensive literature. In Arnstein's (1969) classic ladder of participation, the rungs of the ladder relate to the degree to which citizens have attained decision making power with a category of 'non-participation' at the bottom and complete citizen control as the highest point. Arnstein's ladder distinguishes between higher degrees of 'citizen power', which includes citizen control, delegated power and

partnership, and lower degrees of 'tokenism', in which she includes informing, consultation and placation. For Arnstein (1969: 216) 'citizen participation is a categorical term for citizen power. It is the redistribution of power that enables the have-not citizens, presently excluded from the political and economic process, to be included in the future'.

Various authors (e.g. Wilcox, 1994; Burns et al., 2004) have recast, refined and reinterpreted Arnstein's model. Pretty's (1995) typology of participation gives more insight into the motivations of those seeking to adopt participatory approaches and goes from 'manipulative' participation with token representatives with no real power to the last category of 'self-mobilisation'.

Both Arnstein's ladder and Pretty's typology are normative (Cornwall, 2008), and Bishop and Davis (2002) suggest that viewing participation as a simple hierarchy or continuum is both value laden and ignores that different policy objectives may lend themselves to different participation strategies. Tritter and McCallum (2006: 165) criticise Arnstein's ladder and related hierarchical models on similar grounds, arguing that 'user involvement requires that the structure and process be dynamic and negotiated by users themselves' as people 'may seek different methods of involvement in relation to different issues and at different times' and suggesting that a new model and metaphor (a mosaic) is required. Cornwall (2008: 273-274) agrees that different forms and meanings of participation may be found in a single project or process at different stages, with the seemingly distinct levels blurred or unintended consequences changing the form underway.

Shand and Arnberg (1996) and White (1996) linked participation types to particular government objectives. White's (1996: 7-9) typology of interests is less a hierarchy and more to consider how or why participation is being used (the interests it serves). White addresses these motives by including the top-down perspective of the 'outside agency' initiating participation and its function, ranging from nominal legitimation to transformative empowerment.

Bishop and Davis (2002: 26) consider that these different typologies may be because of the authors' stance, noting, for example, that Arnstein (1969) approaches participation as community activists while Shand and Arnberg (1996) consider it from the perspective of officials.

2.4.2 Risks, benefits and criticisms

Burns et al. (2004) argue that community participation is essential for a number of reasons including accountability, social cohesion, effectiveness, enabling policy to be relevant to local communities and sustainability (considered in this context to be sustaining developments once any additional resources have gone).

Frequently, the arguments in favour of participation emphasise the benefits of the process itself. Cleaver (1999) considered participation an 'act of faith' based on a belief that participation is intrinsically a 'good thing', that a focus on 'getting the techniques right' is the primary way of ensuring its success and that considerations of power and politics, on the whole, should be avoided as divisive and obstructive. Burton et al. (2006) divide claims of the benefits of participation into the procedural (i.e. involvement as a civil right) and the substantive (i.e. instrumental and developmental). Considering the procedural benefits as moral and therefore not requiring empirical evidence to support them, they focus on the need for evidence for the substantive claims. While Smith (2005: 53) warns against 'fetishizing' participation in and of itself and ignoring outcomes, Cleaver (1999: 598) distinguishes between efficiency arguments for participatory approaches (to achieve better outcomes), and equity and empowerment arguments (participation as a process which enhances individual capacity to improve their lives and facilitates social change to the advantage of vulnerable groups).

Burton et al. (2006) highlight two substantive outcome-based reasons policy makers may seek participation—if local citizens are more involved in policy processes, decisions will command greater respect from local residents and hence carry more legitimacy and secondly, they will benefit from the insights

and local knowledge brought by local residents acquired through living in the area. Treadwell Shine and Norris (2006a: 25) suggest consulting can 'ensure value for money by tailoring potential interventions to the needs of target estates.'

However, evidence for the public policy benefits of participation is not clear cut. Cleaver (1999: 597) argues that though there is some evidence for the efficiency argument on a small scale 'there is little evidence of the long-term electiveness of participation in materially improving the conditions of the most vulnerable people or as a strategy for social change'. Taylor (2007: 308) finds that 'there is some evidence in the field of neighbourhood renewal that community voices have made their mark. Issues such as 'liveability' and transport, which appeared marginal…appear to have been given a higher profile in direct response to community concerns.' The OECD (Gramberger and Caddy, 2001: 22–3) describe three key benefits from increasing government/citizen engagement, namely the strengthening of the development of public policy, the development of greater trust, and finally, more transparency and accountability, thus building further active citizenship in society. Meanwhile, in an Irish policy making context, the Reform and Delivery Office in the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform (2020: 17) examined the impact of citizen engagement in the public service, finding that 'when it is done well, engaging citizens can improve the delivery and quality of public services' including through enhanced accountability and increased legitimacy and public ownership of policies and services.

Conversely, participation has been criticised as little more than an exercise in the legitimation of dominant power, while decisions and policies developed through deliberative means can still be undermined by opposing elite interests (Shapiro, 1999). Purcell (2007: 201) considers that 'the rhetoric of participatory decision-making has been used to legitimate neoliberal policy-making. It is not very difficult to shape a participatory process to ensure a narrow range of decisions compatible with neoliberal ends.' Relevant, also, is Lefebvre's (1995) inclusive, emancipatory concept of the right to the city 'focused on citizens'

participation in the use and production of urban space, and a right to full involvement in urban life' (Hearne and Boyle, 2015). Though for Harvey (2012: 138) this means a radically rebuilt socialist city 'that eradicates poverty and social inequality, and one that heals the wounds of disastrous environmental degradation' rather than attempting to reform capitalist urbanisation as 'The right to the contemporary suburb is hardly a viable anti-capitalist slogan.'

This should be considered in the context of Burton et al. (2006: 302) who argued that greater involvement introduces greater unpredictability into the political processes of policy development, programme implementation and evaluation. Lyons et al. (2001) consider that participation is by its nature anarchic, 'Its outcomes cannot be dictated because, if they could, the process would be redundant.' Such uncertain outcomes conflict with the typical preference of agencies and politicians for tangible quick wins (Head, 2007). Tholen (2015) problematises participation by adopting a rationalisation and bureaucratisation focused Weberian lens. They warn that participatory arrangements may lead to reduced predictability and accountability of public administration, a decrease in expertise and an increase in inefficiency, which risks amplifying public frustration rather than ameliorating it as intended.

Approaching the matter from the community's viewpoint, Perrons and Skyers (2003: 27) say that for the residents they interviewed in their study of a regeneration programme in London 'real empowerment was about the community having the freedom to make mistakes particularly as local government officials had been making mistakes for years and had left the community to suffer the consequences.' However, such willingness to make mistakes is unlikely to meet the needs of policy makers seeking predictability and quick wins. This view is supported by White's (1996) typology of interests which suggests that policy makers will allow enough participation to achieve their aim at the time and not more than that, lest additional uncertainty arise. How communities can attain the higher reaches of Arnstein's ladder in the face of this is a significant challenge.

Issues of legitimacy are central when discussing participation. According to Shapiro (1999, 33) and Pateman (2012), for legitimacy, structures to involve the public alone are not enough and participatory programmes should arrive at binding outcomes and impact policy and decision making. As Cornwall (2008: 278) notes 'being involved in a process is not equivalent to having a voice'. This echoes White (1996: 6) who argued that 'sharing through participation does not necessarily mean sharing in power.' The framing and scope of the participatory process and its decision making is significant. For Cornwall (2008: 280) 'To speak of "involving people in decision-making" implies that all and any decisions are up for grabs. Yet, it is important to be clear about exactly *which* decisions the public have the opportunity to participate in, and indeed *which* members of the public participate in different kinds of decision-making fora.' Edwards and Imrie (2015) have discussed debates regarding who has the legitimacy to represent the community and how policy makers can approach communities as homogenous ignoring the complexities of social and political relationships within communities.

Also relevant to this discussion is Habermas' (1984) communicative rationality theory where legitimate decisions in a democracy could only emerge from an 'ideal speech' discursive procedure that allows all affected to have a say in making collective decisions and is unlikely to be achieved in societies rooted in inequality and domination. This has been criticised as utopian (e.g. Rienstra and Hook, 2006) though it was developed and applied to deliberative democracy by Dryzek (1990: 14) who suggested it 'should be free from deception, self deception, strategic behavior, and domination through the exercise of power'. Bevir (2006) describes the need to step back from a system governance perspective on participation which remains managerial, potentially unaccountable, and focused on efficiency and perceived legitimacy to seek a more radical, participatory democracy.

Taking account of such framing and scoping concerns, Cornwall and Coelho (2007) identified five issues which need to be considered for meaningful participation. Firstly, it requires more than just invitations to participate—

instead, people need to recognise their political agency through education and mobilisation. Secondly, it requires addressing issues of representation and legitimacy amongst those included to ensure they represent the interests of those they claim to represent while ensuring others are not further excluded. Thirdly, it is necessary to understand the motivations of those involved. Fourthly, how is participation to be shown to be effective and how will trade-offs between inclusiveness and effectiveness be avoided? Finally, how does it lead to wider effects on citizenship and engagement more generally. A related approach to foster citizen participation and empowerment is decentralisation from central government to local government or community organisations (Koontz, 2006).

Where participation has not led to substantial powersharing, Head (2007) attributes it to governments' continuing control of money and dislike of devolving power and control, alongside the insufficient focus on the capacity and motivation of citizens to participate effectively. With the focus on delivering 'full participation' and the premise that everyone would participate if they could, consideration must also be given to the costs of participation to people and the reasons for non-participation (e.g. due to gender or cultural reasons) or self-exclusion (e.g. apathy, fear of reprisals, absence of feeling a sense of belonging) (Cornwall, 2008). Therefore, solutions must address issues of 'inclusive democratic communication under circumstances of structural inequality and cultural difference' (Young, 2002: 66).

2.5 Towards integrating regeneration, sustainable development and participation

Building on the literature above, this section delves deeper into the intersections of sustainability and regeneration, sustainability and participation, and regeneration and participation. This is followed by an integrated discussion on some key themes relevant across regeneration, sustainable development and participation.

2.5.1 Sustainable regeneration

Though the only use of the term 'regeneration' in the Brundtland Report relates to fish and forests, it does reference the legacy of poorly designed and maintained public housing estates and notes that residential areas are likely to be more attractive if they are governed as individual neighbourhoods with direct local participation (WCED, 1987). It is considered that taken at its most basic and limited level, urban regeneration contributes towards sustainable development through the reuse of land and buildings, (in some circumstances) saving on demolition waste and new construction materials, reducing demand for greenfield development and increasing density and compactness (Turcu, 2012). It also allows for increased energy efficiency in the housing stock, which is a condition for sustainability (Winston, 2021). However, as Winston later emphasises, a decision to demolish as part of a regeneration programme (such as in Knocknaheeny) requires careful consideration from a sustainability perspective.

As noted earlier, Turcu (2012) and Winston (2008) identify similarities between the aims of urban regeneration and sustainable development, but suggest that they have emerged in parallel with little interaction. McElduff et al. (2016: 3) argue that the policy outcome bar for regeneration is raised even further when the adjective 'sustainable' is introduced. Lombardi et al. (2011) argued that the conceptualisation of sustainability operating within urban regeneration schemes should powerfully shape how they do or do not make manifest the principles of sustainable development. However, their study found that the definitions and conceptualisations of sustainability in urban regeneration policy are fundamentally limited.

Providing an alternative perspective on such conceptualisations, Evans and Jones (2008) consider that as regeneration is characterised by multiagency working, it is unavoidable that different actors interpret their work for sustainable development or sustainable communities differently (though they do not rule out the lack of dialogue across actors on the understanding of the

concept as an issue). They consider that such differing views can contribute to the innovation and creativity successful regeneration requires.

Definitions of sustainable regeneration have been posited. For example, it has been defined as involving environmental sustainability, economic efficiency and meeting social needs (Percy, 2003). Approaching regeneration with a heavily environmental focus, Czischke et al. (2015: 7) define 'sustainable urban regeneration' as 'regeneration policies and processes within a city, which seek to address inter-related problems in order to consider, reduce and mitigate their environmental impact'. While they recognise the need to reduce socioeconomic inequalities, their definition loses the integrated nature of sustainability by implying policies should solely serve to reduce environmental impact.

As articulated earlier, Russell and Redmond (2009) identify a constrained approach to sustainability in Irish housing policy, focused on the built environment, housing and environmental performance, thus losing the integrated focus of sustainable development. The implications of this for regeneration policy and practice here are clear, tenure mix is emphasised over other aspects as 'Using the logic of the policy, only the committed, responsible, active "ideal citizens" may be accommodated in a regenerated area and draconian measures can be put in place to prevent and manage anti-social behaviour, all under the rubric of creating sustainable communities' (Russell and Redmond, 2009: 640).

The prominence of tenure mix in policy can be linked to the research on neighbourhood effects, i.e. the idea that living in more deprived neighbourhoods has a negative effect on residents' life chances over and above the impact of their individual characteristics. This theory is academically popular but has also been embraced by policy makers though its significance is still contested (van Ham and Manley, 2012). Arthurson (2002) questions whether tenure mix is useful for creating sustainable communities given that strong, cohesive communities often already exist on social housing estates prior to regeneration.

Physical regeneration can, though, clearly impact on social sustainability. For example, Russell and Redmond (2009: 638) remind us that 'While the social elements of the creation of sustainable communities may seem the most challenging to accommodate in a regeneration programme, residents of social housing estates undergoing regeneration are also faced with the prospect of very significant physical change to their environment'. This in itself may have social impacts in terms of wellbeing, sense of place etc.

The stressful and sensitive experience of 'detenanting' or 'decanting' where local people are moved during regeneration works has also been described (Redmond and Hearne, 2011; Canal Communities Partnership, 2007). As Russell and Redmond (2009: 647) have pointed out in their study of regeneration in a Dublin housing estate, it might be argued that the stability and sustainability of existing communities is fundamentally undermined through the detenanting process and ignores the residents' own conceptualisations of their community. Ferreri (2020) has criticised decanting during regeneration as a 'mechanism of dispossession' and 'a dehumanizing violence' with the term evoking residents as 'an uncountable, faceless entity that can be poured, like a liquid, from one container to another'.

Taylor (1998) argued that to reduce social exclusion, regeneration requires, *inter alia*, building social capital and empowering residents. This aligns with Mischen et al.'s (2019) definition of a sustainable community and the characteristics of a sustainable community summarised in Table 2.1, above. Though studies focusing on sustainable housing and sustainable communities discuss social sustainability issues, they regularly still emphasise the physical and environmental. There are some exceptions. For example, Winston (2010: 321) presents an analytical framework for assessing sustainable housing and regeneration. Here in the context of regeneration, sustainable housing has three specific characteristics (emphasis on renovation rather than demolition; partnership with residents; and social supports for vulnerable households). These are in addition to those of sustainable land use planning, sustainable design and social mix/affordability. Utilising her analytical framework for

assessing sustainable housing and regeneration, Winston (2010: 325) considers that, though regeneration policy in Ireland is becoming more concerned with sustainable development 'greater emphasis needs to be placed on mixed use developments, construction on brownfield rather than greenfield sites, higher densities, sustainable construction and design methods, access to green space, a shift away from demolition and partnership with residents.'

Winston (2010: 329) argues that 'local authorities need to regenerate communities to make them sustainable. By providing high quality, affordable housing in attractive, safe, green, well resourced environments, they would attract people to live in inner urban areas, and significantly contribute to the sustainable development of these communities', suggesting that only holistic regeneration is sustainable. However as we have seen, regeneration in Ireland has been criticised as property-led, lacking the essential integrated approach.

2.5.2 Regeneration and participation

As demonstrated, the three topics of governance and legitimacy, capacity building, and effectiveness are prominent in regeneration and participation literature. Each of these is discussed in more detail in this section.

Firstly, regarding governance and legitimacy, Taylor (2000) identified the contradiction that community representatives are frequently criticised for not being representative while also being criticised for not speaking with a single voice. Ultimately for Taylor (2000: 254-255) their legitimacy relies on the channels that exist for them to give feedback and be accountable to the community, the community's capacity to hold them accountable, and the routes that are created to encourage people to engage.

MacLaran et al. (2007: 35) suggest that it is more usual for the wider community to get involved in the regeneration of social housing compared to other planning processes as the proposals directly affect their homes. However, the opportunities for participation are typically spaces into which the state invites communities/citizens and which are created and defined by the state ('invited spaces') as opposed to spaces created and defined by citizens ('popular spaces')

(Cornwall, 2004). Similarly, Blaug (2002: 107) distinguishes between 'incumbent' and 'critical' democracy, where 'Incumbent democracy is primarily motivated to preserve and improve existing institutions by maximizing and managing orderly participation. Critical democracy seeks, instead, to resist such management and to empower excluded voices in such a way as to directly challenge existing institutions.' For Cornwall and Coelho (2007: 9) despite participation in urban policy, institutional design bias means 'the path-dependency of policy choices can constrain deliberation to issues of implementation, offering little real scope for rethinking policies' which also creates the danger of elite capture. However, as discussed above, Smith (2011) considers that such thinking risks overlooking significant institutional democratic innovations.

Coaffee and Healey (2003: 1997) acknowledge that for communities alive to the potential for co-optation there is a strategic decision to be made: 'it remains difficult to decide whether to get involved in these new discourses and practices and risk co-option, or whether to maintain a critical distance and capacity for alternative resistance strategies.' It is also necessary to consider the three dimensions of power identified by Lukes (2005)—decision-making power (where A has power over B), non-decision-making power (A sets the agenda in which power relationships are played out), and ideological power (a radical view of power and false consciousness where B internalises and accepts A's vision akin to Gramsci's concept of hegemony). This confirms the need to consider both obvious conflicts and the latent exercise of power which prevents such conflicts from arising in the first place (2005: 29). It also echoes Lefebvrean concerns.

Secondly, regarding capacity building, Turcu (2012) has described how regeneration, with sufficient capacity building, can be a catalyst for community involvement that contributes to long term cohesion and sustainability (as measured across suggested social, economic, environmental and institutional sustainability indicators). Such capacity building is considered crucial for the overall success of participatory processes (Head, 2007) and it is also prominent

in the literature on regeneration. For example, McElduff et al. (2016) proposed an 'Octagon Values Model' based on a fusion of the regeneration and resilience literatures to set out how resilience thinking may be embedded within regeneration policy and practice while also taking account of the need to reconcile competing interests and resource requirements. Applying their model to two coastal towns in Ireland, McElduff et al. found a need for awareness raising and knowledge building to gather interest and momentum for regeneration within local communities.

Thirdly there is the efficacy or impact of participation. Perrons and Skyers (2003), in their study of the effectiveness of including traditionally excluded groups in a regeneration programme in Hackney, London, found that in practice 'while local groups may be formally included in discussions over local issues, the main agenda, in terms of allocating resources to urban areas and determining overall priorities, is decided outside the immediate regeneration areas.' (2003: 265).

Parés et al.'s (2012) study of Spanish urban redevelopment projects argues that more participation leads to more holistic regeneration with more emphasis on social and community issues, compared to a focus on the physical and economic aspects when participation is more residual. However, they acknowledge that early citizen participation may suggest that a more comprehensive approach to regeneration was the intention from the outset. They also highlight that participation may be restricted to making more insubstantial decisions, meaning a more limited impact on the regeneration overall (Ibid.: 265).

Finally, Muir and Rhodes (2008) have considered the limits of community participation in Irish regeneration projects, finding that even in cases where residents had a high level of involvement, they did not necessarily have veto power on significant, fundamental decisions, for example. This reflects MacLaran et al.'s (2007) contention that participation in urban development in Ireland is frequently tokenistic and cynical. With this perspective in mind, participation in regeneration in Ireland is discussed further in the next section.

2.5.2.1 Participation and regeneration in Ireland

In Ireland, central government's regeneration policy and funding mechanisms have included requirements for consultation with the local community, but its application has been patchy and the results uneven (Norris, 2005: 191).

Discussing regeneration, *Delivering Homes, Sustaining Communities* (DEHLG, 2007a: 63) highlights its utility for agencies in implementing their obligations, saying it aims:

> to galvanise the agencies at local level and ensure that interventions are focused on a common aim. This will accelerate the development of an appropriate vision for the area and a detailed plan of action. It is designed to secure the commitment of all of the key stakeholders and maintain the momentum for delivery by providing an appropriate implementation vehicle. In all cases, it is essential that an effective dialogue is achieved with those living in the area.

In their study of Limerick's regeneration, Galvin and Mooney Simmie (2017) identify several contradictions of regeneration policy relevant to participation, such as a neoliberal or entrepreneurial official transformational discourse versus the residents' discourse of wanting to keep the community together; the official rhetoric of empowerment versus unaddressed pathologised and internalised feelings of inadequacy amongst the community, and official knowledge's disregard for community based experiential knowledge. They conclude that 'expansive participation' linked to Freirean community conscientisation is necessary in regeneration.

MacLaran et al.'s (2007) study of participation in the Irish planning system included the formulation and implementation of regeneration proposals in Dublin (St. Michael's Estate, Ballymun and the Docklands) and Waterford (Ballybeg estate). There are many differences in these case studies. For example, the regeneration of St. Michael's Estate was to be through a Public Private Partnership, Ballymun and the Docklands used a regeneration authority while the Ballybeg regeneration was led by the local authority (as is Knocknaheeny's).

From these case studies, MacLaran et al. (2007) identify a series of 12 barriers to community participation in regeneration (though good practice and positive examples are identified also, their manifestation is uneven across the case studies). These are presented in Table 2.2. and discussed below. These echo much of the literature discussed earlier and data from the Knocknaheeny case study will be considered against these in the discussion chapter as part of addressing the third research question.

Table 2.2 Barriers to community participation in disadvantaged areas in urban planning (including regeneration) (MacLaran et al., 2007)

1.	Nature of the commitment to community participation
2.	Stage at which community participation was sought
3.	Adequacy of the structures
4.	The accessibility of local-authority planners, officials and planning information
5.	Adequacy of the timeframe for community participation
6.	Adequacy of resourcing
7.	Power differentials between community representatives, local authority officials and other stakeholders
8.	Distrust, demoralisation, alienation and apathy
9.	Representation, accountability and community dynamics
10.	Consistency of plan implementation
11.	Privileging of private sector interests
12.	Credence given to the community's planning interests and concerns

These 12 barriers are now considered under the three themes of barriers relating to principles, processes, and people.

2.5.2.1.1 Principles: Barriers 1 and 12

First, MacLaran et al. (2007) question the commitment of authorities to participation in some cases and highlight issues from individual officials' reluctance to engage with the community to the higher priority afforded to property development interests in plans. Though some examples of best practice were identified, overall, the commitment to it by authorities was uneven. Barrier 12 suggests that in a number of cases, the local authority's

engagement with local communities was characterised by a complete unwillingness to concede the validity of community views and concerns (MacLaran et al., 2007: 230).

2.5.2.1.2 Process: Barriers 2, 3, 5, 6 and 10

Communities typically entered the consultation process at a late stage in the process when the fundamental components of the pertinent policies had been determined (MacLaran et al., 2007: 211). It is also important that a community's input into local regeneration plans cannot be circumscribed by national policy priorities and county-level plans. However, the structures for community involvement can be inadequate, limiting groups featuring community representatives to after-the-fact monitoring roles for example, or with limited efforts to ensure the community representatives selected for such structures are broadly representative and can legitimately reflect the views of the community. For example, in St. Michael's Estate, the community adopted a deliberative model with representatives bringing proposals back to the community for approval. This came into conflict with the representative model preferred by officials (MacLaran et al., 2007: 216).

As identified in Barrier 5, officials can rush communities with inadequate timelines for consultation or community decision making. Also, there are examples of where communities are not supported to participate in terms of expertise and financial resources. The implementation of plans can be inconsistent with, for example, aspects of plans and masterplans not proceeding with little explanation.

2.5.2.1.3 People: Barriers 4, 7, 8, 9 and 11

Barrier 4 finds that both information and officials can be inaccessible with difficulties interpreting information, securing independent technical advice and greater access enjoyed by those with vested interests reported. The power differential between community representatives, local authority officials, elected officials and other stakeholders is highlighted in Barrier 7.

Previous experience can lead to distrust and apathy, which impedes engagement between officials and communities. Barrier 9 suggests that the fact that communities may not agree a position on developments can impede participation, while Barrier 11 finds that private sector and commercial interests can override those of the community.

Perspectives from community workers and residents in the literature bring additional context to these barriers. For example, writing from the perspective of community workers and representatives, Bissett (2008) discusses the community's difficulties in being included in early decision making regarding the St. Michael's Estate regeneration. Furthermore, he describes how many officials making decisions regarding the regeneration, contracts etc. had ever visited the estate. Bissett's account has been described as 'The seminal account of the *realpolitik* of regeneration' (Punch, 2014: 260).

In their discussion of the regeneration of Ballymun, Kintrea and Muir (2009) describe a lack of residents' empowerment through the regeneration as an anomaly, given the history of community development work in the area. This is attributed, in part, to a lack of trust amongst residents towards the local authority and regeneration agency and the absence of a broader forum in which all stakeholders could discuss the regeneration. Hearne and Kenna (2014: 5) are more cautious regarding the role of some community development structures, suggesting that 'corporatist approaches have created powerful networks between the state and local housing and community development organizations that leave little room for critical engagement and analysis'.

A report prepared by residents of regeneration areas in Limerick (Ballinacurra Weston Residents' Alliance, 2011) discusses participation from the perspective of communities emphasising issues around the selection of representatives for 'real' participation. It suggests that authorities can 'handpick' and 'import' residents to sit on representative fora, with a perceived lack of consultation and participation on regeneration proposals leading to disillusion. For those residents 'real' community participation requires community elections onto a

powerful local regeneration board. This is interesting when considered in the context of Tritter and McCallum's (2006: 162) critique of Arnstein's model, which they contend ignores the need to devote time and expertise to building trust, capacity and consensus with these elected representatives if they are to be effective. It is also useful to consider Cleaver's (1999: 601) contention that participation is too focused on institutionalism where the building of community structures which mirror bureaucratic structures presents a paradox, as 'part of the justification for participatory approaches is that they avoid the shortcomings of development delivered by state bureaucracies'. This view has been shared in an Irish context by Mullally (2013). Thus Cornwall's (2004) invited spaces are seemingly designed by the state to reflect what they are most familiar and comfortable with. Furthermore, Mullally (2013: 151) reminds us that participation is not just a matter of building new participative institutions, it is also about ensuring that they can effectively steer change towards sustainable development.

In 2005 Tenants First, a network of tenants and community workers, published its 'real guide' to regeneration for communities based on their negative experiences of regeneration in Dublin estates. Though it focuses on a market led Public Private Partnership model pursued by Dublin City Council, it provides insights into tenants and community workers' experiences. It emphasises the need for local decision making at the earliest possible stages in the process and a 'local agenda for regeneration' with residents taking an active role in any regeneration. Features of this identified in the guide include the community having adequate resourcing and decision-making powers, access to independent expertise, capacity building and 'proper input' into decisions (Tenants First, 2005: 6). However, the guide is unclear on how to proceed if these conditions are not met. Later, in 2009, Tenants First considered the government's progress towards sustainable communities and concluded that there had been 'no effort to pursue this objective' and called for 'a public approach to housing that puts peoples' needs, social inclusion and sustainable communities at the centre of policy and strategy' (Tenants First, 2009: 21).

A 2007 report by the Canal Communities Partnership discusses lessons from the regeneration of that part of Dublin City, including the importance of social and economic regeneration (and an effective social regeneration plan) as well as physical regeneration. This is alongside 'real' consultation, participation and community decision making supported by community capacity building to address power, skill and resource disparity between officials and communities. The report argues 'if a local authority wants to maintain progress and momentum in the development schedule, the community must be enabled to understand, develop and produce their own vision for regeneration in the first place and subsequently come to enlightened decisions on key aspects of the masterplan proposals that emerge from the process' (Canal Communities Partnership, 2007: 8). Such resources should be put in place at the very outset 'so that communities don't have to constantly approach Council with a "begging bowl"'. Discussing their experience of projects in Dublin, Brudell et al. (2004: 84) contrast the commitments regarding participation in urban regeneration policy documents and the 'shameful treatment' of community representatives on regeneration oversight structures in practice. This treatment includes a refusal by officials to recognise or address the capacity deficit representatives faced when interpreting proposals.

Treadwell Shine and Norris (2006a) produced good practice guidelines in estate regeneration for Irish local authorities. These advocate active consultation with tenants in preparing a jargon-free strategic plan for the regeneration and its implementation, while recognising that this can be a time consuming process. The guidelines argue that:

> Tenants' active involvement in estate regeneration can help to ensure more effective and more successful solutions to estate regeneration over the long term. In addition, involving tenants can help to ensure that the estate regeneration strategy fits with their priorities and promotes a sense of ownership over, and support for, the project among tenants. (Treadwell Shine and Norris, 2006a: 7).

Some policy guidance in this space may be considered paternalistic however. For example, earlier guidelines produced in conjunction with central and local government discuss tenant participation in the context of estate management where local authorities pursue tenant participation 'primarily out of a sense of service to the tenant' (Norris, 2001: 7).

Whilst the capacity of the community to participate is discussed above, it is also worth considering the perspective of agencies and officials who may also face limited resources and increased, uncoordinated, pressure for involvement. Community participation and local ownership is one of the guiding principles of the Revitalising Areas by Planning, Investment and Development (RAPID) Programme introduced in Chapter 1, which was launched in February 2001 to direct state assistance towards 51 of the most disadvantaged urban areas. Murphy and Ó Broin (2008) in their assessment of the RAPID programme in Dublin identify practical issues of participation from the official perspective—for example difficulties for staff in agencies to attend a large number of meetings in different areas or overlapping structures meaning staff 'could meet at different meetings but talking about similar themes three times in one day—as one participant observed 'we are literally tripping over ourselves'" (Murphy and Ó Broin, 2008: 18). The present status of the RAPID programme in Knocknaheeny, which has been integrated into local government community development structures, was discussed in Chapter 1.

2.5.3 Participation in regeneration for sustainable communities?

As we have seen, participation is a normative aspect of sustainable development and regeneration. To integrate these concepts this section begins by weighing the conceptualisations of sustainable development and sustainable communities and their relationship to participation in regeneration. Following this, the potential of community development to enhance participation and sustainability in regeneration is discussed.

Definitions and conceptualisations of sustainability in regeneration are fundamentally limited (Lombardi et al., 2011). It would also seem that a factor

in this is that Roseland's (2000: 104) imperative that communities must be involved in defining sustainability from a local perspective is ignored. Though sustainable development's political potency is indisputable it is a difficult, and potentially contradictory, term to define and therefore it might not be the most appropriate term for guiding regeneration policy or engaging communities.

It has been suggested that the term sustainable communities may be more meaningful. Bridger and Luloff (1999: 380) contend 'By moving to the local level, the odds of generating concrete examples of sustainable development are increased' and upon these legitimacy and acceptance can be built. This suggests that a sustainable community, such as that described by Mischen et al. (2019: 10)—e.g. one 'that engages members in self-determination governance processes resulting in the equitable provisioning of the health, educational, and material well-being among its residents while not negatively affecting future generations or other communities'—may be more suited to being a motivating, tangible aim or outcome of regeneration than sustainable development, for both residents and policy makers. In both regeneration (Winston, 2010) and sustainable development (Cuthill, 2010; Mullally, 2004), the social pillar has been neglected and perceived as less important than other aspects. Participation may have a key role in bridging this gap also.

Given their origins in case studies of Irish regeneration, MacLaran et al.'s (2007) 12 barriers to community participation in regeneration are particularly relevant. The barriers relating to the commitment of policy makers to participation, the nature and timing of participation, how resource differentials are considered and the weight given to community concerns are especially pertinent and must be overcome for the realisation of a sustainable community. Addressing these barriers would also appear to be in line with the 'inclusive', 'well run' and 'equality of opportunity' aspects of Irish policy's definition of sustainable communities (DEHLG, 2007a).

It is worth considering whether community development has potential to enable participation, overcome MacLaran et al.'s (2007) barriers while

delivering the governance envisaged in Mischen et al.'s (2019) sustainable community and other identified aspects of social sustainability such as wellbeing, equity and social justice.

Taylor (2008) identified a role for community development in comprehensive regeneration given the need to build confidence and empower residents. Cavaye and Ross (2019) have argued that, though little explored, community development should be an obvious approach to strengthening communities' resilience due to shared principles such as empowerment, collective action, inclusion and capacity building and the role of one in building the other.

When considering the role of participation in regeneration, community development practitioners (e.g. COGS, 2000) regularly begin from an 'act of faith' (Cleaver, 1999) or moral perspective (Burton et al., 2006) that people have a right to be involved in changes affecting them with other benefits secondary to this overarching principle. However, it will be equally important to consider the motivations of officials and decision makers and their attitudes to decision making as well as the wider governance context they are operating within.

It has been put forward that a focus on regeneration risks losing sight of the structural inequality roots of the economic and social problems regeneration estates face (Oatley, 2000), with Perrons and Skyers (2003) suggesting that without a commitment to more transformative change, participatory structures in regeneration may do little to address this. Community development may play a role in addressing this and building empowerment for transformative change.

The role of community development in participation in regeneration is not straightforward, though, and Cornwall (2000) identifies a challenge for community development in enabling those who take up those seats at the consultation table, while also supporting those who seek to take a more direct approach. Furthermore, Cleaver (1999: 599) has suggested that as empowerment has become a buzzword in policy, its 'radical, challenging and transformatory edge has been lost', with an 'individualization of the concept'

focusing on personal improvement which is then expected to benefit the group or community.

In another relevant consideration, Portney and Berry (2010: 122) suggest that there are many reasons to suspect that participation might actually undermine the pursuit of sustainability 'People might participate because they are angry about sustainability proposals or because they distrust their neighbors and worry about what their neighbors might come up with in the planning process. NIMBYism can also be a factor.'

The links between community development and sustainable communities have been identified somewhat in recent policy. In 2019 the Government produced *Sustainable, Inclusive and Empowered Communities: A Five-Year Strategy to Support the Community and Voluntary Sector in Ireland* (*Sustainable, Inclusive and Empowered Communities*) (Department of Rural and Community Development, 2019) building on the Department of Rural and Community Development's mission to 'promote rural and community development and to support vibrant, inclusive and sustainable communities throughout Ireland' (DRCD, 2019: 7).

Amongst the values underpinning *Sustainable, Inclusive and Empowered Communities* (DRCD, 2019: 37) are sustainable development, ('A commitment to sustainable development, including promoting cultural, environmental, economic and socially sustainable policies and practices'), empowering communities ('A commitment to empowering communities, increasing their knowledge, skills, consciousness and confidence to become critical, creative and active participants. It leads people and communities to be resilient, organised, included and influential') and active participation, defined as:

> A commitment to active participation of all stakeholders, including citizens and noncitizens. Participation is rooted in the belief that communities have the right to identify their own needs and interests and the outcomes required to meet them. Building active participation involves a recognition that policies and programmes targeted at

> communities and groups will not and cannot be effective without the meaningful participation of those communities in their design, implementation and monitoring (DCRD, 2019: 37).

How the participation principles of this, and other policy, manifest in regeneration practice and the potential role of community development approaches will be explored further in this study.

2.5.4 Participation and governance

Historically, local government has been described as the 'fountain heads of democracy' (Bryce, 1921: 21) and the key level for democracy building and citizen participation. It is where 'people usually come into contact with politicians or public officials, receive services and benefits from the state, and organise together in communities' (Lowndes, 1995: 161). However, a shift from government to governance has been identified, with a move away from traditional hierarchical decision making to more flexible and networked forms characterised as either further weakening local authorities or showing potential for local empowerment (McGuirk, 2000; Fung and Wright, 2001).

Such multi-level governance has been suggested as a new paradigm for sustainable development, particularly at local level, given the reality that its barriers and solutions cross-cut local, national and global scales (Leach et al., 2007; Ehnert et al., 2018). The concept is also relevant to participation and regeneration. Colantonio and Dixon (2011: 32) note that the community level has become central to experimental social sustainability initiatives internationally in light of the hollowing out of the state. Local authorities and the urban areas which they govern are increasingly charged with delivering sustainable development (Bulkeley and Betsill, 2005: 42) but community and city level regeneration activity is both constrained and facilitated by regional and national government with overlapping responsibilities. The capacity to influence regeneration is spread between different governance levels and regeneration also demonstrates the associated tensions, including differing ideologies, administrative capacities and entry points for citizens (Daniell and

Kay, 2017). Lowndes (2009: 95) considers that though there has been a shift to governance at local and national levels, it does not necessarily mean any increase in local autonomy. All this confirms the potential of taking a specifically multi-level governance perspective.

As Zürn et al. (2010: 1) note 'Multi-level governance has helped scholars of vastly different research traditions; methodological foci, policy interests and geographic specializations develop strikingly similar concepts when researching phenomena beyond the centralized territorial state.' Zürn et al. (2010: 4) continue to define the concept as follows: 'multi-level governance as a set of general-purpose or functional jurisdictions that enjoy some degree of autonomy within a common governance arrangement and whose actors claim to engage in an enduring interaction in pursuit of a common good.'

Callanan (2018) has discussed the multi-level governance context of Irish local government. Though regeneration is delivered locally in Ireland, the local level has little control over how it is funded and there are clear instructions on how regeneration funds are spent (with the involvement of the Housing Agency and government departments documented, for example).

Regeneration and sustainable development transcend various Government departments (e.g. social protection, housing, health, education) and levels of government (as demonstrated in the quantitative study which sampled relevant national, regional and local policy) with the interaction of economic, social and political processes across these also key (Bulkeley and Betsill, 2005). This is alongside the agencification of Irish public policy (Dukelow, 2021).

Leach et al. (2007) argue that though the concept of 'governance' itself is politicised, with origins in neoliberal New Public Management, it also opens up political processes that allow for the involvement of excluded and disadvantaged groups in policy making, confirming that it provides a suitable lens to examine the issues of this study and one which allows examination of the entire policy making and implementation process, rather than just the formal legislative and constitutional arrangements (Tortola, 2017).

Marvin and Guy (1997: 312) have warned that the emphasis on the local level 'as a socio-spatial container in which the sum of institutional, social and physical relations necessary to achieve a more sustainable future can be found' risks creating 'a "black box", disconnected from the global, international and national contexts within which localities are framed.' Clearly, the international and national context remains essential and underlines the importance of ensuring that regeneration governance arrangements retain a multi-level perspective. Normative arguments for participation also necessitate such a perspective, with Meadowcroft (2007: 161) suggesting 'various social sectors, strata and organizations must be involved because the knowledge required to establish pathways to sustainability is dispersed throughout society'. Problematising this shift, Perrons and Skyers (2003: 278) raise the possibility that extending governance like this may in fact 'weaken local democracy by prioritizing the interests of those who have the time or inclination to be involved'. Indeed, Hearne and Kenna (2014) have warned that to date local housing decision making has been dominated by corporatist special interests.

An emerging field is also relevant to the concepts discussed in this chapter. Sustainability transitions' research is multidisciplinary and 'comprises a large variety of approaches and perspectives that in different ways have furthered insight into the persistency of unsustainable societal regimes and possible transition pathways and transition management strategies to escape lock-in' (Loorbach et al., 2017: 601). Therefore, it is relevant to communities transitioning from (perceived) unsustainability towards a more sustainable state by regeneration. Such transitions are disruptive but empowering actors through visioning and participatory processes, while allowing for experimentation and learning, can build consensus around transition pathways towards sustainability. Loorbach et al. (2017: 614) highlight that given 'transitions are complex and unstructured processes of change, a process of learning-by-doing and doing-by-learning is the only way to adapt, change, and transform existing dominant cultures, structures, and practices.' This echoes Sneddon et al.'s (2006) call for dialogue and a plurality of approaches in a

politics of sustainability. McNutt and Rayner (2014) note that reflexive governance has emerged as a key idea in the literature on sustainability transitions. The transition to sustainability implies the shift from government to governance (Beck, 2006; Grin 2006) which should embrace epistemological and ontological pluralism (Sol et al., 2018) and reflexive governance allows for this.

Meadowcroft and Steurer (2014: 5) contend that 'Sustainability is perhaps the quintessential terrain of reflexive governance' while Gottschick (2018) describes reflexive governance as a promising approach to addressing sustainable development challenges and it has emerged as a key ideal in sustainability transitions and operationalising sustainable development (Hendriks and Grin, 2007; Meadowcroft, 2007; Voß et al. 2006). Meadowcroft and Steurer (2013:7) argue that 'because policy-relevant knowledge is increasingly dispersed among different societal actors…the quest for reflexivity is closely related to the principle of participation', and also, it is argued, multi-level governance. For Voß and Kemp (2006) reflexive governance is two fold, both reflecting the need for changed governance for sustainability and also strategies, processes and institutions which engage in reflexivity as part of this.

Social learning can be said to range from lower-order learning to higher-order learning, described also as extending from single-loop learning (learning about the consequences of specific actions), to double-loop learning (learning about the assumptions underlying actions), to multi-loop learning (learning that challenges the values and norms that underpin our assumptions and actions) (Fernandez-Gimenez et al., 2008; Medema et al., 2014). Reflexive governance requires multi-loop learning and higher-order reflexivity, where underlying values, norms, paradigms and structural constraints are challenged, rather than the process or project orientated lower orders (Pahl-Wostl, 2009; McNutt and Rayner, 2014). Such learning is increasingly seen as crucial to sustainability (Medema, 2014).

Hendriks and Grin (2007: 334-335) recognise that reflexive governance 'is not an easy term to pin down' though there are some dimensions and features specified in the literature. Feindt and Weiland (2018: 665) suggest that reflexive governance occurs where four tests are met, namely: arrangements involve actors from various levels of governance and backgrounds; who reflect on and possibly adapt their cognitive and normative beliefs; in ways that take into account and acknowledge alternative understandings of the problems; in an attempt to integrate multiple approaches to problem solution. Hendriks and Grin (2007: 334) describe three features of reflexive governance: First, it demands that they reflect on how their frames, structures and patterns of action contribute to persistent problems (Voß and Kemp, 2006). Actors are also encouraged to loosen their grip on the desire 'to control' problems in the way that classical modernity prescribes (Beck et al., 2003; Grin, 2006). Thirdly, reflexive governance requires innovative and strategic thinking to fundamentally transform existing practices and structures (Loorbach and Rotmans, 2006). Ersoy and Hall (2020) identify their three defining features of reflexive governance as follows: equivalence afforded to process and outcome; a practice of continuous 'learning by doing' that valorises multiple forms of knowledge, scientific, political, quotidian; and, an ongoing process of organisational adaptation in response to this exercise in institutional learning.

In summary, reflexive governance with high levels of autonomy, self-determination and interaction which accept uncertainty and difference and the 'continuous reconsideration of the practices, structures and outcomes of governance' is necessary to shift away from weak, managerial sustainable development and rather engage with it as a 'wicked problem' (Hendriks and Grin, 2007: 334; Sol et al., 2018: 1384). Reflexive governance considers open-endedness and the inclusion of multiple disciplines and worldviews in decision making as a necessary step to part with business as usual and achieve sustainability (Voß and Kemp, 2006; Hendriks and Grin, 2007; Voß and Bornemann, 2011; Feindt and Weiland, 2018). The potential roles of multi-level

governance and reflexive governance in regeneration are developed further in Chapter 6.

2.6 Chapter conclusion

This chapter has provided a critical review of regeneration, sustainable development and participation literature, setting out the study's broad conceptual and theoretical context. To address both their parallels and underdeveloped conceptual interface, the chapter elaborated various intersections of regeneration, sustainable development and participation.

Regeneration is at the centre of this study, and therefore a strong foundation in regeneration theory and practice, including its socioeconomic rationale and critiques such as its potential to individualise disadvantage and mask structural inequalities, is required. In developing this, the entrepreneurial, and housing and built environment focused scope of regeneration policy and practice in Ireland was demonstrated. Similarly, the political attractiveness but practical ambiguity of sustainable development and sustainable communities internationally and in Ireland was explored. This included consideration of these terms' potential to either holistically address hitherto discrete social, economic, environmental, and institutional challenges or further obfuscate action by accepting prevailing market led norms and values in regeneration. Participation was unpacked, utilising a variety of typologies from both community and policy making perspectives. It confirms the benefits (both procedural and substantive) of participation in programmes such as regeneration, while examining its criticisms on legitimation and complexity grounds. MacLaran et al.'s (2007) barriers to community participation were identified as particularly useful in an Irish context and these will be revisited in Chapter 6.

The potential of community development to integrate the concepts, along with the possibility of focusing on the concept of sustainable community rather than sustainable development, was considered. Also, the opportunities for an

institutional perspective across the three concepts utilising a multi-level governance lens or reflexive governance lens, was discussed.

Therefore, this chapter engaged critically with the relevant literature, policy and practice. The next chapter seeks to provide a methodology which allows for the exploration of sustainable development and participation in a regeneration project.

Chapter 3. Methodology

3.1 Chapter introduction

This thesis seeks to explore how the concepts of sustainable development and participation have influenced regeneration policy and practice. To do this, the researcher utilised a mixed methods methodology, applying both qualitative (thematic analysis of interview and focus group data) and quantitative (content analysis of policy documents) approaches to the case of the regeneration of Knocknaheeny, Cork. This chapter explains and justifies the research design employed. It begins by relating the thesis's research questions to the methods used and explaining the rationale for the case study approach taken.

Research paradigms influence research design and philosophical assumptions, direct data collection, analysis, and the mixing of quantitative and qualitative approaches (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2007: 5). Given this, the researcher's positionality is explained in Section 3.3. The chapter then provides more detail on the exploratory sequential mixed methods design chosen. Schoonenboom and Johnson (2017: 12) note a design classification label such as this can never replace 'an accurate description of what was done in the research study, so the reader will know exactly how the study was conducted.' Therefore, such a description is provided for the qualitative and quantitative studies in turn.

Bryman (2012) suggests several criteria for assessing the quality of social research, acknowledging that they may manifest themselves differently in quantitative and qualitative research. These criteria include reliability (whether the results of a study are repeatable, i.e. their dependability), replicability (requiring the researcher to set out their procedures in detail and their objectivity), and validity (concerned with the integrity of the conclusions that are generated from the research, including their credibility, transferability and 'ecological validity' where it reflects the experience of people in their everyday lives). Such considerations have guided the research design described below.

3.2 Research design

Research design explains in detail how the data is going to be collected and analysed (Bryman, 2012). This section begins by describing the research questions. It then discusses the appropriateness of the mixed methods case study design chosen to answer them.

3.2.1 Research questions

This thesis's primary objective is to explore how the concepts of sustainable development and participation are understood and have influenced regeneration policy and practice and if opportunities to further integrate them may exist, thus furthering the conceptual development of these three concepts by relating them to each other. To achieve this, the regeneration of Knocknaheeny, Cork is used as a case study.

The thesis asks the following four research questions:

- Firstly, how do actors in the regeneration programme conceptualise sustainable development? How do these understandings relate to each other and how have they been applied?
- Secondly, has Irish policy from national to local level defined 'sustainable development', 'participation' and related terms with sufficient rigour to support a shared understanding and consistent use in the regeneration of Knocknaheeny?
- Thirdly, are there specific barriers to community participation in the Knocknaheeny regeneration?
- Finally, learning from the case study what strategies or instruments can integrate participation and sustainability in regeneration?

This study is intended to be both evaluative (appraising current policy and practice) and generative (identifying strategies for how regeneration might engage with sustainable development and participation in the future). To achieve this a mixed methods approach was adopted. Feilzer (2010) and Morgan (2007) have discussed the potential for mixed methods research in pragmatic

social research, while Bryman (2012) warns that mixed methods research is not inherently superior to solely quantitative or qualitative research and should only be used if it advances the research question. Here, the rationale for integrating qualitative and quantitative methods is briefly related to the research objective and questions. The features, advantages and disadvantages of mixed methods research are discussed further in the following section.

Maginn (2006) argues that the recent turn to community, social exclusion, partnership and participation in regeneration points to a clear role for qualitative research in a thesis such as this. Given this, it is the principal method used. As the thesis is a case study, it is appropriate that the individual and their experiences should be used in the research and this also points to qualitative methods. These experiences are particularly relevant to the first and third research questions.

As the questions concern the use of concepts and terms, quantitative content analysis was considered appropriate. A relevant concept in content analysis is habitualisation (Krippendorff, 2004: 69), where repetition of terms or concepts and the narrowing of choices from the absence of mention of alternative ways of being or doing things may reinforce institutional power and, potentially, structural inequalities. The quantitative study adopted here allows us to consider issues of habitualisation in policy.

The policy aspects of this research give rise to specific methodological considerations. Browne et al. (2019) suggest three orientations to policy research. These are 'traditional' (quantitatively focused) research; 'mainstream' (policy process focused) research, and; 'interpretive' research which considers the social construction of policy. This thesis reflects an interpretative orientation, considering issues of institutional understandings and interpretations. A mixed methods approach is suitable for this.

Sabatier (1999) discusses the complexity of policy processes which extend from the interaction of legislation and national policy across policy domains to its implementation across a range of actors and levels of government and the

methodology must reflect this. This requires multiple levels of analysis (Ostrom, 1999) and consideration of central and local relationships in the case of regeneration in Ireland. To achieve this Hupe and Hill's (2006) Multiple Governance Framework and its three action levels of governance is useful. This moves from the overarching 'constitutive' governance action level, to content orientated 'directive' governance, to 'operational' process orientated governance. These build on Parsons' (1995) meso, decision and delivery stages of policy and Ostrom's (1999) constitutional, collective choice and operational levels. In Ireland, the structural problem definition and agenda setting facets of regeneration, participation and sustainability may be said to be constitutive. Regeneration, participation and sustainable development policy and legislation may be said to be directive, while the implementation of regeneration policy at the local level and ensuring sustainable development and participation is operational. The research questions address constitutive, directive and operational governance, considering how important matters are conceptualised, addressed in national policy, and implemented at local level.

In summary, the qualitative element will develop our understanding of the experience of regeneration in practice and identify barriers and opportunities from the perspective of policy makers and the community. The quantitative aspect will help determine how these map onto policy.

3.2.2 Why mixed methods?

While there is no universal definition of mixed methods research, Creswell and Creswell (2018) have outlined its characteristics—including that it involves the collection of both qualitative and quantitative data, includes the rigorous methods of both and that the two forms of data are integrated in a distinct mixed methods design. Bryman (2012: 628) describes the term mixed methods research 'as a simple shorthand to stand for research that integrates quantitative and qualitative research within a single project' that allows the researcher draw upon already well-established research methodologies.

In this thesis, qualitative thematic analysis of semi-structured interview and focus group data is mixed with quantitative content analysis data. The

quantitative study followed the qualitative study, with the documents and codes selected for content analysis informed by the qualitative data as well as the literature review and theory. Mixing methods has a number of purposes, including credibility, illustration and enhancement, which are relevant here (Bryman, 2012), though for Schoonenboom and Johnson (2017) the term mixing is a misnomer as the components have to be integrated carefully rather than simply 'mixed'.

The adoption of mixed methods implies that different methodologies have different uses, advantages and weaknesses. As Ivankova et al. (2006: 3) succinctly put it 'The rationale for mixing both kinds of data within one study is grounded in the fact that neither quantitative nor qualitative methods are sufficient, by themselves, to capture the trends and details of a situation.' In their work, Parmelee et al. (2007: 196) state 'the qualitative and quantitative methods were integrated in a way so that each could shore up the weaknesses of the other, as well as provide confirmation and elaboration'. This section explains why neither method alone was considered sufficient to address the research questions, the merits of the mixed methods approach, and also its weaknesses that the research seeks to avoid.

A criticism of quantitative research articulated by Bryman (2012: 179) is that it relies too much on instruments and procedures and thus 'hinders the connection between research and everyday life'. The use of qualitative methods is seen as a way to address this in this thesis. Here, it is considered that both approaches provide a distinctive form of evidence that together can inform and illustrate policy and practice (Ritchie, 2003: 38). This accords with Johnson et al.'s (2007) view that the addition of quantitative data and approaches are likely to benefit most qualitative dominant research projects. With these insights, the researcher concluded that neither a quantitative nor a qualitative approach alone would allow adequate consideration of the issues in question. Bryman (2012: 646-647) recognises a 'utility' argument for mixing methods, quoting one researcher as saying mixed methods is a way to generate data that can allow the

researcher to speak to both policy and academic audiences. This is relevant to this study's aims and objectives.

The research questions have a strong policy element and also explore the potential for policy change and, therefore, might be considered to have an 'official' audience. Quantitative approaches are more prevalent in policy analysis, with Morçöl and Ivanova (2010: 259, citing Stone, 2002) attributing this to the following: 'Powerful political actors use numbers to bolster their authorities, create illusions, and elicit desired outcomes.' Maginn (2006) suggests that the lack of a clear definition and paradigm 'wars' within qualitative research are major reasons some urban policy makers are 'methodological conservatives', uncertain about qualitative approaches, despite the fact that its 'applied' role means it can contribute to policymaking and evaluation. Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004: 20) suggest that qualitative research 'may have lower credibility with some administrators and commissioners of programs'. This is, however, disputed by Maxwell (2020), who highlights the importance of local context in the effectiveness or otherwise of public policies or programmes, finding that qualitative research is necessary to ensure policy is truly evidence based and takes into account context.

It has been suggested that the mixing of qualitative and quantitative methods provides 'triangulation' and a means to verify or validate qualitative evidence (Schoonenboom and Johnson, 2017). However, in this thesis it is considered that the primary value of triangulation lies in extending understanding by including other perspectives. Or, in the words of Ritchie (2003: 55) 'the "security" that triangulation provides is through giving a fuller picture of phenomena, not necessarily a more certain one'.

It must be acknowledged that there is debate about whether qualitative and quantitative approaches can be, or indeed should be, combined. If mixing methods the researcher must be clear on the purpose and what each brings to the study rather than just attempting to fuse the results (Ritchie, 2003: 38). However, the terms qualitative and quantitative are themselves debated (e.g. Morçöl and Ivanova, 2010), with Morgan (2018: 277) arguing that there are

blurry boundaries between them. Both are concerned with data reduction, answering research questions, relating data analysis to the literature and transparency (Bryman, 2012). Sechrest and Sidani (1995: 78) highlight that both methodologies 'describe their data, construct explanatory arguments from their data, and speculate about why the outcomes they observed happened as they did.' Similarly, Punch (2005) and Blaxter et al. (2010) suggest the differences between qualitative and quantitative research can be exaggerated and it is difficult to imagine research that is wholly quantitative or wholly qualitative. The explicit combination of approaches in mixed methods research addresses such critiques.

Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004: 15) argue against methodological or epistemological purism, contending that when selecting their research approach, researchers need to ask which is most helpful and how they can be mixed for the most effective research. They promote ecumenicalism where 'qualitative researchers should be free to use quantitative methods, and quantitative researchers should be free to use qualitative methods' (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004: 15) and this pragmatism is reflected in this thesis. This is discussed further in Section 3.5 below.

When designing a mixed method study, issues to consider include the priority given to the quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis in the study, their sequencing, and how and when the results are integrated (Creswell, 2014). This is explained further in Section 3.3 below, which details the exploratory sequential design used.

Bryman (2012: 68) notes 'case studies are frequently sites for the employment of both quantitative and qualitative research' and the next section discusses the case study approach further.

3.2.3 .Case study approach and selection

This thesis takes a basic case study design entailing 'detailed and intensive analysis of a single case' (Bryman, 2012: 66). Lombardi et al. (2011: 275) consider that if debates over sustainable development focus on the interpretation of the

term 'analyses of how sustainability is made 'real' in policy—and decision-making settings become crucial.' This thesis explores how terms like sustainable development are 'made real' using the regeneration of Knocknaheeny, Cork, as a case study.

Merriam (1998: 27) suggests that the defining characteristic of case study research is in the case as 'a thing, a single entity, a unit around which there are boundaries' allowing the researcher to 'fence in' what they are going to study. Given their spatial and temporal bounds Muir and Rhodes (2008) also recognise the suitability of Irish regeneration projects for case study research. The regeneration of Knocknaheeny allows this, being bound by geography but also time.

Case study approaches may be particularly suitable in a mixed method setting as 'The case study's unique strength is its ability to deal with a full variety of evidence—documents, artefacts, interviews, and observations.' (Yin, 2003: 8). In case study research quantitative data 'can keep the researcher from being blinded by vivid but potentially misleading impressions presented in the form of qualitative data' (Dooley, 2002: 345).

Yin (1994) noted that case studies can be used for theory testing or theory building. The research questions require both an idiographic approach, focusing on explaining the case's unique features, and a nomothetic one, concerned with generating statements regarding regeneration that may apply regardless of time and place (Bryman, 2012: 69). This is achieved through the mixing of methods.

Limitations to the case study method have been identified, notably the caveat that they can sometimes provide little basis for generalisation (Yin, 2003), and single case studies such as this must pay particular attention to methodological robustness and external validity. Yin (1994) also contends that case study teaching (where case studies provide colour but are not rigorously designed) is often misinterpreted as case study research, leading to unfair criticisms of bias and interpretation.

Onghena et al. (2019) consider that a single case study with a robust research design and the application of mixed methods can address concerns regarding validity and trustworthiness, borrowing 'strength from both quantitative and qualitative research traditions to build a convincing case' (Ibid.: 473). The exploratory sequential mixed methods design selected here fundamentally relates to generalisability (Schoonenboom and Johnson, 2017), with the qualitative data tested and generalised against regional, national and local policy documents through the quantitative component. Bryman (2012) also considers that generalisation from case study can occur by drawing on findings from comparable cases—how the findings of this research relate to other national and international regeneration cases (and other research regarding Knocknaheeny) is developed in Chapter 5.

Furthermore, Onghena et al. (2019) confirm that a single case study such as this can produce answers to specific research questions concerning the case (i.e. research questions one, two and three) as well as allowing for theory testing or theory building (relevant to research question four). Indeed, for Bryman (2012: 71) how case studies test or generate theory may be more crucial than their generalisability.

Yin (2003) highlighted five essential elements of a case study design, comprising its questions; its proposition, if any; its unit(s) of analysis; the logic linking the data to the propositions; and the criteria for interpreting the findings. Considering these together will ensure the rigour, validity and reliability of the study. These echo the criteria Dooley (2002) set out to ensure the methodological rigour, validity, and reliability of case study research, including *inter alia*, careful selection of data collection tools, close consideration of the positionality of the researcher, systematic and comprehensive data collection and clear and complete reporting (Dooley, 2002: 338-344). Taken together, this chapter documents the measures I have taken to meet such tests. The final part of this section now outlines why the regeneration of Knocknaheeny was chosen as the case study.

Di Palma (1970: 200) noted 'the more a person feels disaffected from the polity or the more he presents socio-demographic characteristics of low prestige, the less he participates'. In Ireland, regeneration has been an area-based policy response to substandard housing, social exclusion and deprivation. The Knocknaheeny case study was chosen as a typical example selected from the broader category of 'socially deprived' areas undergoing regeneration in Ireland and thus 'provides an apt context for the working-through of…research questions' (Bryman, 2012: 70).

The need to avoid overgeneralisation is essential in a single case study such as this is acknowledged and case selection was considered carefully, with Knocknaheeny not atypical of estate regeneration projects in Ireland. Knocknaheeny is one of the regeneration projects in Dublin, Cork and Limerick, Tralee, Sligo and Dundalk funded under the National Regeneration Programme. Though each project under the programme is to be 'carefully tailored to the needs of local communities' they 'typically move through a number of major phases from master-planning, through demolition, construction and tenanting' (Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government, 2018: 13). Therefore, Knocknaheeny's experience of these 'typical' phases is also likely of relevance to residents, local authorities, agencies and other stakeholders in the other projects under the programme. While there may be some variations in regeneration implementation vehicles, for example, some have been delivered through dedicated agencies and others been delivered through the local authority or involved PPPs, regeneration in Ireland occurs within the same policy and funding framework and governance context (as discussed in Chapter 1), with overlapping statutory actors. Thus, the findings arising from this case study are likely to be applicable to other regeneration projects in Ireland.

Knocknaheeny is consistently shown as one of the most disadvantaged electoral divisions in Cork City. Describing Knocknaheeny, O'Connell et al. (2015: 25) state that in addition to substandard dwellings 'the socio-economic profile of the estate is now marked by high levels of unemployment, lone parenthood, poverty and, in comparison with the rest of Cork City, low levels of educational

attainment and a low rate of tenant purchase.' In response, the *Cork City North West Regeneration: Masterplan and Implementation Report* ('the regeneration masterplan') for the area was prepared by the National Building Agency/Housing Agency on behalf of Cork City Council and adopted by the Council in 2011.[13] It replaced an earlier regeneration programme. The thesis focuses on the period since the 2011 masterplan was prepared. Detailed information on Knocknaheeny and the regeneration has been presented in Chapter 1.

3.3 Stance of the researcher

> Any problem of scientific inquiry that does not grow out of actual (or 'practical') social conditions is factitious; it is arbitrarily set by the inquirer instead of being objectively produced and controlled. All the techniques of observation employed in the advanced sciences may be conformed to, including the use of the best statistical methods to calculate probable errors, etc., and yet the material ascertained be scientifically 'dead,' i.e., irrelevant to a genuine issue, so that concern with it is hardly more than a form of intellectual busy work. (Dewey, 1938: 499)

Bryman (2012: 39) notes that in conducting social research there are 'numerous points at which bias and the intrusion of values can occur' while Robert and Zeckhauser (2011) state that in analysing policy the orientation of the policy analyst is relevant. Given this, I want to be clear on my own positionality in this section.

The research adopts a pragmatic perspective. Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004: 17) summarise the classical pragmaticism expounded by James, Dewey and Pierce succinctly: 'In short, when judging ideas we should consider their empirical and practical consequences'. Many of the general characteristics of

[13] The Housing Agency was incorporated as the Housing and Sustainable Communities Limited in 2010 and established on a statutory basis under the under the Housing and Sustainable Communities Agency (Establishment) Order 2012. The National Building Agency (formed in 1960) was wound down and some of its workload was transferred to the Housing Agency together with a number of National Building Agency staff. The Agency provided technical support for the preparation of the Knocknaheeny Masterplan and Implementation Report.

pragmatism accord with my worldview, such as its endorsement of fallibilism, praxis, eclecticism and pluralism and preference for action over philosophising (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Pragmatism as a research paradigm may 'bridge the gap between the scientific method and structuralist orientation of older approaches and the naturalistic methods and freewheeling orientation of newer approaches' (Kaushik and Walsh, 2019: 2).

According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), in such a paradigm or worldview researchers choose the methods, techniques, and procedures that best meet their research needs and purposes, using both quantitative and qualitative data as required to provide the best understanding of a research problem, while agreeing that research always occurs in social, historical, political, and other contexts and cannot be separated from past experiences. Pragmatism contends that knowledge is always based on experience and is typically associated with mixed methods research and abductive reasoning, creating both data and theories (Morgan, 2007; Creswell and Plano Clark, 2011; Kaushik and Walsh, 2019).

For Bryman (2012: 401) 'The crucial step in abduction is that having described and understood the world from his or her participants' perspectives, the researcher must come to a social scientific account of the social world as seen from those perspectives'. This thesis adopts an abductive approach, where the research builds a theoretical understanding from the literature and qualitative perspectives of those studied, supplemented by quantitative data.

According to Kaushik and Walsh (2019: 4) pragmatism orients itself toward solving practical problems in the real world and is favoured by more practical minded researchers. Goles and Hirschheim (2000) agree, suggesting that the key issue for pragmatists is that a methodology is useful and instrumental in producing desired or anticipated results. This practical and outcome-based orientation chimes with this researcher and a strong argument for a pragmatist adopting mixed methods is the significance that pragmatism gives to the research objective and the opportunity mixing methods provides to answer it through different approaches (Bryman, 2012).

Researchers must consider the criticisms of pragmatism and be reflexive to address them in their work (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Johnson and Onwuegbuzie's (2004: 19) argument that pragmatism promotes incremental change rather than more fundamental, structural, or revolutionary change in society and its tendency to promote problem-focused applied research over knowledge-focused basic research is pertinent to this thesis. Kaushik and Walsh (2019: 7), echoing Thompson (1996), query the problem-centred nature of pragmatism and the risk that 'someone who is a member of a dominant social group and who benefits from structural inequality would not necessarily consider hegemonic power structures as problematic and worthy of inquiry'.

Countering such possibilities in the thesis required careful consideration of the research questions. For example, if the research objective for this study was framed as 'why do the residents of Knocknaheeny not participate if they want to make it a sustainable community after regeneration?' the problem becomes the residents or what can be done to encourage them to participate but the conditions themselves surrounding the regeneration or beliefs around the concepts of sustainability, participation etc. would not be analysed. The inclusion of interviews with a number of residents and also community and regeneration advocates and researchers in the qualitative research is another way the researcher sought to address this risk. I also sought gender balance as much as was feasible to avoid gendered assumptions (ultimately, 36% of the interviews were with women). In light of the above criticism, it is essential to highlight the strong link between pragmatism and social justice advocacy (Morgan, 2014). This is because of pragmatism's 'action-oriented process of inquiry which is based on democratic values and commitment to progress' (Kaushik and Walsh, 2019: 11).

For Creswell (2014: 21) the mixed methods researcher is an individual familiar with both quantitative and qualitative research. This benefits from my training in political science and spatial planning, and career experience in community development and policy settings in the third sector and public and civil service. I am not from Knocknaheeny but my learning about the area began during my

spatial planning studies and deepened when I represented a previous employer on the steering group of an interagency, community based youth employment programme (Project ReFocus) with links to the study area.

It is true that when researching another community, we can never truly understand what it is like to be part of that community unless we were born into it (England, 1994) leading to the thorny question 'given the inevitability of unequal power relations in fieldwork, should we even be doing this research at all' (England, 1994: 250). I was also mindful of Wasserfall's (1993:2341) instruction that researchers 'cannot pretend to present fully their informants' voices and have to take responsibility for their intrusions both in their informants' lives and the representation of those lives'. At all times I sought to demonstrate the fieldwork skills identified by Lewis (2003: 66): 'having empathy and respect for participants, being reflective about participants' social worlds as well as one's own, and being able to listen and understand.'

There are several steps to get individuals to participate in research. Two approaches were required to complete this thesis—one aimed at policy makers, agencies and external regeneration/community researchers and practitioners, which began by approaching existing professional contacts directly, the other at residents themselves which required intermediaries. However, both required being clear about the research objectives and how findings were to be used and receiving their informed consent. 'Cross-perception' between participant and researcher of their background and affinity is also relevant (Lewis, 2003: 65). Given my background, I may have been considered an 'insider' by some policy makers, which may have made access to them easier.

When initially making contact with community workers and residents to set up interviews I was told more than once that the community had been 'picked up' by researchers and then 'dropped' once they had the data they needed and the community never saw them again or their findings. This has been a significant motivator to complete the thesis (and appropriately disseminate its findings). Further ethical considerations regarding the conduct of the qualitative research, in particular, are discussed in Section 3.5.5.

Finally, this researcher could also relate to Mellor's (2001) account of 'the untidy realities of research' and the messiness of data analysis (with the errors, blind alleys and uncertainty it entails), including where the writing up process itself is part of the exploration of data and generation of ideas. The approach here is also guided by Mellor's (2001: 477-478) observation that the researcher has some 'duty to attempt to make what we write as accessible as possible' and that where there may be a practitioner or community audience it is beneficial to communicate findings 'in a form they may be more ready to access, to aid the search for relatability' while meeting the requirements of academic rigour.

3.4 Exploratory sequential mixed methods design

When mixing methods, two early decisions are required—the priority decision (which is the principal method to be used) and the sequence decision (is the qualitative or quantitative data collected first). There are convergent, sequential or complex mixed methods research designs (Creswell and Creswell, 2018). Morse and Niehaus (2009: 28) suggest that it is important to be clear on the priority and sequencing, as a quantitatively-driven study will have a deductive theoretical drive, and a qualitatively-driven study will have an inductive theoretical drive.

To help the researcher identify and place the components and better represent more complex mixed method research designs, Creswell and Creswell (2018) recommend setting out the design using a notation system. Morse and Niehaus (2009, after Morse, 1991) suggest a notation system where 'qual' denotes qualitative, 'quan' denotes quantitative, a plus sign denotes concurrent, an arrow denotes sequential, capital letters denote high priority, and lower case letters denote lower priority.

The qualitative component of this study includes interviews (the core component) followed by one focus group (a supplemental qualitative component) followed by supplemental quantitative content analysis so it can be presented as follows, adopting Morse and Niehaus's (2009:29) notation:

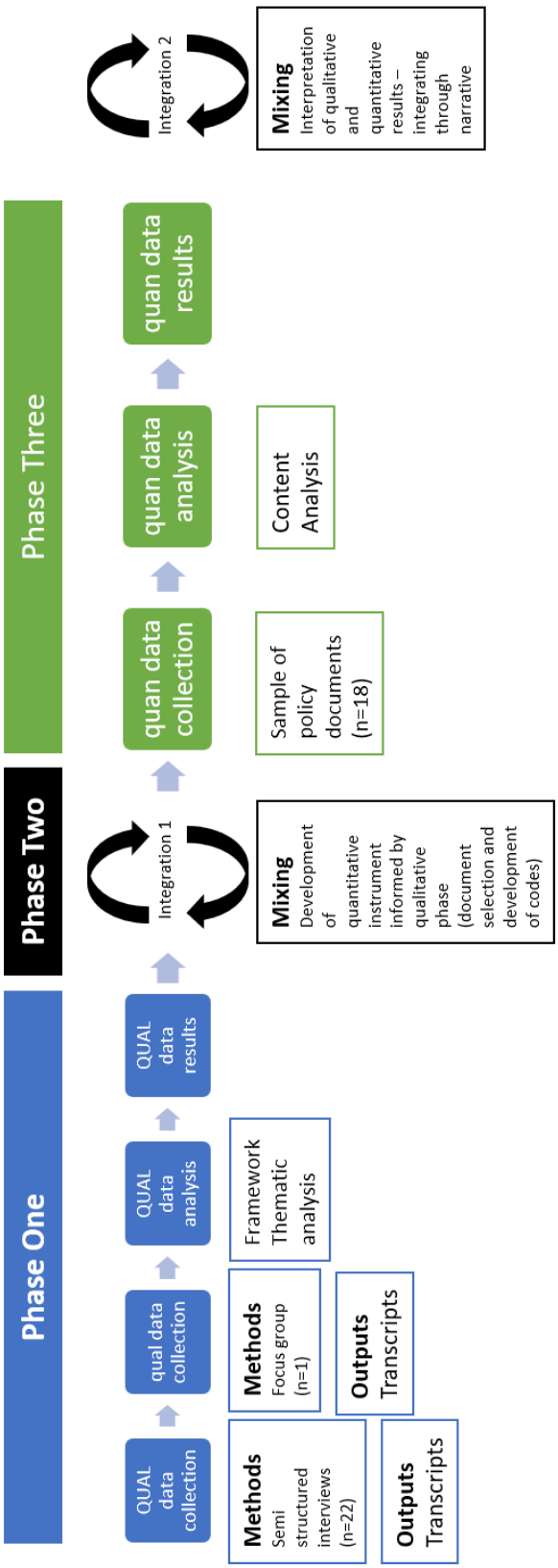
$$(\text{QUAL} \rightarrow \text{qual}) \rightarrow \text{quan}$$

Building on this notation, the mixed methods research design utilised in this thesis is a three-phase exploratory sequential one (Creswell and Creswell, 2018: 218), beginning with a qualitative research phase, the results of which are built into an instrument (in this case content analysis) for the subsequent, quantitative phase to further explore the research problem (Berman, 2017: 6). Data collection occurred at two points, the initial qualitative interviews and focus group and then the quantitative content analysis of policy documents. The exploratory sequential design was chosen to give the most prominence to the rich qualitative data. Figure 3.1 below illustrates the design.

Lalor et al. (2013) have discussed the use of case study within such a design, finding such a design to be a flexible and powerful research strategy, allowing the use of multiple data collection methods from both qualitative and quantitative paradigms.

The research was designed cognisant of Morgan's (2018: 276) remark that categorising mixed method study designs risks a 'cookie-cutter mentality where one's work has to fit within some predetermined set of options.' Given this, it could also perhaps be considered as a mixed methods case study design, with the exploratory sequential design used within the framework of a single case study design (Creswell and Creswell, 2018: 230).

Figure 3.1 Exploratory sequential mixed methods design of study



In this thesis, the qualitative step informed the interrogation of the quantitative data and helped ascertain to what extent the policy documents are reflective of the key themes emerging from literature and the experience of regeneration. In an initial preparatory step, desk-based research was conducted to identify potential interviewees and gain initial impressions of key policy documents, newspaper articles etc. regarding the case study. This helped inform the design used.

Creswell and Creswell (2018: 239) also give a practical reason for the single researcher to pursue a sequential design—it allows the research process to be divided into manageable tasks rather than juggling multiple data collection analysis procedures. For Creswell (2014:16) 'Particular challenges to this design reside in focusing in on the appropriate qualitative findings to use and the sample selection for both phases of research.' This is considered further in the next section.

3.4.1 Integration of methods

The existence of qualitative or quantitative methods alone is not sufficient to call a study mixed methods, instead it is the integration or mixing of data from the two approaches that defines mixed methods (Creswell and Creswell, 2018). 'Determining where the point of integration will be, and how the results will be integrated, is an important, if not the most important, decision in the design of mixed methods research' according to Schoonenboom and Johnson (2017: 115). Integration can happen at multiple levels of a study (i.e. at design level, methods level, or interpretation/reporting level) and can happen in a variety of different ways (Fetters et al., 2013).

In this study, the first linking of data happened at the design level with the use of an exploratory sequential design, where the results from the first, qualitative phase, of the research were used to inform the second, quantitative, stage of the research design. The quantitative study was guided by the preceding qualitative study in two ways—in document selection and coding scheme development.

The second linking of data is at the interpretation and reporting level. In this thesis an 'integrating through narrative' approach was taken, first contiguously with the quantitative findings reported in one chapter and the qualitative findings in another and then through 'weaving' in a single integrative discussion chapter for a more complete understanding (Fetters et al., 2013). In keeping with the tendency for qualitative research to feature rich 'thick descriptions' to contextualise the research compared to quantitative research (Bryman, 2012: 401), and also their priority within the research design, the qualitative chapter is longer than the quantitative one. This two-part mixing also reflects the view that the data derived from mixed methods research 'should be mutually illuminating' (Bryman, 2012: 628).

The following sections discuss the qualitative and quantitative research conducted in more detail.

3.5 Qualitative study

While this study is described as mixed methods because of the combination of qualitative and quantitative methods, it also uses more than one type of qualitative technique (i.e. both interviews and focus group) and the thematic analysis of this data. There are advantages to mixing qualitative approaches.

Rubin and Rubin (1995) explained that the use of interviews allows a researcher to build ideas in areas where existing research may be limited. Lewis (2003: 61) noted that 'Focus groups could be used after in-depth interviews to discuss the issues at a more strategic level, perhaps focusing on underlying causes and possible solutions'. This is how qualitative approaches have been mixed in this study, with semi-structured interviews followed by a focus group. Yin (2003), Bryman (2012) and others establish the validity of such an approach.

The interviews and focus group were taped and transcribed, generating a large body of qualitative data for analysis. Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004: 16) warn that qualitative researchers sometimes do not provide an adequate rationale for how they interpreted and analysed their data. Thematic analysis is one of the most common approaches to qualitative data analysis but Bryman (2012: 581)

warns that there is an 'absence of a great deal of codification of its core procedures'. This section sets out the procedures I followed but it is considered that the mixed method approach also strengthens the overall research against such criticisms.

3.5.1 Selection strategy

Vasileiou et al. (2018) argue that transparency in the number of respondents, the selection strategy and any limitations is key in qualitative research. Purposive sampling was used iteratively to identify those approached to participate in the interviews. A purposive sample relates to the selection of interviewees who are expected to have detailed knowledge and experiences about the subject of inquiry (Bryman, 2012).

To start, I identified individuals or organisations working in the area and also spoke to existing contacts. Some of these people were interviewed subsequently or they recommended interviewees. Also, the regeneration masterplan (Cork City Council, 2011) was consulted as it contains a list of service providers and agencies in the area who it may have been appropriate to interview. The inclusion of agencies reflects the agencification in Irish social policy from the 1990s, with a diverse field of government bodies and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) assuming (sometimes overlapping) policy implementation and analysis, though these experienced cuts following the 2008 economic crisis (Dukelow, 2021).

Furthermore, snowball (or network) sampling was used with interviewees asked 'is there anyone else you think I should talk to?' at the end of each interview. I considered this particularly important to access residents or identify policy makers and officials with a particularly strong relevance who I may have missed. This snowball approach to sampling should result in most, if not all, relevant stakeholders being identified (Clarke and Clegg, 1998).

Regarding Cork City Council, the sample sought to include members of staff in a range of relevant functions and across grades. It involved those in the Council's community and regeneration work in the area, representatives of the

Council's Economic Development and Planning Directorates (including at senior levels) and the elected membership. The sample of statutory and agency staff and officials sought to interview professional staff based on the ground in the area, or staff responsible for delivering services (e.g. community development, health, education) locally, or central government actors with an involvement in the regeneration.

Though included in the 'officials' category, many community workers in the area could be interpreted as engaging through the lens of residents but it was considered essential that resident voices were heard directly also. Recruiting participants to become involved in the research from amongst residents was a slow and labour-intensive process, with access proving challenging. The size of the sample was largely determined by pragmatic considerations and the availability and accessibility of respondents. It required building relationships and trust with the residents and being sensitive to local relationships and using gatekeepers at community worker level (with the support of the local community development project) to negotiate access. Other researchers (e.g. Byrne et al., 2020) have identified the importance of building trust with local actors when conducting research in a disadvantaged estate undergoing regeneration such as Knocknaheeny. As noted, residents interviewed were asked 'is there anyone else you think I should talk to?' and one further resident was identified through this snowball sampling but it was not possible to make contact with them.

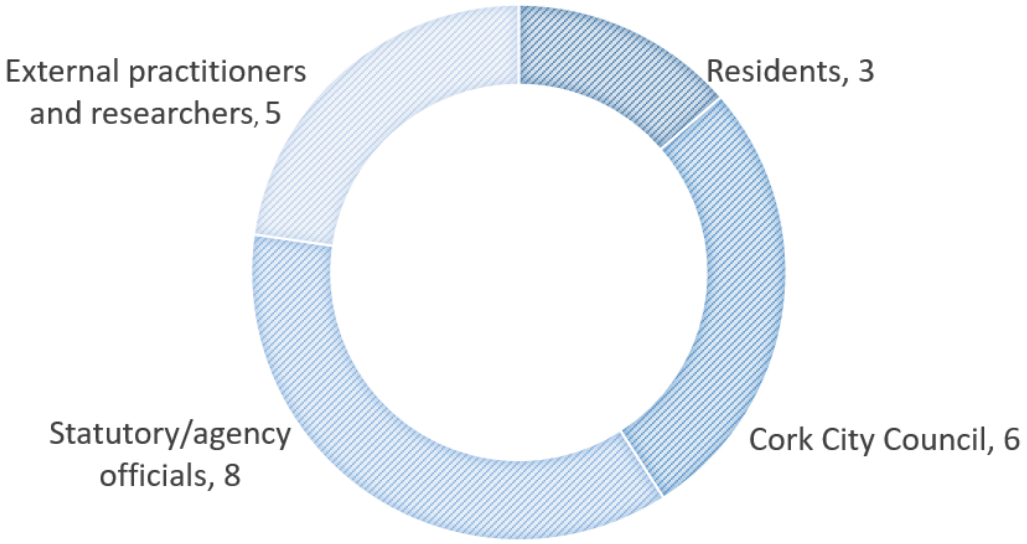
It was not required that the sample be representative of the population of Knocknaheeny overall in terms of gender, age cohort, education and employment status etc., though as noted above the need to avoid gendered assumptions was a consideration. While the views of the three residents interviewed provide strong perspectives on their lived experience in robust, rich data, the community of Knocknaheeny is of course not homogenous and this must be acknowledged when presenting and analysing the interview data so it does not purport to make claims for all residents. To do so would ignore Edwards and Imrie's (2015) criticism that communities can be approached as

homogenous, ignoring the complexities of social and political relationships within them, as well as the differences in personal circumstances and characteristics.

When it comes to the number of residents interviewed it is considered that a number of factors are important, including those identified by Morse (2000: 1) in her discussion of qualitative research sample size, i.e. 'the quality of data, the scope of the study, the nature of the topic, the amount of useful information obtained from each participant, the use of shadowed data [information given by participants about the experiences, perceptions and behaviours of others], and the qualitative method and study designed used'. These have all been reflected on. Furthermore, the validity of the interview data generated from residents can be tested in a number of ways, such as: how the experiences reported by different residents align with each other, if they align with the experiences of regeneration elsewhere in Ireland and in regeneration literature specific to Knocknaheeny (e.g. O'Sullivan et al., 2020) as well as in 'shadowed data' described by others, and finally how residents and communities are shown to be considered in the policy documents analysed. It would be of methodological concern if the residents' interview data did not share similarities to these other sources and findings.

Following the emergence of issues around community development and examples of regeneration elsewhere in the literature review (particularly around its links to participation) and early interviews, I added a fourth constituency to be interviewed. This was external regeneration/community education researchers and practitioners who had worked in regeneration projects elsewhere in Ireland or who had expertise in community development and regeneration issues. This allowed me to gain additional insights from regeneration and community development practice in Ireland. It also ensures the sample is not overly balanced towards Cork City Council or agency officials, given the challenges of accessing residents discussed above. In total 22 people were interviewed in the period 2012-2015.

Figure 3.2 Qualitative study constituencies sampled and numbers interviewed



Sampling sought to ensure that a range of experiences from the relevant constituencies were represented, while being kept manageable and considerate of data saturation where increasing the sample size no longer contributes to the evidence (Ritchie et al., 2003a). The resulting sample size generated rich data while still permitting significant reflection and time on each transcript. It was an essential selection criterion that those sampled across the different constituencies were familiar with Knocknaheeny or regeneration, sustainability or participation issues. The 22 interviewees comprised 8 women and 14 men. The interviewees are described further in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1 Description of interviewees

Residents (3)	Male resident 1
	Female resident 1
	Male resident 2
Statutory/agency actors involved in Knocknaheeny (8)	Education and training official
	Health sector official
	Education sector worker
	Central government architect involved in regeneration
	Central government adviser involved in regeneration
	Social protection official
	Former community development worker
	Current community development worker
	Social scientist with experience of Knocknaheeny

External Regeneration/Community Education and Development academics/practitioners (5)	Community development academic with experience of Ballymun regeneration
	National community development advocate
	Adult and community education academic
	Dublin based community worker with regeneration experience
Cork City Council (6)	City Council community official
	City Council senior community official
	City Council senior planning official
	Elected member
	City Council regeneration official
	City Council community worker in the area

The possibility of future focus groups to 'sense check' or 'road test' initial findings coming from the interview data was raised with all interviewees. Initially, the researcher considered holding one group with a mix of participants from across the three 'local' (i.e. Cork City Council, agency actors involved in Knocknaheeny and residents) constituencies sampled. Further consideration of the power disparities across the groups ruled this out.

To advance the thesis's fourth research question (around identifying strategies for integrating participation and empowerment that contributes to both sustainable development and regeneration outcomes) an initial review of the interview data led me to develop nine initial interventions for discussion. These had a policy focus. Given that the proposals had developed as policy interventions, I invited those interviewed from Cork City Council to attend one focus group on the matter. Three officials (one senior planning official, one community and economic development official and one official directly involved in the regeneration area) participated. This comprised one female and two male participants. The proposals were circulated in advance to participants and are described in the qualitative findings chapter.

As Bryman (2012: 517) notes, focus groups take a long time to arrange, and it takes a long time to transcribe the recordings that are made which acts as a limit to the number organised. Given the richness of the interviewee data, the policy nature of the initial suggestions developed and practical considerations such as those identified by Bryman above, I elected not to organise additional focus groups for the other sampled constituencies.

The following sections discuss both interviews and focus groups in more detail.

3.5.2 Interviews

Interviews are probably the most widely employed method in qualitative research (Bryman, 2012). The 22 interviews conducted were semi-structured. A number of questions were prepared in advance but such questions were designed to be sufficiently open so that the subsequent questions were not planned but improvised in a careful and theorised way (Wengraf, 2001: 5). This is as 'it allows respondents to raise issues that the interviewer may not have anticipated. The material generated in this way is rich, detailed and multi-layered' (Valentine, 1998: 111).

The core interview questions were based on the research questions and topics identified from the literature review process. The questions were provided to interviewees in advance and they are presented in Appendix 1. The questions were slightly altered depending on the interviewee, for example the questions for the official and expert interview began by asking about their role while the questions to residents sought information on how long they had lived there and their links to the area.

Burgess (1984: 102) called qualitative interviews 'conversations with a purpose' and I sought to adopt a conversational approach overall. I was eager to ensure some level of rapport between interviewee and interviewer to avoid criticisms that interviewers extract information from interviewees and are a form of hierarchical relationship (Bryman, 2012). This is something I was particularly mindful of when interviewing residents who may have seen many researchers come and go.

Each interview was taped, and a transcript was produced. After each interview, a transcript was sent to the subject for confirmation. The process of transcribing interviews, returning these to participants for comment and finalising these also proved to be a slower process than anticipated but it brought me closer to the data, allowing me to identify emerging themes, links, similarities and differences between different interviewee's answers at an early stage.

3.5.3 Focus group

As a recognised method for data gathering, focus groups are used by researchers to 'obtain information of a qualitative nature from a predetermined and limited number of people' (Patton, 1990: 26). Ritchie (2003) notes that the terminology of focus groups has changed in recent decades, with the term displacing earlier descriptions such as group interviews or group discussions (though the terms 'focus group' and 'group discussion' are used interchangeably in their text). A similar approach is adopted here though I prefer the latter as it more accurately describes 'the idea of a group which may be more or less focused or structured depending on the requirements of the study, and in which data is generated and shaped through discussion' (Ritchie, 2003: 37).

Krueger and Casey (2000: 24) suggest that focus group interviews are suitable for when the researcher wishes to 'pilot test ideas, materials, plans, or policies'. As discussed above, having concluded the interview phase, and to further my fourth research question in particular, I developed nine initial policy intervention proposals based on an initial analysis of the interview data to 'pilot' in the focus group discussion.

For Lewis (2003) focus groups are useful because of the process itself and the interaction between participants which can refine what they have to say and generate ideas, suggesting that this is particularly relevant when seeking solutions. In this case the discussion group was used to test initial findings derived from the interviews. However, it is recognised that such group discussions may silence or exaggerate particular views (Blaxter et al., 2010), raising the importance of facilitation in focus group discussions. This was assisted by my earlier completion of a 'Train the Trainer' course, which included facilitation skills content.

Bryman (2012: 501) describes focus groups as essentially group interviews and that a smaller number of participants may be preferable. In this study, three participants took part. The focus group was held in the familiar setting of Cork City Council's offices in a formal meeting room around a table.

3.5.4 Ethical considerations

Ethical approval was received from Maynooth University's Social Research Ethics Sub-Committee where the researcher was registered when the thesis and fieldwork began and all the qualitative fieldwork was completed while registered there. This approval made reference to the British Educational Research Association's (BERA) *Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research* which state that researchers must make known to the participants any predictable detriment arising from the process or findings of the research. Also, any unexpected detriment to participants, which arises during the research, must be brought immediately to their attention (BERA, 2011: 7).

Mindful of this, confidentiality and informed consent were crucial provisions to address the risk of repercussions beyond the research context due, for example, to the disparities in power and authority across participants. Interviewees and focus group participants were informed that confidential quotes, without names, might be used in the thesis, but they were also reminded of the local nature of the research and that it is possible that participants might still be identifiable in the thesis, as, for example, views may be strongly associated with one particular individual. Participant consent forms noted that the thesis will be open to public scrutiny and that it is possible that residents or officials working in the area will read it. The decision to hold one focus group aimed at policy makers, rather than one focus group with residents and officials all together was also partially informed by considerations such as these.

Participants were informed of their right to withdraw at any time up until the thesis is submitted. Participants were informed that their data is available to them at their discretion (i.e. their own recordings or transcripts could be accessed at any time) and were fully informed of what the data will be used for. As noted, each transcript was sent to the subject for confirmation in any case.

Koen et al. (2017) describe how the notion of an 'over-researched community' (while complex and, ironically, under-researched), has been increasingly raised as an ethical concern and potential barrier to community participation in research. Clark (2008) links 'over-research' to 'research fatigue', but Koen et al.

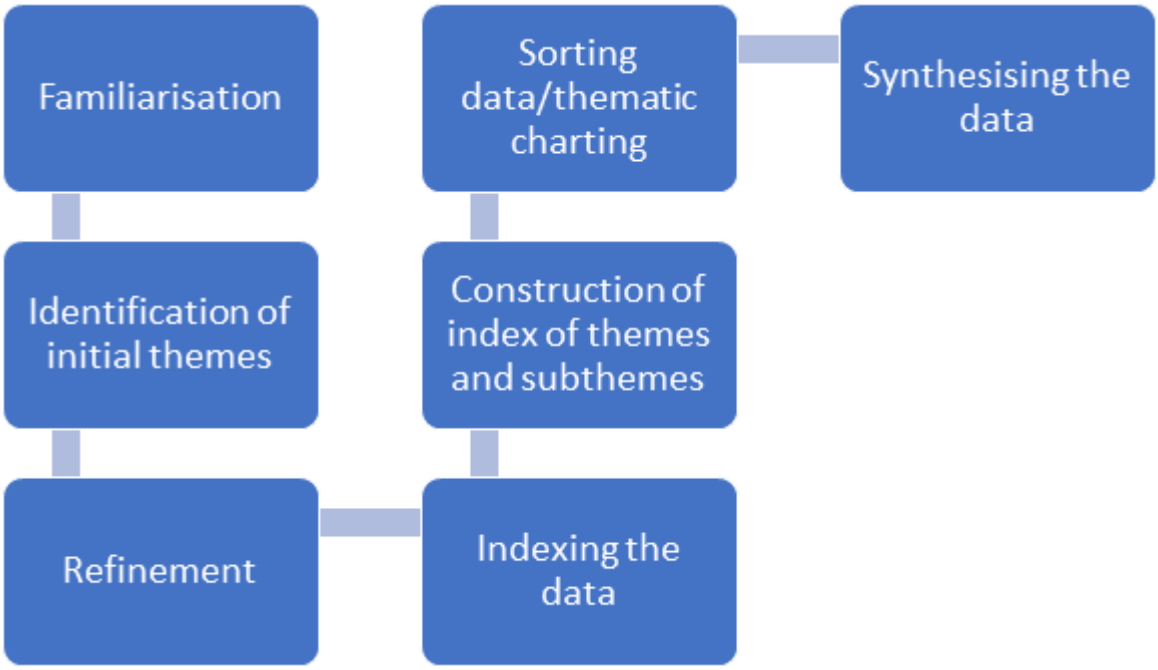
(2017) identify further ethical and methodological matters, considering that overlapping research in the same population may 'contaminate' studies and risk gatekeeping researchers taking "patriarchal 'ownership' of a community" to protect their work, or that over-research may overburden vulnerable groups, or indeed change a community so that it is no longer 'representative' of others which are less familiar with research processes. Informed consent, which underpins the present study, is a way of addressing concerns about over-research (Koen et al., 2017), as is making certain that it is respectful and that participants are not 'left to wonder what happened to the data, what conclusions might be drawn from it, and what policy changes advocated as a result' (Neufeld et al., 2019). Ensuring this does not happen is identified as a motivator in the discussion on the stance of the researcher, set out in Section 3.3 above. It is worth noting that feedback from all residents interviewed was broadly positive with significant interest in the research and the findings. Clearly ensuring that the results of this work are appropriately disseminated to community members is imperative.

Finally, data was kept secure at all times. Audio files and transcripts were stored on a password-protected laptop so that conversations could be listened to as well as read.

3.5.5 Thematic analysis framework

The qualitative 'framework' thematic analysis approach utilised to assess the interview and focus group data is based on that set out by Bryman (2012) and Ritchie et al. (2003b). This is a matrix-based method for analysing qualitative data. The procedure is described below and the steps undertaken are outlined in Figure 3.3.

Figure 3.3 Steps in framework thematic analysis



Under this process, an index of recurring themes (something important about the data in relation to the research question that 'represents some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set' per Braun and Clarke (2006: 82)) and subthemes from the interviews and focus group transcripts was constructed and thematic charts developed. This index ensures there are no obvious overlaps or omissions and allows the data to be analysed in a grounded, yet manageable, way (Ritchie et al., 2003b).

The index of four themes and subthemes developed for this thesis is presented in Table 3.2 below. The four themes are: Regeneration, Housing and the Built Environment; Sustainability (specifically in terms of its situatedness in regeneration policy and practice); Participation/Democracy (specifically in terms of its situatedness in regeneration policy and practice); Governance and Policy (a distinct, but cross cutting theme, intersecting with the other three).

The index was derived from a close reading and rereading of the interview and focus group data to familiarise myself with it—a step which is an essential, if obvious, foundation for the analysis (Ritchie et al., 2003b: 221). This allows the researcher 'to get a sense of the whole' (Erlingsson and Brysiewicz, 2017: 94). This process made me very familiar with the transcripts and I decided against

computer coding to ensure I did not become detached from the findings. The development of themes and subthemes in this way ensures they emerge from the data and stay close to the language of the data and its subjects.

A number of features may assist in the search for themes, including repetition of topics, metaphors and analogies, and how different interviewees discuss the same topics in different ways (Bryman, 2012: 580). Interestingly, and of relevance to the mixed methods design of this study, Bryman (2012: 624) later posits that identifying themes by their repetition is an example of quantification in qualitative research demonstrating their blurred boundaries.

Table 3.2 Index of themes and subthemes from the qualitative data

Theme 1: Regeneration, Housing and the Built Environment • Nature of housing and communities in Cork City • Physical regeneration/housing • Social regeneration • Communities in regeneration
Theme 2: Sustainability • Sustainable development • Sustainable communities • Policy and practice
Theme 3: Participation/Democracy • Planning versus implementation • Mechanisms and techniques • Agendas • Community representatives
Theme 4: Governance and Policy • Focus on economy, employment and investment • Powers, roles and structures • Coherence • Regeneration policy • Community policy • Effectiveness

This framework was then manually applied to the data with key points and snippets placed in the appropriate cell of the matrix in a process of thematic charting. Ritchie et al. (2003b) prefer to describe this as indexing rather than coding and suggest the researcher look out for interconnections between themes in passages of transcripts that may have later significance. When sorting the indexed data Ritchie et al. (2003b: 229) warn that bluntly cutting and pasting text from the transcripts risks losing context. To ensure their setting was not lost, the relevant page number of the transcript was also included. Ritchie et al. (2003b) also suggest that the researcher add their own reflections and interpretative comments to the charts at this stage to inform later analysis.

Appendix 2 presents an example of the thematic chart developed for the Governance and Policy theme and its subthemes using this procedure. Indexing error was reduced as the researcher was the sole analyst and internal validation was conducted with the researcher revisiting the index of themes and subthemes and its application regularly.

The results of the final stage, synthesising the data, form the basis of Chapter 4. When doing this Ritchie et al. (2003b: 229) stipulate three requirements—the participants' own language should be retained as much as possible; interpretation should be kept to a minimum at this stage; and, material should not be considered irrelevant just because its inclusion is not immediately clear.

Finally, given the personal and institutional backgrounds of participants, it is recognised that a number of distinct discourse coalitions (Hajer, 1995) and shared understandings and narratives may arise (within the qualitative data in particular but also relevant to the policy documents in the quantitative study). Considering these discourses is important in a thesis such as this as 'Each discourse rests on assumptions, judgements and contentions that provide the basic terms for analysis, debates, agreements and disagreements' (Dryzek, 1997: 8). Also relevant is considering the tension between professional expertise and the experience-based views of citizens in local and environmental decision making (Fischer, 2000) and the constraints to Habermasian (1984) communicative action. Interviewing external regeneration/community

education researchers and practitioners also provided an opportunity to surface and better understand such discursive struggles in Knocknaheeny. Ignoring these would represent a weakness of the thematic analysis.

3.6 Quantitative study

Krippendorff (2004: 17-18) defines content analysis as 'a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts (or other meaningful matter) to the contexts of their use' considering it to be a learnable, reliable and replicable scientific tool and distinguishing it from more 'interpretive' qualitative content analysis approaches. It is a potentially powerful data reduction technique that can be used to examine trends and patterns in documents (Stemler, 2001) and this is how it has been applied here.

Content analysis is very appropriate when the goal is to collect information from the literature, as it primarily requires the researcher's time and sample availability. It can prove to be a more powerful method than surveys and interviews because of its unobtrusive nature and its lack of reliance on subjective perceptions (Krippendorff, 2004). As Boettger and Palmer (2010) point out, it can enable a broader investigation of texts over an extended period which may be difficult for researchers investigating the same phenomena qualitatively. Bryman (2012) describes content analysis's transparency as one of its key advantages.

However, Bryman (2012) has also identified several weaknesses of content analysis as a research technique, stating 'Content analysis becomes particularly controversial when it is used to seek out latent meaning and themes' (2012: 308). This thesis's focus on manifest content (rather than latent, interpreted meaning) with one coder addresses many of these weaknesses. Quantitative content analysis has been criticised as simplistic and reductionist—'buying into the measurement theories of the natural sciences' in the words of Krippendorff (2004: 87)—or solely descriptive, however it is useful as it can incorporate such scientific methods as 'a priori design, reliability, validity, generalizability, replicability, and hypothesis testing' (Neuendorf, 2002: 10).

Quantitative content analysis can take a number of forms. The first is conceptual analysis (where the presence of a concept is quantified), the second is procedural analysis (focusing on actions in the text, which it is suggested is suited to texts with multiple actors where there is 'back and forth'), the third is relational or semantic analysis (exploring the strength and direction of relationships between concepts) and the fourth is emotional analysis (considering the texts affective or emotional content) (Carley, 1994).

The quantitative research in this study takes a conceptual analysis approach. This is achieved by using a codebook (or 'coding manual' in Bryman's (2012) language) of key concepts, phrases and words to test if they are present in the text and is suited when the interest is in broad concepts (Carley, 1994). The preceding qualitative study guided the quantitative study in two ways—document selection and the development of codes, with the codebook derived from the research questions but also the qualitative data. Neuendorf (2011) warns that rigorous standards have not always been met in quantitative content analysis. Mindful of this, the methods used in this thesis are clearly set out further below.

3.6.1 Document selection

Boettger and Palmer (2010: 347) describe 'identifying a corpus of texts that will explore a research question or hypothesis' as the first content analysis step. They follow this by rigorous sample selection to develop 'a specific and replicable framework for researchers interested in reproducing or extending the study' (Boettger and Palmer, 2010: 347). Policy documents such as those studied here represent a useful source of data for a number of reasons. They are publicly available and easily accessible in digital format, making them particularly well suited to study in the modern age.

An advantage of content analysis is that the researcher can use larger samples than might otherwise be the case, reducing the possibility of sampling errors. To select documents for analysis a relevance sampling approach was used which 'aims at selecting all textual units that contribute to answering given research

questions' (Krippendorff, 2004: 119). In all, 18 documents were analysed. This analysis took place in 2021.

The Knocknaheeny regeneration masterplan was the starting point. It was consulted to identify its policy context. The literature review was also used to identify documents for quantitative analysis. The websites of Cork City Council and the government departments responsible for regeneration, sustainable development and community policy were also searched. Documents were also included on foot of the qualitative research. The third column of Table 3.3 below explains the rationale for each of the 18 documents selected.

Finally, similar to snowball sampling, identified documents were reviewed to see if they referred to other policies which might require analysis. As Evans (2011: 5) notes 'Analysis of policy documents is necessarily a selective process. However, the crossreferencing that exists between key policy documents ensures that important documents of relevance are not likely to be missed.'

According to Atkinson and Coffey (2004: 59), certain document types constitute genres with characteristic styles and conventions. Therefore, it is also important to consider the distinctive features of public policy documents. The interdisciplinary field of policy studies suggests that policy can be studied from the perspective of its context, text, effectiveness or consequences (Cardno, 2018; Freeman and Maybin, 2011). When analysing policy documents there are some caveats that must be take into account, including why and when the document was produced and for whom (Blaxter et al., 2010: 191). Cardno (2018: 631) suggests that when examining policy text, the researcher should ask what are the key elements of the policy, are there legal or regulatory requirements and are there procedures specified in the text that provide guidance for practice? Not all the documents selected for this thesis were conceived for the same purpose or written in the same manner, their formats vary and some meet statutory obligations while others are to advance political commitments or priorities of the day. They also have different time horizons. Table 3.3 seeks to situate the policy documents and give a brief description of elements such as the above.

Table 3.3 also gives the dates of publication of each document are set out to show a chronology of policy development as recommended by England et al. (2018) and Kelleher et al. (2019). Therefore, the documents selected also allow an opportunity to consider the use of the concepts longitudinally from 2001 to 2020. This may identify any historical shifts in regeneration, sustainable development and participation thinking and priorities. This is also relevant when considering the Krippendorff's (2004) concept of habitualisation introduced earlier. This capacity to allow a certain amount of longitudinal analysis relatively straightforwardly has been described as one of content analysis's strengths (Bryman, 2012).

Table 3.3 Policy documents selected for quantitative analysis

Title (Published by, Year)	**Description of document**	**Rationale for selection**
National		
Sustainable, Inclusive and Empowered Communities: A Five-Year Strategy to Support the Community and Voluntary Sector in Ireland 2019-2024 (Department of Rural and Community Development, 2019)	Non-statutory policy initiative articulating the Government's strategy for the sector, fulfilling a Programme for Government commitment	Considered to have relevance to the research questions following literature review
Project Ireland 2040 – the National Planning Framework (Government of Ireland, 2018a)	Government's legislatively backed high level national strategic plan for spatial growth and development	Considered to have relevance to the research questions following literature review
Sustainable Development Goals National Implementation Plan 2018 – 2020 (Department of	Framework for the all-of-government implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals in the	Considered to have relevance to the research questions following literature review

Communications, Climate Action and Environment, 2018)	2018-2020 period. A successor strategy is overdue	
Rebuilding Ireland, an Action Plan for Housing and Homelessness Government of Ireland (Government of Ireland, 2016)	Action plan to increase housing supply in the period to 2021	Data from the qualitative phase regarding overall regeneration policy
The National Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development 2014-2020 (Department of Education, 2014)	Non-statutory framework to support education's contribution to sustainable development, emerging from a commitment in *Our Sustainable Future*	Data from the qualitative phase regarding adult and community education and sustainable development
Our Sustainable Future: A Framework for Sustainable Development in Ireland (Department of Environment, Community and Local Government, 2012)	Policy succeeding the 1997 *National Sustainable Development Strategy for Ireland* with a timeframe to 2020	Considered to have relevance to the research questions following literature review
Sustainable Residential Developments in Urban Areas – Guidelines for Planning Authorities (Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, 2009)	Statutory guidelines planning authorities are required to have regard to in carrying out their functions under the Planning Acts	Considered to have relevance to the research questions following literature review

Delivering Homes, Sustaining Communities: Statement on Housing Policy (Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, 2007a)	Statement setting out the integrated policy approach to sustainable housing, building on the 2005 *Housing Policy Framework – Building Sustainable Communities*	Considered to have relevance to the research questions following literature review
National Action Plan for Social Inclusion 2007-2016 (Government of Ireland, 2007)	Government strategy for social inclusion, fulfilling a Programme for Government commitment	Data from the qualitative phase regarding social policy
Good Practice in Housing Management: Guidelines for Local Authorities. Regenerating Estates, Rebuilding Vibrant Communities (Treadwell Shine and Norris, 2006a)	Non-statutory guidelines for local authorities elaborating on Government policy documents, published by the Centre for Housing Research.	Data from the qualitative phase regarding governance approaches for community involvement in regeneration
National Spatial Strategy 2002-2020 (Department of Environment and Local Government, 2002)	Ireland's first national spatial plan with limited statutory support, succeeded by the *National Planning Framework*	National spatial plan in place at time of beginning of regeneration
Regional		
Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Southern Region (Southern Regional Assembly, 2020)	Strategic regional spatial development framework for the region including Cork, nested under the *National Planning Framework*	Data from the qualitative phase regarding overall regeneration policy

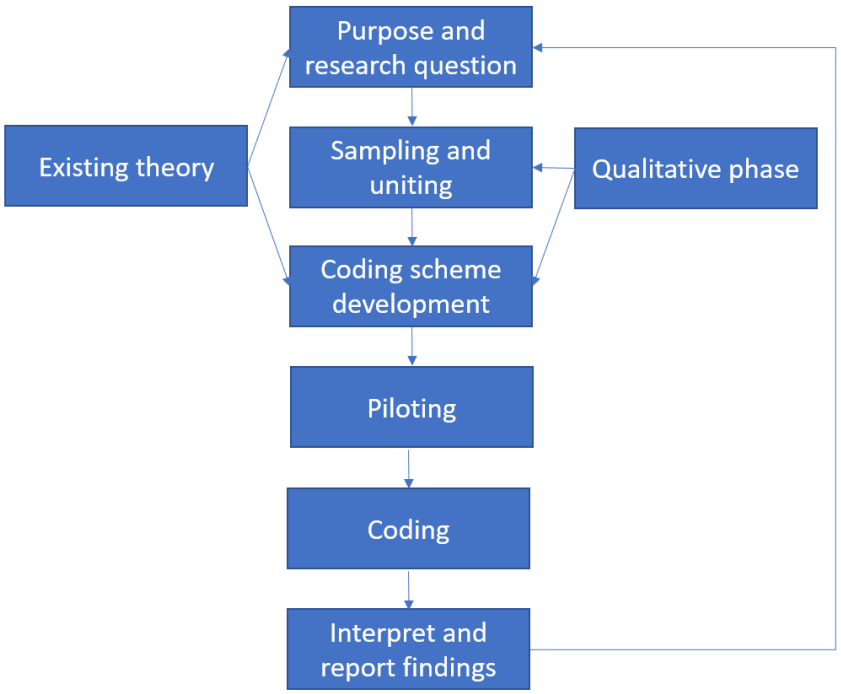
Regional Planning Guidelines 2010 – 2022 (South West Regional Authority, 2010)	Predecessor to the *Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Southern Region*	Data from the qualitative phase regarding overall regeneration policy
Local		
Local Economic and Community Plan 2016-2021 (Cork City Council, 2016)	Statutory local authority plan prepared to promote the economic and community development of Cork City	Data from the qualitative phase regarding economic and employment elements of Knocknaheeny regeneration
Cork City Development Plan 2015-2021 (Cork City Council, 2015)	Statutory local authority planning policy for the overall development of the city, nested under national and regional spatial policy	Data from the qualitative phase regarding spatial concentration of disadvantage in a 'divided' Cork
Cork City North West Regeneration Masterplan and Implementation Report (Cork City Council, 2011)	Masterplan for the regeneration of Knocknaheeny over approximately 12 years, replacing a 2001 masterplan	Considered to have relevance to the research questions following initial desk study
Joint Housing Strategy for Cork City and County Councils 2009 – 2015 (Cork City Council and Cork County Council, 2009)	Strategy required under the Planning Acts to address the housing needs of the existing and future population of Cork	Considered to have relevance to the research questions following initial desk study
Cork Area Strategic Plan (CASP) 2001-2020 (Cork City	Non-statutory strategic plan for the development of the	Data from the qualitative phase regarding spatial

Council and Cork County Council, 2001)	Cork metropolitan region adopted by Cork City and County Councils	concentration of disadvantage in a 'divided' Cork

3.6.2 Content analysis process

Adapting Rose et al. (2015) and Carley (1994), a six-step quantitative content analysis was used as described below and presented in Figure 3.4. Figure 3.4 also relates the steps to the qualitative phase of this thesis and its research questions.

Figure 3.4 Steps in quantitative content analysis and links to qualitative study



Step One: Purpose and research question – This required identifying the relevant concepts, asking what content might be examined and why and satisfying myself that quantitative content analysis is a suitable way to meet the research objective.

Step Two: Sampling and uniting – The sample of policy documents was informed by the qualitative analysis as discussed above. Riffe et al. (2005: 72) describe recording units as the elements of content that will be classified in the coding process – though terminology varies (Rose et al., 2015 for example) and

they may be called study units or coding units. The recording unit is the policy document or plan in question (excluding indexes, appendices and bibliographies).

Step Three: Coding scheme development – A codebook, with all coding variables fully explained (Neuendorf, 2002), and coding form (used to record details of the codes applied to the data) were developed. These were inductively derived from the research questions and the qualitative data. Bryman (2012) considers the a priori coding scheme the key part of quantitative content analysis and it is further discussed in Section 3.6.3 below.

Step Four: Piloting – Piloting is essential to identify problems with the coding scheme or its application (Neuendorf, 2002). The initial coding scheme was piloted on one randomly selected policy document.

Step Five: Coding – A PDF of the policy document was systematically analysed using the coding form (Neuendorf, 2002). The coding form applying the codebook was in Excel with a tab for each document in the sample (i.e. manual coding rather than automated coding using software). Boettger and Palmer (2010: 354) consider that 'In conceptual studies where a small number of terms or themes are being coded, manual coding is an excellent choice.' I felt well equipped to do this, supported by Neuendorf and Skalski's (2009: 208) view that in content analysis 'the emphasis is on the coding scheme as the critical instrument, rather than on the observer's or coder's expertise.' Validity and reliability are considered in more detail below.

Step Six: Interpret and report findings – This includes applying quantitative techniques, such as frequency counts, and the presentation of statistics. This forms the basis of the quantitative findings chapter of this thesis.

As in the qualitative thematic analysis, error was reduced as the researcher was the only one conducting the analysis, but as Bryman (2012) notes the issue of intra-coder reliability is still relevant for a lone coder working on a thesis. Unless the coding scheme has been applied in a consistent way the resulting data will be unreliable. To ensure validity, the coding scheme 'should have clear

definitions, easy-to-follow instructions, and unambiguous examples' (White and Marsh, 2006: 32). Reliability was considered in terms of stability as a sample of documents was rechecked after some time (Stemler, 2001). Also, Duriau et al. (2007) note that reliability is easier to achieve when coding is at the manifest level such as here. Because of the mixed methods nature of the study, validity was also tested in the context of the qualitative research and the integration of the findings in the Chapter 6.

3.6.3 Coding scheme

Boettger and Palmer (2010: 347) describe developing the coding scheme as 'a paramount step in quantitative content analysis'. In quantitative content analysis the coding scheme is determined explicitly a priori, before coding begins (Boettger and Palmer, 2010; Manganello and Blake, 2010). 'Coding, as a process, should be methodical' (Boettger and Palmer, 2010: 354) and this requires developing a clear coding scheme which involves deciding how many concepts to code for and whether to code for existence or frequency of a concept or otherwise. Though the terminology varies the scheme described here comprises a detailed codebook applied to a document through a coding form.

To investigate the research questions, the codebook took a dichotomous approach to coding the terms (present or absent), each term has equal weight. Whether a definition was used and if it is used in aims, objectives or actions of the policy was also coded. The codebook (presented in Appendix 3) set out to capture the following:

- Number of mentions (excluding tables of contents, indices, appendices and bibliography) of a priori terms and concepts.
- The presence of definitions of these terms and concepts and the definitions used.
- Were the terms and concepts used in aims, objectives or actions of the document.

When designing the study, a priori concepts based on the research question and guided by the literature review were developed, but given the mixed methods

approach it was also essential to allow some themes to emerge from the accounts. Therefore, important terms and concepts which emerged in the qualitative phase and were also included. This is in keeping with Neuendorf and Skalski's (2009: 207) observation that the coding scheme can 'be based on theory, past research, and, often, pilot work that includes immersion in the message pool under investigation.' This also addresses a weakness of quantitative research identified by Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004: 19), namely that the researcher's categories and theories may not reflect local constituencies' understandings. This confirms the utility of the mixed methods approach used.

The a priori terms used in the quantitative content analysis are set out in Table 3.4 below which also indicates which terms were included as a direct result of the qualitative study. The terms are divided into four themes mirroring those used in the qualitative analysis. The results of the quantitative analysis are presented in Chapter 5.

Table 3.4 A priori terms used in quantitative content analysis

Concept/Term	**Comment**
Theme 1: Regeneration, Housing and the Built Environment	
1. Community benefit	Included following qualitative phase
2. Physical regeneration	Included following qualitative phase
3. Regeneration OR urban renewal	Inclusion based on initial research questions and literature review
4. Social regeneration	Included following qualitative phase
Theme 2: Sustainability	
5. Community resilience	Inclusion based on initial research questions and literature review
6. Sustainability	Inclusion based on initial research questions and literature review
7. Sustainable community/communities	Inclusion based on initial research questions and literature review
8. Sustainable development	Inclusion based on initial research questions and literature review

9. Sustainable housing	Inclusion based on initial research questions and literature review
Theme 3: Participation/Democracy	
10. Active citizenship/citizens	Inclusion based on initial research questions and literature review
11. Community development OR community education	Inclusion based on initial research questions and literature review
12. Consultation (public/citizen/community/local or equivalent)	Inclusion based on initial research questions and literature review
13. Empowerment or capacity building	Inclusion based on initial research questions and literature review
14. Participation (public/citizen/community/local or equivalent)	Inclusion based on initial research questions and literature review
Theme 4: Governance and Policy	
15. Interagency OR interdepartmental work	Included following qualitative phase
16. Local autonomy OR subsidiarity OR devolved decision making	Included following qualitative phase
17. Social OR Equality Impact Assessment	Included following qualitative phase

3.7 Chapter conclusion

Case studies typically use 'qualitative and quantitative data sources, selected to encapsulate the complexity of the phenomenon' (Lalor et al., 2013), as does this thesis. This chapter outlined the mixed methods three-phase exploratory sequential design adopted, explaining how qualitative methods (thematic analysis of focus group and interview data) were integrated with quantitative content analysis of policy. Both these qualitative and quantitative approaches have basic phases of data collection, coding, analysis of content, and interpretation of results. This chapter set out, examined and justified the application of these methods and their various phases in turn. Such a mixed methods approach was the most appropriate for this thesis as the research questions address different scales (national, local authority, and community) and involve policy and practice; therefore, different methodologies needed to

be considered. The research's quantitative element also addressed one of the key criticisms of qualitative research, namely that it is difficult to replicate and can lack transparency (Bryman, 2012).

In this chapter, whilst describing and justifying the various methods of investigation for my research questions, I was always conscious of my own subjectivity within the research and this was also explored. This methodology has provided a substantial body of data that is described, interrogated and integrated in the remaining chapters.

Chapter 4. Discursive struggle: Transformation or perpetuation?

4.1 Chapter introduction

As set out in the previous chapter, this thesis takes an 'integrating through narrative' approach to mixing methods, first contiguously with the qualitative findings reported below, followed by a quantitative findings chapter. These are then integrated in a single integrative discussion chapter (Chapter 6) for a more complete understanding (Fetters et al., 2013).

Using the thematic analysis approach described, this chapter sets out the findings of the priority qualitative study. First, the interview data is presented under each of the four themes (Regeneration, Housing and the Built Environment; Sustainability; Participation/Democracy; Governance and Policy) and associated subthemes indexed in Table 3.2. This is then followed by the results of the focus group, also presented using these themes. The following quantitative findings chapter utilises these themes also. In this chapter direct quotes are used to highlight and personalise the data, with the speaker identified using the descriptions set out in Chapter 3.

As discussed in Chapter 2, Galvin and Mooney Simmie (2017) describe contradictions and discursive struggle in regeneration. Similarly in this thesis, given the differing personal and institutional contexts of participants (residents, local authority and statutory agency staff involved in the area, regeneration/community researchers and practitioners), it is not surprising that a number of competing and contradictory discourses emerge both within and across the themes. These include discourses of justice and emancipation, neoliberal transformation, professional versus experiential knowledge, and individualism. This is important as when considering participatory processes underlying discourses make some things important and others insignificant and serve to include some participants and exclude others (Fischer, 2006: 25). Points of coalescence and divergence amongst actors emerge and shift across themes and subthemes. Reflecting the discursive turn in policy analysis, such

contradictions are acknowledged and examined and where there are differences between those who share an institutional background or where there is consensus across interviewees, it is highlighted. Commonalities and differences across the data are discussed further in Chapter 6, where the results are related to the literature and in answer to the four research questions.

This data is particularly relevant to the following aspects of the research objective: the first research question and how sustainable development has been interpreted and applied in the regeneration, the third research question regarding barriers to participation in regeneration, and the fourth research question regarding how participation and sustainability in regeneration can be better integrated.

4.2 Regeneration, Housing, and the Built Environment

This section on the Regeneration, Housing and Built Environment theme presents findings from the interview data relating to the regeneration in Knocknaheeny using four subthemes: the nature of housing and communities in Cork, physical regeneration/housing, social regeneration, and communities in regeneration. Wider regeneration policy issues are discussed in Section 4.5.4 under the cross cutting Governance and Policy theme.

Overall, this theme reveals different views on the nature of structural inequalities in Cork and their causes and suggests that there have been negative consequences for communities that have taken a critical position and challenged local government on such issues. Despite recognition of the inherent vulnerability of communities in regeneration and the disruption to established social networks, it also exposes a perception that regeneration practice in Knocknaheeny remains weighted towards tenure mix and physical—rather than social—improvement and that this damages its potential for sustainability. A central government actor interviewed suggested that Cork City Council was responsible for this emphasis.

4.2.1 Nature of housing and communities in Cork

A profile of Knocknaheeny within Cork was presented in Chapter 1. A fundamental subtheme to emerge from the interviews was the importance of locating Knocknaheeny and its regeneration within the overall socioeconomic landscape of the city.

It is notable that Cork City Council officials recognise ongoing inequalities in the city and do not think that recent interventions have adequately addressed them. For example, a Cork City Council community official described Cork as 'a two speed city', with more disadvantage on the northside rather than the southside. The official concluded that despite recent physical improvements 'socially, has there been change? Probably not a huge amount.' Another senior City Council planning official agreed, saying 'there were efforts to change that in policy documents both from government and from the City Council, but I don't think they were successful because I don't think we reduced the amount of social...segregation or social stratification in the city.'

Political decision making that is resistant to redistribution was identified by a senior official in Cork City Council who said 'you would get politically a certain amount of envy and begrudgery among we'll say politicians on the southside generally about what Knocknaheeny has got...That they are getting everything up there, what about the southside and so on and so forth.'[14] A former community development worker in Knocknaheeny attributed this to structural issues saying the emergence of disadvantaged areas such as Knocknaheeny 'was a consequence of political decisions that privilege one group in society over and above others. I mean how is that out here in the south west of the city you have five or six major pieces of infrastructure and on other sides of the city you have hardly nothing?'

[14] Council minutes show a councillor 'mindful of the huge investment in northside regeneration' asking for future funding for regeneration and refurbishment on the southside (Cork City Council, 2014), for example.

Such inequalities may also be attributable to the relationship between such communities and the Council and the state. A social scientist who researched Knocknaheeny identified a:

> historical context in Knocknaheeny where, unlike other parts of the city, there was probably a more critical relationship between the City Council and some of the local groups, the local community groups and residents' associations, with the result that Knocknaheeny was marginalised for quite a long time unlike areas, say like Togher, where there was a much more pragmatic engagement between the local communities and the City Council.

The interviewee attributed this 'oppositional culture' to a 'legitimate' 'critical analysis of the role of the state and its relationship with working class communities' but concluded that such a 'doctrinaire position' resulted in communities being left behind. Another City Council staff member said there was historically an awkward relationship between the Council and the area's community development project (CDP).

It appears that adopting a challenging approach locally towards the state had been interpreted as intransigence and lead to less investment and worse outcomes in the past. Issues related to structural inequalities in regeneration are addressed again in Section 4.5.

4.2.2 Physical regeneration/housing

Almost without exception, respondents articulated a view that regeneration should comprise physical regeneration of the built environment and social and economic regeneration. This subtheme discusses aspects of physical regeneration while the next subtheme considers the social aspects.

A central government architect who worked alongside Cork City Council on the regeneration masterplan said that physical regeneration was not enough for sustainability, describing physical regeneration as 'a framework' within which 'sustainability can happen'.

A central government adviser involved in the regeneration described earlier work in Knocknaheeny as 'refurbishment' which was found to be not as cost effective as 'demolition and reconstruction'. This reconstruction, they said, would develop 'opportunities to encourage private development so that you got some kind of tenure mix in the development.' Despite this, they believed physical changes alone were not the objective, saying 'It is an improvement in the quality of life of the people which is the goal of regeneration, isn't it? That's what you are striving for at the end of the day and although included, it goes beyond just the physical constraints.'

However, one male resident questioned the ability of a demolition and reconstruction approach to improve people's quality of life saying 'Instead of spending 170 million on this, if they had spent 50 million refurbishing the houses...they could have pumped another 20 million into the community, into the community itself. They'd have saved 100 million. We would still have the 300-odd families living in our community, living in better quality houses and more services'.

This view echoes the assessment of the national community development advocate interviewed who said 'the whole investment around the non-physical has to be just as important as the investment in the physical otherwise in a sense there's almost no point in starting. You end up with people, okay, living in better accommodation but living with the same stuff they were living with beforehand and I don't think that's good enough.'

4.2.3 Social regeneration

There was some dispute over the priorities of central and local government with regards to the social aspects of regeneration. Some interviewees suggested central government directed Cork City Council to a more holistic approach, while others suggested central government is the problem as it does not sufficiently prioritise social regeneration.

The central government adviser described regeneration as an 'evolving science' that had grown to recognise the importance of social and economic aspects,

admitting there were earlier projects where 'physical regeneration may have been prioritised'. They said that government had 'alerted' Cork City Council 'to the fact that they needed to look at both the economic and the social strands' as well as the physical in Knocknaheeny. A shift in central government's priorities was recognised by one City Council community official who said the Department 'has tried to put more of a focus on I suppose the holistic approach…realising that, you know, you can't just knock and rebuild or we'll be doing it again in forty years time or whatever.'

In evidence of a possible local impetus for physical regeneration, the central government architect who worked on the 2011 masterplan said that much of the early work they did with Cork City Council was based upon briefing provided by the local authority and it was 'just numbers driven, you know getting so many houses.' This early engagement did not appear to include community involvement in preparing the brief for central government professionals, suggesting that at least an outline vision for Knocknaheeny was in place before any community engagement took place and it was physical regeneration focused.

Reinforcing this perspective, a resident did not believe Cork City Council took account of the need for social regeneration in Knocknaheeny 'I do not believe this regeneration programme will be a success because it will only deal with the physical. They will not look at the sociological aspect of it, the effect it will have on families, the effect it will have on the community. That never comes into consideration. It's never, ever considered to be part of the programme. It's just knock and build a new house'.

However, the social scientist interviewed pointed to central government saying there was insufficient 'buy-in at central government level' regarding a more holistic approach to regeneration, saying it needed 'political direction given to say you must look at regeneration in an integrated manner'.

4.2.4 Communities in regeneration

The vulnerability of communities in regeneration was noted by several interviewees. One education and training official stated 'I think the challenge with the regeneration will be to not damage the people end of it.' The national community development advocate said 'Regenerations are enormously disruptive for people. And sure the gains will be fantastic hopefully but the disruption to people's lives is staggering'. This was recognised by a local elected representative who said 'physically the community is going through a massive transition. When you go into the heart of it and you see bulldozers knocking down a substantial amount of houses...there's mixed emotions.'

One community worker with experience of regeneration projects in Dublin emphasised how vulnerable communities were in the regeneration process:

> because people are not organised, they haven't got experience of it and they don't know how to. It's a complicated piece of work to be involved in, right...There's tendering processes, there's the whole architecture of a project of getting to the brass tacks of poverty...All that shit. All those different things are flowing around you all the time.

One solution they identified was to secure funding for independent built environment professionals to review plans on behalf of the community.

One male resident described the effects of the regeneration process on the community as follows:

> My best way of describing what they've done at the moment with the regeneration programme for me, it's community abortion. You are taking the heart and soul out of the community and you're aborting it because of these 300 families, very few will move back. You have these people who are so unique to us and so important to us and they're not living in areas where they don't know the people next door to them. City Council, it's a jackboot approach.

They returned to this later, saying residents were being 'thrown' into:

> other areas and we're just going to be left with a blank, empty space that will also be a blank, empty feeling. I see it every day people coming up, getting off the bus and you're looking at another row of houses. You can see the sadness in people's faces because they can remember well, Máire lived there and Kevin lived there and the Joneses lived there.

The insensitive language of regeneration officials when referring to communities was also raised. The education and training official recalled one meeting where a City Council official 'spoke in terms of "decanting" people and I was so taken aback with the phrase I didn't challenge it and I was waiting for it to come up again, but it was obviously in such regular use that he wasn't even aware of saying it…Pour out a load of families out of a building…that was one of the ones that struck me.' The term 'decanting' appears in the Knocknaheeny regeneration masterplan as stage in implementing the regeneration (Cork City Council, 2011: 64). Criticisms of decanting (e.g. Ferreri, 2020) were described in Chapter 2.

4.3 Sustainability

Interviewees were asked to discuss their understanding of what made a sustainable community, what sustainability and sustainable development were, and their place within the regeneration. Therefore, this section explores the findings around sustainability under the subthemes of sustainable development, sustainable communities and sustainability policy and practice.

There was a variety of views, for example one respondent from Cork City Council (a senior planning official) considered these to be important concepts for decision making while a colleague (a regeneration official) described them as too 'soft' to be applied usefully. Another interviewee (a former community development worker in Knocknaheeny) considered them to be buzzwords while another considered the term sustainable community to be 'propaganda'. Analysis of the interviews found that few professionals engaged with their organisation's definition of sustainable development if aware of it or believed it was used in practice despite its prominence in aspirational policy. One

regeneration official felt discussing sustainable development with residents would not be useful. Most (but not all) interviewees felt sustainability or a sustainable community depended on the area's broader socioeconomic circumstances, rather than being something that could be community led.

4.3.1 Sustainable development

A former community development worker in Knocknaheeny described sustainable development as a buzzword saying that 'sometimes politicians use words like "sustainable development" and "sustainable communities" and ask them what do you actually mean by that? I mean… like it is emptied of all meaning you know?'

Many professionals working in statutory bodies or agencies did not know if their organisation had a definition of sustainable development in place, while one (central government regeneration adviser) openly disagreed with the framing presented by their organisation. The central government regeneration adviser described going to their department's website to read about sustainable development policy ahead of the interview and found they were 'surprised to read the summary that "sustainable development is about ourselves". This might not have been my personal approach.' The official noted that government sustainable development policy can contain contradictions, asking if high levels of economic growth and motorway projects can be compatible with sustainable development, for example.

When asked about their organisation's definition of sustainable development, one Cork City Council official said 'I suppose sustainable development is the International one, the needs of the present and all that but I don't think we have one'.

Discussing whether sustainable development impacted on the Council's day to day activity and policy, another senior City Council community official suggested it was limited to certain areas rather than mainstreamed or applied across the organisation, explaining:

> I would think broadly speaking we will say at the professional level that there is a fairly strong emphasis on sustainable development…there would be a view like that it does pervade we will say transport and traffic management and housing, house construction, house maintenance and you know water, water services, waste management. All environmental we will say air, water quality, noise. All of that. There would be a kind of a fairly strong view on sustainability across those areas.

4.3.2 Sustainable communities

There was little agreement on the usefulness of the term sustainable community or what it entailed.

One central government architect who worked alongside Cork City Council on the regeneration masterplan noted that, though the strapline of the Housing Agency (who prepared the 2011 masterplan for adoption by Cork City Council) is 'promoting sustainable communities', sustainable:

> has a very broad meaning. And it is one of these words…it sounds good, but getting down to the specifics of it, is you know what is sustainable? What is…it seems to be a collective word for all the sort of things I am talking about plus the thing of social mix, plus the, you know, getting a sort of economic mix you know. It is a bit of a rag bag of a word, isn't it?

Though acknowledging that the regeneration masterplan they were delivering included ambitions regarding a sustainable community, a City Council regeneration official stated

> It is hard to define what sustainable development is, but it is easy enough to define what it isn't. I think in the sense that…okay we could go simply and build 500 houses here just hell for leather and go at it without any discussion on how we blend age groups, the various… you know if we could go ahead like we did in the past as a country, you know.

Also, due to its low density layout, the environmental and economic sustainability of Knocknaheeny was questioned by some respondents. This

reflects a trend in the interviews where participants felt it easier to say what a sustainable community was not rather than what one was.

One community development academic with experience of Ballymun during its regeneration said 'when you're saying what's a sustainable community and it really got me thinking you know and I was going "Jesus, what is a sustainable community?" and I guess my first instinct is around positioning that community within its wider socioeconomic context.' A Cork City Council official involved in community and economic development echoes this saying:

> I suppose in Knocknaheeny now it's not a sustainable community and the amount of supports that go in from various different agencies to fill gaps...I suppose, for me for Knocknaheeny to be sustainable in the future, that level, we'll say there's more need for those agencies supports but they would need, in an ideal world they would be able to withdraw. It may be a long time away for Knocknaheeny to be, I suppose, sustainable.

This suggests that the regeneration as organised is not sufficient for sustainability.

One interviewee (community worker who has worked with regeneration projects in Dublin) addressed this bluntly:

> the sustainable community stuff is ... it doesn't mean a great deal, right, beyond that it's a piece of propaganda. It's an ideological f***ing statement that people use to tell you things will be great but you find out then five years later they're not great. So what we need is broad egalitarian change never mind sustainable communities.

However, one adult and community education academic did offer a proactive description of a sustainable community based more around the community themselves. They said for them a sustainable community is:

> self-generating, self-enhancing, self-reflexive and I would say I suppose the big word is the extent to which it moves towards self-reliance. In poor communities a mark of impoverishment is actually a lack of self-

reliance. I don't mean to be blaming them or patronising but that's how it seems to me.

4.3.3 Policy and practice

As noted above, though sometimes used in the policies they implement not all officials are aware of a 'corporate' vision of sustainable development or sustainable communities within their organisation. Some suggested that it would not be useful, or practical, in their day to day work while others believed it could be important in decision making.

Asked if they felt other agencies working in the area had a vision for making Knocknaheeny a sustainable community, a City Council community worker replied 'Nobody lays it out on the table at a meeting and says this is what, what we need and then it would all be fine', later asking if 'you know had we started down this road about creating a sustainable community without a shared understanding of what it all means. I am not sure what the answer to that is.'

Similarly, the social protection official interviewed said they never came to their work in the area with a definition of sustainability or a sustainable community in mind, explaining that 'I was never given you know the long-term view is the sustainable community or where it is going. There was never a vision…you are sent off to do your job.'

One City Council regeneration official acknowledged that there was no agreed definition of sustainable development they were working to and questioned if it would be useful when engaging with the community 'I mean you could look at any one of several texts and there would be a different interpretation of what they feel sustainable development is and we don't have a formal definition that we work to here. All I know is that my own gut feeling and there is no point in me going up to talk to residents about sustainable development you know? It's a bit, it's a bit too sort of…soft a concept.' They concluded that agreeing one vision of it for Knocknaheeny 'would be a hard one because it means something different to every single person.' This perhaps echoes Connelly's (2007: 267)

suggestion that some believe only a technical elite can correctly identify and implement sustainability given its complexity.

When asked about how the community was involved in building the regeneration vision and integrating sustainability one City Council official said 'it is not about sustainable, it is whatever is logical to a blend of views, whatever makes sense.'

However, this view was not shared by all their colleagues. The senior City Council planning official said a definition would be useful as 'sustainable development should give us as decision makers is a decision-making framework where we can make choices, and define priorities, and then see how individual projects measure up against those priorities.' Another senior City Council official said that they believed the City Council should have a definition of sustainable development considering it 'a strength because it allows you to, and it allows a shared understanding, so you can defend what you are doing and you know you have a straight line between policy and action and I think that, especially now when we are subject to so much outside scrutiny, that that's a good thing.' However, they warned that 'there can be resistance to that as well because, you know, if you put up a decision-making framework against which you are going to be judged, you are exposing yourself then to...there can be I suppose...people perceive a lack of flexibility.'

Overall, this theme shows there is a lacuna in terms of defining sustainable development and sustainable community and this lack of clear vision has potential impacts in terms of what regeneration can achieve. It may be used as a policy goal with little regard to its implementation and there is little interest in speaking to residents about it. It also shows that for a community to be sustainable, wider structural issues needed to be addressed.

4.4 Participation/Democracy

This section presents findings from the interview data relating to participation in regeneration and sustainable development using the four subthemes of

planning versus implementation, mechanisms and techniques, agendas, and community representatives.

An adult and community education academic interviewed argued:

> there is no such thing as poor housing, there's only poor people...So if you start with the premise that the problem is poor people then you'll begin to say, okay, now we have to work on dealing with that problem...And the odd thing is that people in communities are very aware of these issues. They want to talk about them but the agencies need to engage an awful lot more actively in listening because that will help the agencies to frame their own responses more appropriately.

How this takes place in practice and opportunities for community-led decision making is the focus of this section.

While analysis of the interview data finds mixed views on whether Cork City Council's approach to consultation had improved over time, there was widespread agreement that community consultation and involvement in the vital implementation stage remained weak (with a suggestion that some residents felt 'bullied' or intimidated by the Council when it came to one-to-one interaction during the regeneration roll out). One City Council official described this as the inevitability of a plan not surviving 'contact with the enemy' when it came to being implemented. Examples of City Council officials being inaccessible or distant and the ineffectiveness of approaches likened to 'tick box' large public meetings compared to targeted cooperation with individual residents or community workers were proffered by interviewees.

The analysis also identified several challenges for residents who took a leading role in regeneration or community structures (including 'borderline threats' by Cork City Council) and revealed the motivations of actors with regard to participation were not congruent.

4.4.1 Planning versus implementation

It was expressed that consultation had improved between the preparation of the first and second masterplans. For example, one community development worker acknowledged:

> I thought when this section of the regeneration was being developed, I suppose I found that there were changes made. They came up. They had the consultation. They had an overhead projector. They spoke to people. Explained things to people and while people had questions and weren't 100% happy, things were explained to people which hadn't happened before. It was very 'come in, look at the maps and off you go'.

This view was not universal, however. When asked about community engagement regarding the current masterplan one resident said 'I think they've just done the basic'. This was echoed by a health sector official who worked in the area said 'my issue all along with the masterplan always was around consultation. I never felt they were consulting properly with the community…I suppose I would have a concern that there was an element of tick-boxing on the consultation.' They then clarified that this concern applied to both the first and second regeneration masterplans, explaining:

> I suppose my concerns round consultation were like I said on a couple of different levels. One was that the people who did the consultation I felt weren't qualified to do it. They didn't know what they were doing. There was a lot of kind of kind of token consultation. I was at some of those myself. There was and still is an element of 'we know what's best for you, so here it is'.

Regarding the second masterplan, one social scientist welcomed the consultation process as 'deliberate and broadly based' but said there 'has been a complete imbalance in the implementation stage.' This suggestion that while consultation may have improved between the first and second masterplans but was still absent when it came to implementation is now discussed further.

An academic who had worked in a community development project in Ballymun during its regeneration warned that 'the danger' of not consulting properly 'is people get pissed off so housing authorities make what they think are minor decisions and they don't realise that these are actually having quite major impacts on people's lives'. Many of these 'minor' decisions may take place during the implementation phase of the regeneration.

Back in Knocknaheeny, a local community development worker expressed concerns with participation in the implementation of the masterplan saying that when it came to the:

> actual physical work of working with people to move out of their homes, that was kept very much then a one-to-one basis and people were struggling with it. They were coming to us and saying you know, they felt they were being bullied, some people, do you know what I mean? Now, I can't say whether they were or they weren't because I wasn't there.

The community development worker expressed regret that the City Council did not work with them on this aspect of the regeneration 'I just felt that people are so easy to work with and to deal with issues with. I don't know why they didn't come down. Even if it was only to sit one-to-one and talk to people, at least we could have supported people in discussing what the issues were or why things were being done or, do you know?'

The community development worker believed there was not enough support for people required to move from their homes during the regeneration due to the demolish and rebuild approach adopted (for example regarding mail redirection, moving vans, their furniture that wouldn't fit) and that this was a significant source of stress for residents. They explained that for an official 'planning regeneration, that's all small stuff. That doesn't come into the equation at all… They have their bit done now as far as they are concerned. They had their consultation and they went off then and did their jobs…While they made a little change to the consultation process as opposed to what they did before. They've done that and carried on as before, I think.'

Giving their perspective on how the community is involved in implementation after the planning phase, a senior council official in the Planning Directorate said (in notably martial, and perhaps confrontational, language):

> there is also a sense that when you do a plan or you do a strategy, you can't think about everything and you know the saying, you know, that any plan doesn't survive contact with the enemy, you know, and the first time you go out and do a plan and then you say, you pass it and then you get some money and then you start to implement it and suddenly the, the, I suppose the people with a vested interest in how things are at that point in time start to come out of the woodwork, you know, and they have held their powder dry.

4.4.2 Mechanisms and techniques

This section considers interview data relevant to consultation techniques and mechanisms for participation in the Knocknaheeny regeneration.

A community worker felt that City Council officials were inaccessible, preferring people to email in their queries despite 'that the literacy levels in areas like this are so poor'. One resident described the experience of trying to proactively meet with the City Council on an issue as follows saying the City Council official they had contacted:

> ...emailed [another named City Council official] back but CC'd it to me and a couple of other people giving out about me and me questioning stuff, do you know want I mean?...I was requesting an urgent meeting and [City Council official] was saying people are very happy and giving [themselves] a clap on the back for taking on such a big project. I wasn't challenging [their] project, do you know what I mean?...but [they] was saying you know "we're after taking on a huge challenge, you know, we have it nearly completed and blah, blah, blah". But I mean you could complete the challenge no bother if you disregard how people are being dealt with.

When asked what could be improved in terms of engaging residents in the regeneration, one health sector official interviewed said:

> Maybe the management and facilitation of it because I suppose what never works in areas is open meetings about the regeneration. That never works, you know what I mean, and I suppose we spend a long time telling people that. There's no point in getting 100 people in a room, you know what I mean? That won't go anywhere.

Echoing this, one Cork City Council community development worker in the area questioned the value of 'traditional' large public meetings as in their experience 'half a dozen people dominated those meetings you know. They stood up and made their little speech and, and the vast, vast majority of people, 95% or 99% went out through the doors without having participated at all.'

Discussing the first masterplan, one community development worker in the area said 'They [Cork City Council] had an open day and people came in and they could look at the plans and people were looking at the maps and the colours and they were saying, it didn't mean anything. Do you know what I mean? People weren't able to explain the maps to them. But people had to sign in when they came in so that was the consultation process.'

In an example of a successful technique, an education sector worker interviewed noted that getting parents involved in the school 'gives then I suppose a sense of empowerment maybe, you know. They see themselves as well, I've been asked to contribute to the school and that and because it involves their child as well. If it's their child they'll do it.'

One health sector official believed that in the past there 'was a real resistance to meeting people from the community' within the City Council, adding:

> even when they did then, it really wasn't great and I was brought in a couple of times as a kind of neutral person to chair meetings between the Council and the residents. It was carnage. Absolute carnage and it never... now, I know the estate management process has improved. The

> tenant liaison people have meant that Mrs. Murphy doesn't have to go to the City Manager because her door is broken, you know what I mean? So there has been that improvement. So, to be fair to them, things have moved a long way from not being able to get in the door.

In terms of lessons, the health official summarised:

> I think targeted, focused engagement is what works and it has to be a two-way process and that the real thing is commitment to the two-way process...it's about being open to what people are saying as well and back to your question, the way you engage people is critical. I've been at too many open meetings over the years.

One method a Cork City Council community development worker in the area considered effective was to engage with community workers rather than residents themselves, saying:

> a lot of briefing sessions done for the various workers and volunteers and on the ground people were active in the community. Lots of briefings for them and I think that was very helpful because then you had people who were there every single day who when passing people ask them you know what they thought was going on you know. They were in a position to be able to at least pass on information.

This approach is notable for the City Council preferring an approach where they do not engage directly with citizens, instead an intermediary is used. Though this may have benefits for legitimacy is also may reinforce the perceived distance from the Council and highlights the lack of local consultation and engagement capacity within the organisation. As seen below, a resident indicated that many of the effective relationship between residents and City Council officials seems to be based on personal relationships. As it appears that this can be lost if personnel change, it does not appear to be embedded in the local authority's culture and values or the structures in place.

One resident said any successes in resident engagement by the City Council were less to do with senior management's efforts to listen to residents ('they couldn't be trusted because they were only in it for what they wanted') and more to do with the 'personality of the people on the ground', explaining that in the past they had had 'a fantastic working relationship with the City Council groundworkers' which allowed useful 'off the record' discussions. They also recalled an occasion where residents insisted a senior official in the Council apologised to a community worker as a precondition to a negotiation. This relationship was now lost due to personnel changes.

One health sector worker also believed any successes in Knocknaheeny could be attributed more to the personalities involved than any policy saying:

> what you have on the ground is you have loads of people working in the area. They amount of people employed in the voluntary sector is huge in Knocknaheeny and to be fair, they're all very good people so they have made things work more so, like I think things have worked in spite of policy rather than because of policy.

The health worker described the arrival of a new, named, City Council community development worker as 'a breath of fresh air' with:

> the right attitude. [They] met people where they were at. You would hear people saying in the area that they don't believe [name] works for City Council because of, you know, just the way [they] gets things done... I deal with Housing an awful lot in the Council. I know they're under pressure themselves. There are some top class people in the Housing Department that I would work with any time, but equally there are people who are very difficult to work with and that, I think, impacts on the regeneration.

An adult and community education academic interviewed raised the issue of the impact on relationships when decision makers are professionals and are not from the area. In line with this, a resident was critical of officials and 'people running programmes that do not live in the area, that have no concept of what

life is like in the area.' The importance of local residents being involved in leading work in regeneration was also acknowledged by an academic who had worked in a community development project in Ballymun during its regeneration who said in their experience top-down community engagement such as newsletters were not effective in engaging the community there, instead it took a community development project organised Housing Transition Programme with 'a very strong adult education ethos' where there were always 'more people from the local area working in the organisation than people like me from the outside.'

One adult and community education academic interviewed believed that all agencies needed 'to relearn how they need to engage with the poor and disadvantaged people' involving an 'interrogation of their own practice in some kind of professional development process.'

4.4.3 Agendas

According to the adult and community education academic interviewed 'democracy is often at odds with planning...planning is all about theoretically directing a public project. Democracy is always going to push against that. So there's going to be always a little bit of tension in a general sense between a project which is about planning and a project which is about democracy'.

The accuracy of such a view and how this is resolved is amongst the considerations in this section which sets out the different agendas of those involved in the regeneration and consultations.

The existence of conflicting agendas and discursive struggles between residents and those who claim to represent their interests was raised by the national community development advocate who said:

> City Council will often say 'well we're on the side of the residents and we have their interests at heart' and so on. The fact of the matter is that there are different agendas and they will conflict at times. The agenda of the City Council will include things like the use of the land because often in these areas there's quite a lot of open spaces. The use of the land

> for the city, the housing of people on the homeless list generally or the housing list generally. So it would have all those agendas as well. The agenda of balancing its books and so on.

When discussing housing, the central government architect said that local and central government had a shared 'agenda' in the regeneration masterplan to increase density etc. and change the physical form of the area. When asked if more could be done to put forward the 'community agenda' they said community input into new models of housing would be helpful but required community education as they might struggle with the 'complexity of it…maybe this sounds arrogant, but I think you actually need community education…people need to know that you can live in different ways.'

Discussing their expectations of consultation, one senior City Council official said 'Well I suppose maybe if you are looking at it from a Public Servant's point of view that you like to have something that will gather all the views in and present them to you in a package, but that you know, the reality is that's not legitimate.' Such a legitimacy argument as articulated by an official, is balanced against the efficiency argument that participation can add unpredictability to policy development and implementation introduced in Chapter 2 (e.g. Burton et al., 2006; Head, 2007).

An academic who had worked in a community development project in Ballymun during its regeneration said community education work in regeneration that focused on 'social development where there is collective responses from residents in making decisions about their estates' is 'often not very popular with the housing authorities because it can throw up problems for them'. Discussing how local government works with residents, the community worker who has worked on regeneration projects in Dublin stated that 'the Council has a great f***ing habit of co-opting people.'

An adult and community education academic interviewed said a 'counterintuitive' argument for early and meaningful community consultation is:

> if you don't do it you're leaving a disenfranchised class very open, I would say, to mobilisation, in a way which is, in my view anyway, hugely manipulative. So even though I recognise the value of the mobilisation… and that sounds patronising almost of me. I realise this. But I think the water charge argument demonstrates that disenfranchised people become angry and frustrated and will mobilise around a relatively, I would say, simplistic kind of slogan which is anti-austerity.

Clearly, how community education and outreach is funded and potential capture is an issue. For example, one adult and community education academic who had worked in a community development project in Ballymun during its regeneration recalled 'I remember the guy I was working with, I remember him really clearly saying like "Are we in bed with the devil here?" suggesting that taking funding from the regeneration agency might compromise them and mean they were less critical.

Such issues are also discussed in Section 4.5.5 on community policy.

4.4.4 Community representatives

The Cork City Council official in the Community Directorate believed 'one of the things about Knocknaheeny is that it has, over the years I suppose since it was built it has never for example developed community, a successful community association and most of the community work is certainly led by people who are, for whatever reason, paid people'.

Another Cork City Council official involved in community and economic development in the area believed that residents needed to take a greater role in representing their area 'I think community participation in Cork is weak. I think we have a lot of community activists and they're great but…I don't work directly in Knocknaheeny but there are community activists there but the community representation needs to be stronger and I know hopefully the regeneration, there will be outreach work and stuff like that to kind of bring people along.'

This strongly contrasts with the view of the health official who said 'the community in Knocknaheeny to me seem to be more engaged than any other

community in Cork City. I think they're probably the best example of community engagement.' One local elected representative took a similar view saying people who don't live in Knocknaheeny 'say fair play to the people of Knocknaheeny. They've stood up. They've got themselves together. They've got themselves organised and they have achieved a lot.'

The national community development advocate said regenerations can give rise to 'all kinds of tensions in the community about trying to make decisions about who gets what and who is entitled to what and all that'. In light of this and the other interview data, it would appear that being a community representative on regeneration structures or taking a leadership role in the regeneration from a community perspective is a thankless, time consuming (described as taking up 20 or 30 hours a week sometimes by one resident) and difficult task where you might be treated badly by Cork City Council as well as your neighbours.

One community development worker in the area described the ad hoc way the City Council dealt with community representatives in the past:

> you'd have a group of residents coming together for a purpose and then the City Council would move on to the next phase and forget about what happened in that phase. Instead of building on the residents, they just left them go or whatever. Or if things got too difficult, you know, they moved away or moved on.

One resident described pressure resident representatives came under from Cork City Council to approve the designs of the initial masterplan in 1997 'To this day I still can't understand why the day of the signing of the document there was such pressure on us...I mean there were borderline threats. There were borderline threats. It was a case of "if ye don't sign this, we're withdrawing it and your community will know that it's down to ye"'.

The resident interviewed was involved in organising a residents' association at the time of the first masterplan and felt that while it was easy to engage people around issues to do with their immediate area, longer term involvement in community affairs was less likely, explaining 'Every meeting that you had, you

practically had everybody from the terrace and what we found was since the houses were done and completed, if you called a meeting, you got very, very few. It was a case of "I'm now all right, Jack. Do whatever ye want. I'm grand, my house is grand"'. This moderates MacLaran et al.'s (2007: 35) suggestion that it is more usual for the wider community to get involved in regeneration than other planning processes as the proposals directly affect their homes.

One community development academic with experience of Ballymun during its regeneration discussed how that regeneration benefited from formal community representation at regeneration board level though this still competed against the more personal motivations of some residents (similar to those described above):

> ...I think sometimes when you have community reps people tend to be driven by their own personal circumstances, so well if I'm getting a nice house and I'm getting an end of cul-de-sac and my kids are grown up and they live somewhere else maybe it doesn't matter to me if we're losing 100 units so I'm not going to maybe make such a big deal out of that because it's not something that's immediately impacting on my life, you know?

One Cork City Council community development worker in the area felt it was easier to involve community members in individual initiatives while they were reluctant to get involved in broader structures 'People seem to be much more comfortable at engaging in things around one thing like...but when it is kind of the bigger picture overall stuff it's more difficult and I can understand why'.

Potential tensions between residents representing community interests and the area's elected officials were also identified. One resident described how Cork City Council gave residents:

> the impression that at some stage a proper estate management programme would be implemented where we would have a say with regards to the development of our community...but I knew that it's something that Cork City Council would never develop and I also

> realised that we would never have the support of city councillors because if estate management worked, there was no need for your city councillor. You didn't have to go to them for any problems.

Regarding the role of the community and their politicians in shaping the regeneration, a social scientist said 'You know there's a political dimension to this which the local community must take on themselves…I think in the first instance local people need to engage with their local political representatives, the ministers and TDs'. A community development worker interviewed also identified the importance of running a 'voter education programme' for residents.

However, a resident was critical of the elected councillors in the area saying at election time you 'hear people coming out of the woodwork…my question straight up to them is "where the f**k have you been for the last two years?"' going on to suggest that if further work in supporting the capacity of the community was undertaken 'I think the first thing they would discover is you know what? We actually don't need councillors.'

This suggestion echoes a comment by a community development worker who—in a different context—also suggested there was a limited need for councillors in their experience as:

> I mean the councillors up here are not getting stuff for the area. Policy is dictating that the area gets this stuff…Every area that's classed as disadvantaged throughout the country are getting the same types of funding. Not to the extent maybe that Knocknaheeny might get it because you would have the higher levels that would get more than others but they're not getting anything… I mean, the councillors are not getting this for the area. The area is getting this because it's policy is dictating that they get it.

4.5 Governance and Policy

This theme further considers the role of residents, Cork City Council and agencies and how these actors engage horizontally, diagonally, and vertically. It is a distinct, but cross cutting theme, intersecting with regeneration,

sustainability and participation. It uses six subthemes as follows: focus on economic, employment and investment; powers, roles and structures; coherence; regeneration policy; community policy; effectiveness.

The theme reveals a shift in priorities at national and local level which sees basic community development work under resourced and an increased focus on education for employment along with an emphasis on communities 'living within their means' with potentially little guaranteed ongoing social support for regeneration areas. This may align with a view that regeneration inadequately addresses structural inequalities, with a desire for 'sanitised' public engagement and dislike of dissent. The multiagency nature of regeneration, existing tensions and how coordination and coherence can be achieved was also raised. Cork City Council put themselves forward as the appropriate lead agency for regeneration while highlighting the challenges presented by the siloised and centralised nature of Irish public administration. Giving them powers to 'whip' other agencies was suggested.

4.5.1 Focus on economy, employment and investment

The social protection official identified a 'backward' shift in policy saying their department's focus was now:

> welfare to work and work first…I suppose it is more like the US model. You see this Department now is all, is driven by activation so it's more anything that we are doing is from the active labour market policy is the driving force. I don't think it is anything to do with…bringing communities along… I don't think the Department now considers "communities". It considers numbers on welfare and how we can reduce numbers on welfare.

One education and training official noted that the formation of Educational and Training Boards in 2013 risked that 'the training end could well overshadow the education end'. One health sector official expressed concerns that national community policy had changed to 'focus on the economy or economic and jobs…It's government policy, but I don't think it's done the communities much

good.' Despite this shift in policy one male resident concluded 'when this [Knocknaheeny regeneration] is over and done with… you're still going to have a community that has high levels of unemployment.' They attributed this to a continued focus on investment in building houses rather than social regeneration.

4.5.2 Powers, roles and structures

When asked about how the regeneration is governed one health sector official said 'it would make sense to have one body running everything.' The City Council put themselves forward as the body who should take the lead role locally and Council officials were resistant to others taking this role.

One City Council community official said the Council were 'civic leaders so I suppose we should lead the way and bring other agencies with us. The Council can't do it on its own. They shouldn't do it on its own. We need to lead the vision with the others, the agencies, HSE or whatever to try and I suppose create that holistic approach to the development of Knocknaheeny.' The official then raised the practical issues with such an approach however 'the Council obviously can't make any agency do anything.' The agencification of Irish public policy (Dukelow, 2021) therefore adds significant complexity to the governance and delivery of regeneration.

This suggests a continued role for central government and the central government adviser suggested that the regeneration of Moyross from Limerick benefited from an interdepartmental group with the Department of Housing seeing itself 'as the overarching Department to coordinate the input from the other Departments, so maybe that's what Cork needs to consider.'

The limited powers of local authorities to direct investment and services was raised regularly. One senior City Council official identified the 'big three' services of education, social protection and economic development as being areas the Council had limited powers. This is explored further in the 'coherence' subtheme below.

Discussing the merits of a separate regeneration board for Knocknaheeny with agency and community membership (described as 'a kind of negotiation space that is fair and equal and recognising the power difference' by the national community development advocate), a community worker who has worked on regeneration projects in Dublin said such community regeneration boards are there to:

> hold the Council to account, 'will you do what you said you were going to do?' That's kind of the negative piece of their work in the sense of just really being there to make sure that it happens because we know from all the previous experiences that the chances are they f**k it up, right? It's probably 50:50 they'll f**k it up, right. And somebody has to be there to tell that story, from that side, and say 'actually you did that, that's what happened'.

The national community development advocate said such a regeneration board should have an independent chair 'to look and safeguard the participation of residents, the makeup of that board, giving the slight advantage to the community over the other parties and so on.'

Echoing Pateman (2012), one community development academic with experience of Ballymun during its regeneration discussed the importance of residents being involved in meaningful decision making through these structures:

> You have representation from the community alongside representation from other interests… the local authority interests, councillors—whoever else needs to be there—but that there has to be community people there who are involved in making the decisions and the decisions have to be made at that table so it can't be a place that the decisions are made in corridors and then rubberstamped at those.

The City Council regeneration official felt such structures were not needed, explaining:

> the local authority I feel should be given extra powers even to...to kind of you know whip them into shape if it needs whipping. I think the local authority should be a step above the other branches of public sector in the area...We need to be the leader...I think at the moment we tend to try to coax people along and pussy foot around their sensitivities...There is nothing else really that has anything elected by the people, so we really need to take the initiative and drive it...and they [other agencies] account to us and that they are able to say we are asking what is the progress, what is the story?

This suggests they do not believe the Council needs to be held to account in the ways the regeneration board model seeks to do.

4.5.3 Coherence

Existing tensions and how coherence is achieved across bodies and agencies working in the area is a clear subtheme. Explaining this context, a senior City Council official in the Community Directorate said:

> Unfortunately, Irish public administration...is very compartmentalised. It is very centralised. It is very siloised, you know, that you have, you have all the government departments running their own programmes...I mean that is kind of endemic to Irish public administration in that, you know, it's almost as if anything that can be centralised will be centralised, you know, now, and again I am probably quite jaundiced at this stage, but that you know we have no, we have no local government really in the country.

A City Council regeneration official said 'there are a lot of agencies working in Knocknaheeny and I think there is more integration possible...there is still a lot of work to be done in trying to pull them together better.' The official found working with other statutory bodies and agencies challenging, relying on the Council's 'powers of persuasion' rather than 'coercion' explaining 'You know we can coax people along but that's why you need buy-in...we have to lead other

public sector branches and they are not often as co-operative as you would like to be you know. They say who the hell do we think we are?'

The issue of diverse agencies responsible for a range of functions was identified as a barrier to sustainability by the national community development advocate saying:

> you look at a regeneration board, any regeneration board, even the really successful ones, well-functioning ones, there's nobody there from the Department of Education, there's nobody around from Social Protection probably, there might be a junior person from the HSE. Probably not. So what you have is you have the City Council, you have the Gardai, who usually play a very strong role and you have community projects, residents. That's generally as far as it goes and that's just not good enough for delivering a regeneration of a sustainable community.

A health sector official said 'the HSE has done more for and with those communities than any other agency and I think other people would probably say that as well. We've gone above and beyond, because of the community work department, but we are only one agency. We wouldn't be the most popular with other agencies...But like, we've made investment into local communities where other agencies haven't and I think that has paid off for us'.

A Cork City Council community development worker in the area saw much more interagency work in the area recently, saying:

> There are so many projects and initiatives in Knocknaheeny, but there was to an extent people were sort of working in their own little silos and it is certainly not perfect yet, but now I think there is much better working relationships between different projects. There is much more joint planning of things. There is a much more coming together of you know, how can we all collectively work together with the community to try and improve the quality of the life in Knocknaheeny.

However, they warned 'as you go higher up the food chain sometimes maybe the coordination and the interagency working and that ideally would be there isn't there.'

One education and training official involved described this interagency work as an 'extra to your core business and it's a meeting that you don't have to attend, but if anything I think maybe there is more added value from not dropping back with regards to pressures on time and everything else and shortages of staff...'

However, for one community development worker, this interagency coordination was of limited value unless they engaged with residents directly and focused on their requirements, noting:

> if you bring a group of people from all different agencies into a room and you ask them what does Knocknaheeny need, they might have ideas of what they think it needs, but if they're not engaging with people on the ground they don't have a clue...Like if we... when we're doing our plan every year, we have to ask people what are they interested in doing. I don't know who else in the community does that.

A health sector official gave the following example of a lack of coordination saying 'The parachuting in of the Barnardos project [Brighter Futures prevention and early intervention initiative] just summed up to me what was wrong with how things are developed in that, Barnardos is a great project...but the way that happened, it was kind of parachuted in...without consultation with the community. Without linking in with what was already there.'

Another example of 'parachuting' involves a 'community garden' project. Discussing the community garden, one Cork City Council community development worker in the area said there was a 'fantastic new community garden right in the middle of Knocknaheeny...There is huge community buy-in. There is huge community interest.' However discussing the same project, a local community development worker took a different view and objected to terming it a 'community' garden when they felt it was a top-down, rather than bottom-up initiative '...next thing we heard the community was getting the community

garden. There was no consultation. None whatsoever and there was over €100,000 put into this garden and it's still not ready. Do you know what I mean? And there's very few community involvement in it, but over €100,000 was spent on it…To me the money should have been set aside for some kind of community garden but with consultation first…It was created. Like the garden was created…And it's called the community garden. It didn't evolve from the community.'

4.5.4 Regeneration policy

The community worker who has worked with regeneration projects in Dublin believed that Ireland's adoption of Public Private Partnerships represented a change in regeneration policy and 'State's social contract with its people in public housing, it didn't see any need actually to invest in them, they had to look for resources to really do that and it was like, whatever. It can go on, like just that thing of it's almost they're money-making ventures, they become entrepreneurial activities as opposed to f***ing issues around people's right to housing.'

The social scientist recommended that there be a 'national regeneration strategy' that 'has to start by saying there will be special treatment' for areas that 'suffer disproportionately from a range of deprivation indicators', leading to additional social investment. This echoes the views of the community development advocate who said 'where a community falls below a certain standard there's needs to be a particular intervention just the same as when a child is at risk you know, there's an automatic state intervention if that risk is chronic enough'.

On how regeneration policies are enacted, one Cork City Council official involved in community and economic development believed that 'Ireland is very conservative around introducing community benefit clauses in regeneration' that might benefit 'local labour and local suppliers'.

A criticism articulated in some interviews and also in the literature is that regeneration can be characterised as local action intended to ameliorate and

legitimate, rather than challenge, structural inequalities (e.g. Furbey, 1990; Perrons and Skyers, 2003). A Dublin community worker argued that regeneration itself was a 'problematic frame' arguing:

> it excuses that other side, it lets that sit there and it doesn't really challenge it and one of the reasons that happens is because people are afraid to ask the bigger questions...Politicians are not interested in changing the structural inequalities really at any ... there's a bit of rhetoric around it and stuff like that. So, to give people new housing is enough really and a few quid for social regeneration and a few bits of this and that but fundamentally nothing changes in terms of the relationships which exist in Irish society.

4.5.5 Community policy

With regeneration itself described as a 'problematic frame', some officials saw the Council's role in helping communities' develop an analysis of inequalities as limited and instead presented a more neoliberal discourse. For example, a senior City Council planning official said:

> we need to be preparing local communities for a new world...I think a lot of what these communities are told is dishonest by some of their advocates...I suppose sometimes the message they get is that you can stay as you are, you know, without consequences and I think increasingly that message is not tenable anymore.

Echoing this, a local elected representative felt that Cork City Council and communities needed 'to work within the resources you have and not to raise expectations and for everybody to be realistic of what's achievable and what's not achievable but that would be all part of us moving forward together.'

Such views conflict with the more critical analysis that community development and education work can provide in regeneration communities. However, their effectiveness when faced with such institutional views was highlighted. For example, the academic who had worked in a community development project in Ballymun during its regeneration believes that community education courses

in Ballymun's regeneration damaged relationships between the community and officials:

> ...people's eyes were opened I guess. So they were given a social analysis, they got to understand about economics and power and culture and then when they tried to do something about that, even small things, they just hit an absolute brick wall...for me when there was a decision to stop running them I was quite happy with that because... I felt that it was disingenuous...It was not honest. It was 'we'll bring you in, we'll do community development and leadership with you but if you actually try and exercise collective leadership we're going to shut that down very, very quickly unless it's the sort of leadership that we want, which is that you come to a residents' association and you agree with everything that we say.' So, I think that didn't work.

One Dublin based community worker with experience of regeneration said that authorities such as the Council should resource the community 'to go on that journey and that's their job at that stage, I think it's stand back, give the resources to allow the community to explore its life and reflect on its life and to develop its vision and what it wants and all of that'. The officials' role, they considered, was to 'unlearn' their professional positions and recognise discursive differences. This required a 'co-learning process' with the residents as equals,

> ...and I don't mean just having people in the same room talking. What I'm saying is real dialogue where people are really trying to understand the other perspective, where they're coming from, what it's like to be you and beginning to sort of see, well okay, you know this is where I am, this is where you if you help me together we'll create something that works for both of us and that's very hard to get into that space but it can happen.

A community worker who has worked with regeneration projects in Dublin noted that successive governments are 'refusing to fund democratic dissent in

the form of community based projects and what that effectively means is it's very difficult to get funding to think radically, right? In an ideal world the state would fund … you know would say think the way you like but it's really we have a really immature kind of anti-democratic state in that way… it's hard to get a degree of kind of constructive radical thought in places and to keep it going for a period of time.' One health sector official believed that community policy locally and nationally now sought a 'very sanitised version of community engagement.'

Returning to the city level, a Cork City Council community development worker interviewed who said:

> adult education in an area like Knocknaheeny can tend to be quite narrow…you get flower arranging, childcare, hairdressing…People can only ask for what they know about do you know what I mean…it sounds very arrogant of me to say that they don't know that they want this, but they don't know enough about it or they, they have never had the opportunity or, or think of themselves as being an individual that can do anything you know that can.

They felt this affected the number of people in the community willing to engage with the Council on the regeneration and suggested an approach to address it. They said 'I think somewhere Knocknaheeny needs community development at the most basic level. It needs people who can go out and knock on doors and you know go in and have the cup of coffee and the chat and you know to start that long road to get people involved and engaged in their community'. They described this as an adult and community education approach where 'It's kind of about people feeling confident and interested enough to take that wider view'.

The senior City Council community official said over the years 'very little money has been put into capacity building really proportionately, and I suppose the political system and so on has really, has really, it pays lip service towards

developing activism and capacity and so on, but resources haven't been put into capacity development.'

At one point the social protection official interviewed discussed working with 'customers' in Knocknaheeny. Separately, an adult and community education academic interviewed had noted that 'when an agency defines one of its users as a customer it's moving from a rights-based approach to a different one, to a different type based on the person's capacity to purchase actually...As a customer you walk into a shop if you can afford it you get it, if you can't you do without it. As a citizen you have an entitlement to the rights that citizenship affords you. So, any action by any agency in any way weakens that rights based approach and it raises ethical questions for me.'

4.5.6 Effectiveness

The education sector worker in Knocknaheeny said 'Our focus is with most marginalised but sometimes, you know yourself from community work, progress can be very, very slow so in the meantime you see progress in terms of you're getting through to people, you're building up a trust, you're seeing a difference maybe in their lives, but in terms of if you like the policy makers or those demanding targets or demanding outcomes, they may not see your outcomes as, you know, I suppose what would you say, important.'

Some agencies queried the effectiveness of their own work. For example, one health sector official argued that 'In Knocknaheeny you're looking at third and fourth generation engagement with services, you know what I mean? Like, by rights if we had done our job properly people wouldn't be engaging with the crisis services, you know what I mean? It's the same in community development. If you're doing your job properly, you know. The need for the CDPs shouldn't be there.' This was echoed by another interviewee involved in Home School Community Liaison who said 'you're working to do yourself out of a job. In other words, you're passing on skills to adults, that the adults are the ones that should be taking over and running their community.'

Discussing redistributive policies such as regeneration and investment in areas like Knocknaheeny one senior City Council planning official said 'the big question for sustainable development is do you, do you continue to put resources into somewhere where it isn't making a difference?' This again suggests a very limited, market led interpretation of sustainable development.

4.6 Focus group

This section presents findings from the thematic analysis of focus group data. It begins by setting out the policy interventions respondents were asked to consider and then the response of the focus group to these proposals is discussed under the four themes of Regeneration, Sustainability, Participation/Democracy and Governance and Policy.

4.6.1 Policy interventions

As outlined in the methodology chapter, having concluded the interview phase, nine 'policy intervention proposals' were developed based on an initial analysis of the interview data and these were presented to a focus group of Cork City Council officials. Figure 4.1 describes each proposal and also the theme under which the focus group discussion is analysed.

Figure 4.1 Focus group policy intervention proposals

1. **A National Urban Regeneration Framework should be developed. This would include how and when regeneration is initiated, managed and delivered with a key focus on the role of the community.** It would be the responsibility of a national body who would also allocate funding and monitor outcomes of regeneration taking place under the strategy. Regeneration would continue to be delivered by local authorities through Regeneration Boards. To minimise uncertainty over funding and budgets for regeneration, the national body should ensure the local authority receives sufficient, ring-fenced, funding from central government at the outset to complete all stages of the regeneration. Residents must have a role in how the regeneration is being measured and what is being evaluated.

Theme: Regeneration

2. **A citizen participation programme should be developed and made available to residents with the key aim of empowering them to become active participants in regeneration.** Participation, empowerment, shared management and local leadership are essential elements of a 'sustainable community' and equal, effective and adequate participation by residents requires ongoing support, training and education.

   This programme might address matters such as poverty reduction, citizenship, democracy and governance, justice, human rights and gender equity. This is in keeping with the National Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development which aims to 'ensure that education contributes to sustainable development by equipping learners with the relevant knowledge (the "what"), the key dispositions and skills (the "how") and the values (the "why") that will motivate and empower them throughout their lives to become informed, active, citizens who take action for a more sustainable future' (Department of Education, 2014: 3).

   Theme: Participation/democracy

3. **An independently chaired, legally incorporated local Regeneration Board should be put in place to oversee the regeneration. Transparency in the selection of community representatives and the mechanisms for them to feed up and down the views of the community would be key. This would require significant and ongoing capacity building and support.**

   The Regeneration Board could be an adapted version of the structure set out in 'The Real Guide to Regeneration for Communities' (Tenants First, 2005). It could comprise nominated representatives from the community, local and state agencies (e.g. senior representatives of Cork City Council; Department of Housing; Department of Social Protection; Department of Education; Department of Justice; Garda Siochana; Cork City Partnership; HSE; Cork Education and Training Board) with a majority of community representatives. Silos within and across local authorities, government

departments and local service providers remain. One way to address this is by ensuring the right senior representatives, with budgetary powers within their relevant organisations, sit on the Regeneration Board. There should be clear terms of references for participating bodies.

The Regeneration Board would be responsible for approving all regeneration spending. The Regeneration Board would also be responsible for drawing up an estate management plan for implementation post regeneration.

The appropriate method for selecting community representatives, supporting them and ensuring they represent cross community views would be considered in the design of the citizen participation programme described in 1. Councillors would not be eligible to sit on the Regeneration Board but community representatives would be invited to make a commitment not to run in next local or national election. An independent observer should be involved at all meetings of negotiation.

All actors should also explore ways government, statutory and community and voluntary services working in the community can minimise staff turnover as local knowledge and relationships are important. There should always be a preference that future staff recruited to work in these areas by these bodies are local residents.

Theme: Governance and policy

4. **The Regeneration Board should resource the preparation of four separate, but complementary, community-led documents built upon the residents' active participation facilitated through proposal 1:**

    a. **Sustainable Development Vision Statement** – The Regeneration Board's independent chair would be the 'sustainable development' champion ensuring all those represented on the Regeneration Board worked to achieve the articulated vision and reporting on any deviations.

    b. **Education Strategy** – Setting out a vision for adult and community education in the area.

c. **Economic and Employment Strategy** – Setting out a vision for employment and training in the area, including social enterprise.

d. **Communications Strategy** – This would address matters such as the identity of the area, the image residents wish to portray about their area, the regeneration and the future. It would also consider how to appropriately celebrate quick wins, improvements and achievements.

Agenda setting is a key exercise in power and therefore it is essential that residents frame all these.

Theme: Sustainability

5. **A panel of external technical experts, (including architecture and design; planning; facilitation; property economics; and community development professionals), selected by residents, should always be available to community groups and community representatives on the Regeneration Board.** Allowing residents to draw on expertise and then learn from this expertise contributes to capacity building and ultimately to active citizenship. Significant community consultation will be required on technical matters such as tenure mix, densities, the quantum of social and affordable housing post regeneration, public open space, house types, heights, materials and design. Engaging fully with these experts will be facilitated by the capacity building aspect of the community education initiative in proposal 1.

Theme: Participation/democracy

6. **A Sustainability Assessment (including elements of Social Impact Assessment and Equality Impact Assessment methodologies) of the current masterplan and any future regeneration masterplans should be conducted.** This would consider the integration of sustainable development dimensions; rely upon principles and objectives rather than targets and thresholds; act with a precautionary bias; engage the public and include intra-generational and intergenerational equity considerations (from Colantonio and Dixon, 2009). Conducting the Sustainability Assessment will require effective public involvement as part of the

methodology. The masterplan and any successors should incorporate the state's human rights obligations and citizen's rights to adequate standards of living, housing, health, education, social protection and participation alongside remedies for any violations.

Theme: Sustainability

7. **All documents, plans and communications to residents should be plain English proofed.** Government and statutory actors should also avoid the language of 'customers' and 'clients' and instead ensure community are dealt with as citizens.

   Theme: Participation/democracy

8. **Community representatives should sit on any evaluation panel awarding contracts as part of the regeneration.** Appropriate social clauses should be part of any public procurement in the regeneration area. Community representatives will be able to actively and effectively participate in this through the capacity built through the community education initiative in proposal 1.

   Theme: Participation/democracy

9. **Social funding in the regeneration area should be ringfenced for the duration of the regeneration and at least six years following its official end.** Reductions in state services and funding of community and voluntary organisations represent a risk to successful social regeneration. It should also be ensured that independent organising space is available to community groups.

   Theme: Regeneration

4.6.2 Theme: Regeneration (proposals 1 and 9)

Under this theme the focus group discussion considered how national regeneration policy and funding could be changed. There was some support for the proposals but also a feeling that current structures should be made to work more effectively.

A participant said 'there is definitely a need for some kind of framework' and recommended that, similar to the process surrounding local development plans, there be 'some kind of national standard that you have to adhere to, timeframes that you have to work to, there isn't really anything like that for regeneration.'

Recognising the benefits of the proposal for a National Urban Regeneration Framework, one official said:

> I think one of the most useful things would be if there was some kind of departmental policy or guidance around regeneration that you know those core things have to be in it and there has to be cooperation with other agencies, there has to be community involvement, rather than setting up a different structure. As far as I know there's no kind of departmental instruction manual for regeneration so really the local authority isn't instructed to consult or cooperate with anybody, and like if that was part of the guiding principles

One participant believed there were coordination gaps across departments and recommended that national regeneration policy be driven by a 'Senior Officials Group on regeneration and that's usually at Assistant Secretary level, that would hopefully bring the coordination together across the thing and then when it gets down to the local level well we understand that our parent department's on message', thus ensuring that Departments and agencies are in agreement from national to local level. However, one participant cautioned against introducing new structures, saying 'there's a tendency in this country if something isn't working not to try and fix it but to set up something else'. The typical attractiveness of such institutionalist responses to policy makers has been discussed earlier (Cleaver, 1999; Mullally, 2013; Callanan, 2020).

Regarding the proposal for multiannual, ringfenced social funding, one participant agreed that 'there should be some long term plan and some long term commitment from government departments' with another adding that agencies had become better at working together and more flexible in co-funding initiatives.

A participant said there were obstacles to taking a long term approach to funding where the Councils had discretion to spend as they saw fit:

> I don't think the ringfences are strong enough, to be honest. What I'd prefer is that you would be given a global grant, say you're given 5 million or 10 million and told locally to work out how that's going to be spent…I think that's the way they go and unfortunately you can probably only do that on a two or three year basis max because it's impossible to see further down the road

4.6.3 Theme: Participation/Democracy (proposals 2, 5, 7, 8)

Under this theme the focus group discussed how residents were involved in regeneration decision making and supported to fulfil such roles. Discussants were reluctant to see communities access external expert advice except in limited circumstances where it may be necessary to avoid exposing them to legal liability on contractual issues.

One official indicated that a wide citizen participation programme would not be something the City Council itself was likely to deliver, but they queried 'if there's something that we should be doing for community reps.'

Another official queried if this would be a time limited programme for the duration of the regeneration, or a once off initiative or if rather it could be:

> a broader long term thing that would be part of the infrastructure of the local democracy in the city? You know so that's a question in my mind, whether this is a one-off or it's something we're trying to develop which can be mainstreamed…It's a good idea but our experience in the past has been that we get competing programmes as well.

One official, though acknowledging the study's focus on regeneration areas, saw a disconnect between how citizens of all backgrounds across the city and the Council engaged:

> The majority of people don't think the way we think because we think policy – action – timeframe, and they are concerned, to a large extent, with what affects their everyday lives.

In response to this one official said the City Council has to be 'more flexible, I think, and receptive, and receptive to information coming in from different channels and from different avenues' and recognised that the proposals would allow this.

Issues with national community development policy were noted by participants with one saying that due to funding requirements it is 'quite difficult for the partnerships to do grassroots community development and actually in order to achieve citizen participation you need grass roots community development and grass roots community development doesn't really have very visible outcomes.'

Discussing the proposal for a panel of external experts to advise regeneration communities, one participant was concerned that this proposal could represent an admission of failure by the City Council 'if we need to invite a panel of experts for the community representative we'd kind of failed in terms of building trust with them really. That really we should be engaging with them in a way that we can explain what we're doing and why we're doing it and we can take feedback from people.' Another ruled it out with an example of previous work saying:

> we've had some really good experiences even recently with the regeneration. We did a consultation around the landscaping plan and do you know it was fine, residents were able to contribute. The landscape architect and the architect were able to talk things through in terms that people could understand and were able to kind of articulate that in the plan. So I don't … yeah I don't really see any need for that.

The proposal that documents, plans and communications be plain English proofed with careful consideration of language was met with general agreement, though one participant was unsure if the City Council referred to 'customers' or 'clients' anyway, with another noting 'You can be sometimes a citizen when you vote. You're obviously a customer if you're buying a service

off us. You're a client if we're providing you with a service and you've no choice. I'm not sure when you're a consumer, maybe when you go to one of the facilities, like Leisure World [who operate Council owned leisure centres] or something like that, you become a consumer.'

Discussing if the use of 'customer' and 'client' related to neoliberalism, one participant said that in 'one sense the country always elects neoliberals, whether they're Fianna Fáil or Fine Gael, they're still neoliberals you know. So there's a dichotomy there you know which I'm not sure we're ever going to solve…Well you think about it and even you look at the ward members up in north west, maybe not so much now but definitely 20 years ago, they were probably all neoliberals, you know at national level really.'

Discussing the contractual proposals, one participant acknowledged that it would be a slow process but that the 'social clause thing is possible and can be done and is being done.'

Regarding the community representation on the evaluation panel awarding contracts, one official warned 'they'd want some fairly good guarantees from let's say the local authority or something that you know if they're sued, I can imagine a contractor now not getting a contract…. suddenly you're in the High Court'. The official suggested that the panel of independent experts might be part of addressing these risks.

Participants also believed this might 'expose' any representative on an awarding panel locally 'Previously as well there's … so there's a community person on the panel that appoints the builder, the project goes wrong, the community rep gets knocks on the door, "Well you were on the panel, like surely you can go and tell him to get off site now", you know that kind of thing?' Another added 'So I mean that could be a double-edged sword for a community rep.' This reinforces the importance of appropriate support and reporting structures for such community representatives.

4.6.4 Theme: Governance and Policy (proposal 3)

This proposal for an independently chaired, legally incorporated local Regeneration Board to oversee the regeneration was not well received, with democracy and efficiency arguments used against it and a view that better delivery under current arrangements was preferable to new structures. Analysing the focus group data under this theme revealed an antipathy to structures or ways of doing things that might weaken Cork City Council's role, reputation, budget or influence.

On the democratic side, one official said such a model with funded independent local entities in the past 'sundered the democratic element, it sundered the local government element from the local community element and it set them up against each other'.

They continued:

> ... if you make it legally, you know it's a legal entity, I don't think that's a good idea because it sets up a whole level of bureaucracy... So it would be far better...to set it up as an informal mechanism legally but have quite formal procedures...

The official also felt that elected councillors would oppose such a Regeneration Board as 'the councillors will see you rewarding the people who failed, who didn't get elected, they'd be probably on the board and the councillors won't be.'

Such opposition to new bodies somewhat reflects Cleaver's (1999: 601) contention that participation should look beyond institutionalism, but it also highlights her paradox of officials being unwilling to countenance participatory structures without the bureaucracy the public may be seeking to break from.

Focusing more on efficiency, another official was concerned that such a structure would give a negative impression and prove inefficient 'What this is saying is the City Council has a problem, maybe some of the other agencies, have a problem cooperating so we set up something, another thing, that will

make them cooperate. Rather than saying to them 'Well you have to cooperate. Go and change your internal procedures' and we went through all this… I mean this could turn out like Irish Water, do you know seriously? You've an independent board, you've a chief executive, goes off gets consultants, two years down the road, nothing is working and all this money has been spent, do you know?' They considered that closer monitoring by central government would 'be much more cost effective'.

Such an approach was later expanded upon by one participant who believed existing structures were sufficient to address what the proposal sought to achieve, saying 'Why set up another board that someone else has to keep an eye on? Why don't the National Oversight and Audit Commission [NOAC] come down here and say well if community participation is a priority of government NOAC should be telling for next year, look, see what people are doing, how responsive they are, what procedures have they got in place? It's not rocket science you know, it's just the will to constantly keep the pressure on consistently rather than huge pressure one year and then forget it the next year.'

Given the potential loss of power, funding and influence such a board may represent to the Council, these reactions are likely not surprising. However, the efficiency and democracy arguments presented to bolster the case against it, merit further discussion and will be considered in Chapter 6.

4.6.5 Theme Sustainability (proposals 4 and 6)

Under this theme the focus group discussion considered how sustainable development was interpreted and operationalised and how the contribution of regeneration to sustainability was measured.

Though the sustainable development vision statement proposed was intended to be community led, some participants questioned the need for separate statements such as this as existing City Council documents were in place. One said 'I suppose if you took the vision statement, I mean the development plan is a vision statement which is meant to be sustainable development. The LECP has a vision statement. So you know you could adopt those vision statements

to the local … but I think it's around the common understanding of what sustainable development is and I'm not sure we have that.'

However, another participant said 'We have a masterplan that really is about house building that highlights that some of these issues need to be developed further down the line but really they should be all developed as part of one integrated strategy at the start' and that the approach proposed was a way to address this but that in particular it should also ensure health was addressed.'

To general agreement, one participant said they had no problem with the proposal that a Sustainability Assessment of the current masterplan and any future regeneration masterplans be conducted, saying 'everything should be assessed obviously and that's the law and it has to be assessed… so I mean we wouldn't have a problem about that at all anyway, would feel that it will add to its value obviously.' However, participants said the construction of the criteria that these assessments would be held against would be key.

4.7 Chapter conclusion

The interviews conducted for this study generated a rich body of qualitative data and the focus group allowed me to explore some of the issues that emerged from the interviews in more detail. This has resulted in the research findings identified above.

With regards to regeneration, it is apparent that Irish regeneration practice initially focused on the physical, rather than socioeconomic aspects. There also appears to be different views between officials and community workers and residents on whether this has been adequately addressed and whether communities are now more appropriately engaged in both regeneration planning and, crucially, regeneration implementation. The effectiveness of the techniques decision makers use to engage with communities were questioned. There were several examples of Cork City Council preferring to use intermediaries to work with communities rather than engaging with them directly (while being reluctant to see communities have access to independent professional advice or strong board representation during the regeneration).

More fundamentally, the ability of regeneration to address structural inequalities was questioned by many of those interviewed, while some questioned the attitude of national and local government to 'real' community development and community-led change. The data also showed a reluctance to promote more critical analysis through community education and development as it may lead to deteriorating relationships with decision makers or increased community frustration and apathy without effecting meaningful change.

It is also clear that, when considered at all, 'sustainable development' and 'sustainable communities' remain contested concepts nationally and locally and do little to guide decision making at this time with differing views of their potential relevance and usefulness. Barriers to sustainability identified included ongoing socioeconomic deprivation, poor environments, and policy incoherence. Sustainable communities were described as self-generating, self-enhancing, self-reflexive and self-reliant.

Tensions were identified between local and central government (regarding the nature of regeneration and the powers available to local authorities, for example) and between local government and the community (regarding how consultation is carried out and how decision making does or does not take into account local voices and the frustration this gives rise to, for example). There are also different views on the governance structures required to improve the situation.

To conclude, across the data different perspectives are apparent, this is compounded by the evident absence of a shared, underpinning, understanding of sustainable development and participation in regeneration. Some consider sustainable communities, sustainable development and, indeed, regeneration, ideological constructs distracting from structural inequalities. The lived experience of the residents interviewed suggests that official commitments to sustainable development and holistic, participatory regeneration are more limited in practice with a distant local government. An official discourse considers that the local community is adequately consulted through a range of traditional means but that some aspects of (physically focused regeneration) are

too complex or lofty for communities to usefully engage with and that communities themselves are not sufficiently organised to participate. It is clear that despite their prominence as concepts, there is a lack of a well-defined policy goal or vision regarding regeneration and sustainable development or sustainable communities at national or city level and this must impede how it can be achieved or measured in Knocknaheeny.

In keeping with the tendency for qualitative research to feature rich 'thick descriptions' to contextualise the research compared to quantitative research (Bryman, 2012: 401), and also its priority within the research design, this qualitative chapter is longer than the next chapter which presents the quantitative findings. Chapter 6 then discusses both qualitative and quantitative findings with reference to the literature and offers policy tools for participatory regeneration for sustainable communities which may mediate the contested positions outlined above.

Chapter 5. Multi-level policy coherence and divergence

5.1 Chapter introduction

The exploratory sequential mixed methods design utilised in this thesis comprises a priority qualitative study followed by a supplemental quantitative component. This chapter presents the results of the quantitative conceptual content analysis of 18 policy documents, examining the occurrence of selected terms. The documents were coded for the existence and frequency of the concepts or terms, if they were defined when used, and if they appear in the document's objectives, aims, actions or similar.

As explained in Chapter 3, the purpose of the quantitative study was to deepen the understanding of how relevant concepts and terms are used in policy, in part to consider issues such as habitualisation (Krippendorff, 2004: 69) which legitimises and propagates chosen discourses through a pattern of frequent use and limits choices by 'the absence of mention of alternative ways of being or doing things'.

The structure of this chapter is as follows. Firstly, high level descriptive statistics drawn from the analysis are set out. Then, quantitative findings from the policy documents are discussed using the four themes of Regeneration, Housing and the Built Environment; Sustainability; Participation/Democracy; and, Governance and Policy. Under each theme, particular attention is paid to the content of the Knocknaheeny regeneration masterplan and cross-thematic linkages where relevant. A further discussion of the quantitative findings integrated with the findings from the qualitative phase of the study set out in the previous chapter will be presented in Chapter 6.

5.2 Descriptive statistics

The 18 documents analysed and the rationale for their selection was outlined in Table 3.3 of Chapter 3, and they are summarised below in Table 5.1. This table also includes the abbreviated title, acronym or initialism used to describe the document throughout the chapter. The table presents the documents in order

of their publication going from national to local levels, while Figure 5.1 illustrates the policy documents analysed by scale (national, regional and local).

Table 5.1 Summary of policy documents analysed in quantitative study

Title (*abbreviated title used in chapter*)	Published by	Year
Sustainable, Inclusive and Empowered Communities: A Five-Year Strategy to Support the Community and Voluntary Sector in Ireland 2019-2024 (*Community and Voluntary Sector Strategy*)	Department of Rural and Community Development	2019
Project Ireland 2040—the National Planning Framework (*National Planning Framework*)	Government of Ireland	2018
Sustainable Development Goals National Implementation Plan 2018 – 2020 (*SDGs Implementation Plan*)	Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment	2018
Rebuilding Ireland, an Action Plan for Housing and Homelessness (*Rebuilding Ireland*)	Government of Ireland	2016
The National Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development 2014-2020 (*National Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development*)	Department of Education	2014
Our Sustainable Future: A Framework for Sustainable Development in Ireland (*Our Sustainable Future*)	Department of Environment, Community and Local Government	2012
Sustainable Residential Developments in Urban Areas—Guidelines for Planning Authorities (*Sustainable Residential Developments Guidelines*)	Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government	2009
Delivering Homes, Sustaining Communities: Statement on Housing Policy (*Delivering Homes, Sustaining Communities*)	Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government	2007
National Action Plan for Social Inclusion 2007-2016 (*National Action Plan for Social Inclusion*)	Government of Ireland	2007

Good Practice in Housing Management: Guidelines for Local Authorities. Regenerating Estates, Rebuilding Vibrant Communities (*Housing Management Guidelines*)	Treadwell Shine and Norris, published by the Centre for Housing Research	2006
National Spatial Strategy 2002-2020 (*NSS*)	Department of Environment and Local Government	2002
Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Southern Region (*RSES*)	Southern Regional Assembly	2020
Regional Planning Guidelines 2010–2022 (*RPGs*)	South West Regional Authority	2010
Local Economic and Community Plan 2016-2021 (*LECP*)	Cork City Council	2016
Cork City Development Plan 2015-2021 (*City Development Plan*)	Cork City Council	2015
Cork City North West Regeneration Masterplan and Implementation Report (*Regeneration Masterplan*)	Cork City Council	2011
Joint Housing Strategy for Cork City and County Councils 2009–2015 (*Joint Housing Strategy*)	Cork City Council and Cork County Council	2009
Cork Area Strategic Plan 2001-2020 (*CASP*)	Cork City Council and Cork County Council	2001

Figure 5.1 Typologies of documents analysed

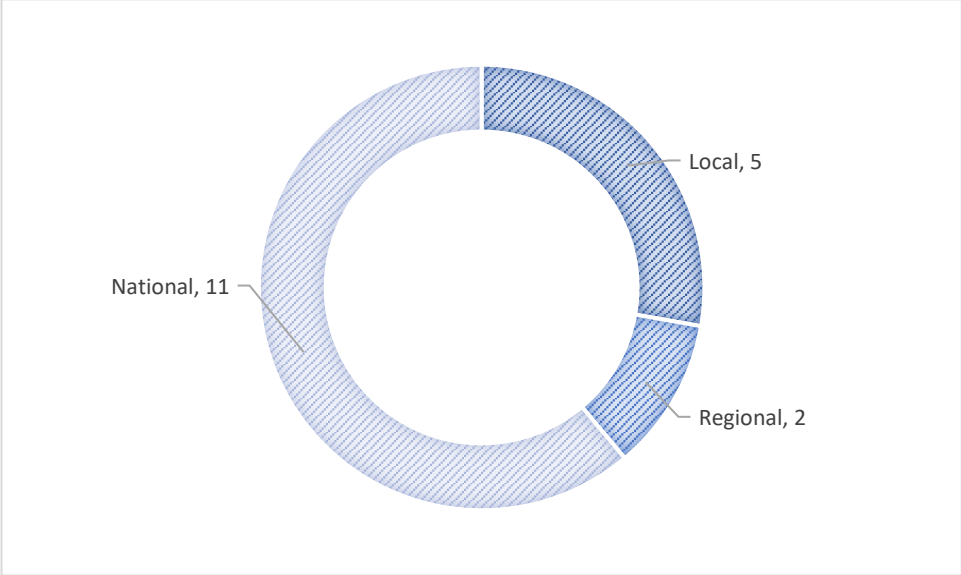


Figure 5.2 illustrates the documents analysed grouped by publication year, with the most recent document dating from 2020 (*RSES*) with the earliest dating from 2001 (*CASP*).

Figure 5.2 Number of policy documents analysed by publication year

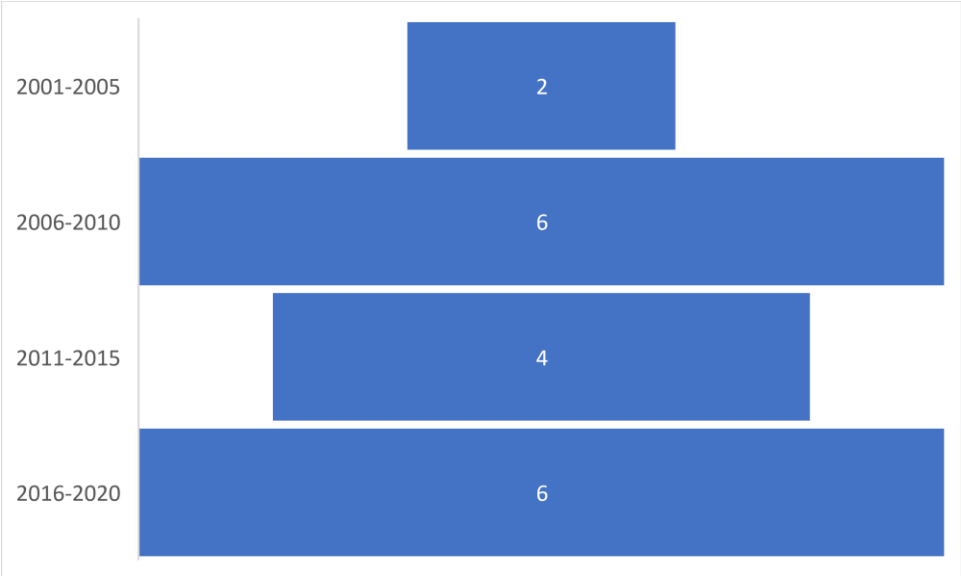


Table 5.2 presents the results of the a priori quantitative coding. Column A sets out the number of documents that used the concept or term. For example, the code 'social regeneration' was present in five of the 18 documents (27.77%).

Column B sets out the number of documents from Column A that defined the concept or term when it was present. For example, 'sustainability' appears in all 18 documents but only one document (5.55%) includes a definition.

Column C is a frequency count of the number of times the concept/term occurs across the corpus of documents analysed. For example, 'community resilience' occurs seven times in the two documents where it is present.

Finally, Column D takes the finding from Column A and sets out the number of documents that used the concept or term within its objectives, aims, actions or similar when it was used in the document. For example, 'sustainable development' is present in 15 of the 18 documents and in 8 of these documents (53.33%) it is included in at least one objective, aim, action or similar.

Following simple statistical analysis, relevant percentages are presented. Given the variation in the number of codes across themes and the high number of occurrences for some codes the mean and standard deviation is not included as, while calculated when writing up the analysis, they proved of limited relevance when comparing themes or codes. After Table 5.2, findings are outlined further by theme.

Table 5.2 Results of quantitative content analysis

Concept/Term	A. Present in document (% of documents n=18)	B. Defined in document if present (% defined when present in document)	C. Number of mentions across documents	D. Occur in objective, aim, action or similar (% where it occurs in these when present)
THEME: REGENERATION, HOUSING AND THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT				
Community benefit	2 (11.11%)	0 (0%)	2	0 (0%)
Physical regeneration	6 (33.33%)	0 (0%)	13	2 (33.33%)
Regeneration OR urban renewal	16 (88.88%)	1 (6.25%)	925	10 (62.50%)
Social regeneration	5 (27.77%)	0 (0%)	9	2 (40%)
THEME: SUSTAINABILITY				
Community resilience	2 (11.11%)	0 (0%)	7	2 (100%)
Sustainability	18 (100%)	1 (5.55%)	165	8 (44.44%)
Sustainable community/ communities	16 (88.88%)	2 (12.50%)	125	8 (50%)
Sustainable development	15 (83.33%)	6 (40%)	580	8 (53.33%)
Sustainable housing	4 (22.22%)	0 (0%)	6	0 (0%)
THEME: PARTICIPATION/DEMOCRACY				
Active citizenship/citizens	6 (33.33%)	0 (0%)	20	4 (66.66%)
Community development OR community education	13 (72.22%)	1 (7.69%)	170	6 (46.15%)
Consultation (public/citizen/	17 (94.44%)	0 (0%)	184	8 (47.05%)

community/local or equivalent)				
Empowerment or capacity building	13 (72.22%)	0 (0%)	73	5 (38.46%)
Participation (public/citizen/ community/local or equivalent)	16 (88.88%)	1 (6.25%)	200	9 (56.25%)
THEME: GOVERNANCE AND POLICY				
Interagency OR interdepartmental work	10 (55.55%)	0 (0%)	92	5 (50%)
Local autonomy OR subsidiarity OR devolved decision making	4 (22.22%)	0 (0%)	9	2 (50%)
Social OR Equality Impact Assessment	0 (0%)	0 (N/A)	0	0 (N/A)

5.3 Regeneration, Housing and the Built Environment

The following four terms are considered under the regeneration, housing and the built environment theme:

- Community benefit
- Physical regeneration
- Regeneration or urban renewal
- Social regeneration

This theme was present in 16 of the 18 documents analysed. It was not present in the *SDGs Implementation Plan* and *National Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development*. While only one subtheme ('regeneration') was defined, this had the highest number of mentions (with 925) of all the a priori codes used, occurring in 88.88% of documents (n=16). This code is also one of the terms most likely to appear in objectives, aims, actions or similar (62.50%) in the study. 'Physical regeneration' occurs slightly more than 'social regeneration' (present in 33.33% of documents, compared to 27.77%), while

'community benefit' is one of the terms that appears the least of all terms with two mentions (occurring in 11.11% of documents).

Only one definition of 'regeneration' is provided in the documents analysed, with Rebuilding *Ireland* (Government of Ireland, 2016: 47) describing regeneration programmes as targeting the 'country's most disadvantaged communities, including those defined by the most extreme social exclusion, unemployment and anti-social behaviour, through the provision of a holistic programme of physical, social and economic regeneration.'

Some ingredients for successful regeneration are outlined in *Delivering Homes, Sustaining Communities* (Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, 2007a: 62) which says successful regeneration projects 'are built upon a rigorous analysis to select the right solution; strategic planning to deal with the multi-faceted response required and concerted and focused action by a number of state agencies at local level to deliver on the ground and real community engagement.' These are clearly related to the later governance and policy theme also.

In the three explicitly sustainable development focused policy documents analysed (i.e. *Our Sustainable Future*, *SDGs Implementation Plan* and *National Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development*) there was only one reference to regeneration.

Community benefit does not appear in the *Regeneration Masterplan* and 'social regeneration' appears just once compared to 'physical regeneration' which appears five times in the *Regeneration Masterplan*.

To summarise, terms in this theme are used often in the sample and we see a focus on physical regeneration at local level and limited discussion of regeneration in sustainable development focused policies.

5.4 Sustainability

The following five terms are considered under the sustainability theme:

- Community resilience
- Sustainability
- Sustainable community/communities
- Sustainable development
- Sustainable housing

This theme was the only one found in every document analysed and of the a priori codes 'sustainability' is the only one present in every document.

5.4.1 Sustainable development

Of the terms coded, 'sustainable development' is the second most frequent term in the documents analysed (n=580), after 'regeneration'. Sustainable development is defined in 40% of the documents that use the term, making it the most defined term. The six definitions contained across the 15 documents that use the term are presented below. It appears in the objectives, aims, actions or similar of eight documents.

Table 5.3, below, sets out the six documents which include a definition of sustainable development and the definition provided. No document contained identical definitions of sustainable development though some are closely similar. For example, the 2012 *Our Sustainable Future* definition is slightly altered in the 2014 *National Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development*, (though the subsequent definition in the 2018 *SDGs Implementation Plan* is significantly different to either of these).

Table 5.3 Definitions of sustainable development present in documents analysed

Document	**Definition**
Cork Area Strategic Plan (CASP) 2001-2020 (Cork City Council and Cork County Council, 2001: 145)	Environmental Sustainability – Living within the capacity of natural environmental systems.

	Economic Sustainability – Ensuring continued prosperity and employment opportunities. Social Sustainability – Ensuring greater opportunities to participate in economic success in a way that adds to personal well-being and quality of life.
National Spatial Strategy 2002-2020 (Department of Environment and Local Government, 2002: 13)	Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of this generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs. The concept captures the important ideas that development • has economic, social and environmental dimensions which together can contribute to a better quality of life • will only be sustainable if a balance is achieved between these three dimensions • should allow future generations to enjoy a quality of life at least as high as our own • should respect our responsibilities to the wider international community.
Our Sustainable Future: A Framework for Sustainable Development in Ireland (Department of Environment, Community and Local Government, 2012: 10)	Development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Sustainable development is a continuous, guided process of economic, environmental

	and social change aimed at promoting wellbeing of citizens now and in the future. To realise this requires creating a sustainable and resource-efficient economy founded on a fair and just society, which respects the ecological limits and carrying capacity of the natural environment… Sustainable development is about ourselves. It is about inhabiting a place where there is economic stability based on a model of national progress and development that respects the three core pillars of sustainability: the environment, the economic, and the social.
National Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development 2014-2020 (Department of Education, 2014: 6)	'Sustainable development' can be defined as 'development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.' Sustainable development is characterised as a continuous, guided process of economic, environmental and social change aimed at promoting wellbeing of citizens now and into the future. To realise development of this nature requires creating a sustainable and resource efficient economy founded on a fair and just society, which respects the ecological limits and carrying capacity of the natural environment.
Cork City Development Plan 2015-2021 (Cork City Council, 2015: 273)	Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.
Sustainable Development Goals National Implementation Plan 2018–2020 (Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment, 2018: 8)	Sustainable development means meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Sustainable development is about making sure that everyone in society enjoys a decent quality of life today, while

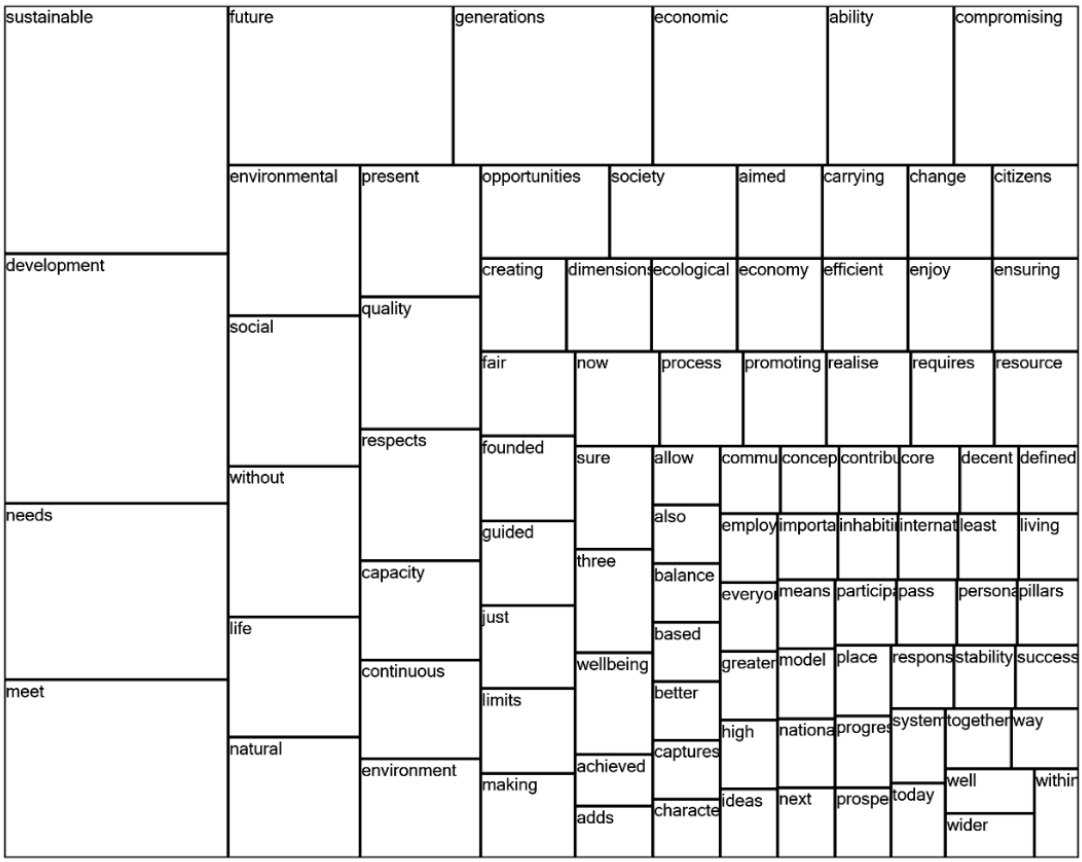
	also making sure that we can pass on that same opportunity to the next generation, and on into the future.

As we can see from the table above, many of the definitions provided are clearly rooted in the Brundtland definition of sustainable development as development that 'meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs' (WCED, 1987: 8), but further detail or areas of emphasis are included (apart from the *City Development Plan*). For example, Ireland's sustainable development policy framework *Our Sustainable Future* (DECLG, 2012: 10) elaborates to say sustainable development is about 'ourselves' while the *NSS*, though ostensibly a national spatial policy, also considers its international dimensions. The successor to the *NSS*, the *National Planning Framework*, does not include a definition though the term is used in several of its objectives.

The *City Development Plan* reproduces 'the Egan wheel' of place making for sustainable communities (ASC, 2006) which includes equity and effective governance, but notably the plan only discusses its built environment dimensions, missing its holistic approach.

As a piece of secondary analysis, the definitions set out in Table 5.3 were analysed using Nvivo software and a tree map (Figure 5.3) was generated displaying words (with a minimum length of three letters) from the definitions as a series of rectangles, where frequently occurring words are in larger rectangles.

Figure 5.3 Sustainable development definitions word frequency tree map



This analysis shows that 'development' was the most frequent word in the definitions (n=14), with the terms 'sustainable' or 'sustainability' together also appearing 14 times. The words 'participate' and 'community' appear once each in the definitions and in a limited and specific way, i.e. 'participate' is linked to economic success in the *CASP*, while the *NSS* refers to the international community. The word 'citizens' appears twice (in the *National Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development* and *Our Sustainable Future* definitions).

As noted in Chapter 2 the 'three pillars' or 'triple bottom line' heuristic, balancing environmental, economic, and social priorities (Peterson, 2016) is frequently used to describe sustainable development and this forms the basis of the conceptualisations of sustainable development contained in the policy documents analysed. The fourth 'governance' or 'institutional' dimension of sustainable development suggested by, for example, Čiegis and Gineitienė (2008) and Valentin and Spangenberg (2000) is not included. 'Economic' (n=7)

appears more than 'social' (n=5) and 'environmental' (n=5). 'Economic' is used three times in the *Our Sustainable Future* definition and twice in that from the *CASP*.

In an example of its widespread, but perhaps somewhat incoherent, deployment, 'sustainable development' is used 39 times in the *RPGs* (South West Regional Authority, 2010) and referenced in a large and diverse range of its objectives, from the development of motorways in the region to the linguistic heritage of the islands, for example.

5.4.2 Regeneration Masterplan and other terms

'Sustainable community' or 'sustainable communities' is used 125 times across 16 of the 18 (88.88%) documents analysed. It is used in actions, aims, objectives or similar of eight of these documents.

Though national housing policy as set out in *Delivering Homes, Sustaining Communities* (Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, 2007a: 21) has the building of sustainable communities as its guiding principle, and the term is used eight times in the *Regeneration Masterplan*, it is not used in specific objectives, aims, actions or similar of the document though the narrative does say the masterplan overall 'represents an aspiration for the development of a high quality, sustainable community' (Cork City Council, 2011: 25) and it acknowledges that a key message from national, local and regional policy is that the regeneration strategy should 'create a long term sustainable community' and 'ensure the long term sustainability of the area' (Cork City Council, 2011: 18). Though also present in the *Regeneration Masterplan* document, the terms 'sustainability' or 'sustainable development' are also not used in specific aims and objectives. The term 'sustainable housing' is not used in the *Regeneration Masterplan*. 'Community resilience' and 'sustainable housing' also do not appear in the document.

Objective 14.3 of Cork City Council's *City Development Plan* (2015: 215) relates to the Knocknaheeny regeneration and lists six outcomes but a sustainable community or sustainable development is not listed amongst these. The *City*

Development Plan (Ibid.: 81) links regeneration to achieving social cohesion (a term it does not elaborate).

Two documents, *Our Sustainable Future* and *Delivering Homes, Sustaining Communities*, define or conceptualise sustainable communities. These are presented in Table 5.3 below. This shows that the definitions are similar, but not identical, with the more recent 2012 definition arguably more limited, lacking a discussion of resident's needs.

Table 5.4 Definitions of sustainable communities present in documents analysed

Document	**Definition**
Delivering Homes, Sustaining Communities: Statement on Housing Policy (Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, 2007a: 2)	Sustainable communities are places where people want to live and work, now and in the future. They meet the diverse needs of existing and future residents, are sensitive to their environment, and contribute to a high quality of life. They are safe and inclusive, well-planned, built and run, offer equality of opportunity and good services for all.
Our Sustainable Future: A Framework for Sustainable Development in Ireland (Department of Environment, Community and Local Government, 2012: 63)	Sustainable communities are places where people want to live and work, are environmentally sustainable and contribute to a high quality of life for residents. They are safe and inclusive, well-planned, built and run, and offer equality of opportunity and good services for all.

The term 'community resilience' appears only in some of the more recent documents, the 2016 *LECP* and the 2019 *Community and Voluntary Sector Strategy,* perhaps demonstrating its more recent prominence.

'Sustainable housing' occurs in 22.22% of documents, though it is only used six times in total across these. It is not used in any aims or objectives. However,

further examination of the appearances of 'sustainable community' or 'sustainable communities' shows that these also often focus on housing as the following four examples demonstrate.

- Measure 35 of *Our Sustainable Future* relates to 'Developing Sustainable Communities' however despite the wide definition of sustainable communities earlier in the document (and seen in Table 5.3 above) only three of the ten Government commitments under this measure relate at all to social sustainability (referring to community development programme reform, the Irish language and the quality of life associated with greening), with the rest focusing on housing and the built environment (without a specific mention of regeneration) (DECLG, 2012: 71-72).
- Secondly, this is echoed in Goal 10 ('Deliver high quality housing for those who cannot afford to meet their own housing needs and to underpin the building of sustainable communities') of the *National Action Plan for Social Inclusion* (Government of Ireland, 2007: 15) which links sustainable communities to housing explicitly.
- Thirdly, in the Joint Housing Strategy one of either 'sustainable development', 'sustainable communities' or 'sustainability' appear in three of the four principles derived from national, regional and local policy, which are said to inform the strategy. Alhough these terms are not defined a limited interpretation is sometimes apparent—for example, in the document 'sustainable communities' is explicitly linked to tenure mix.
- As a final example, *Delivering Homes, Sustaining Communities* (DEHLG, 2007a: 51) commits that 'Sustainable community proofing will be introduced for all new projects. Based on a simple toolkit, a series of critical questions should be asked before the commencement of a project to determine the appropriate profile of supply. It is proposed…to develop the appropriate toolkit and to publish best practice guidance on delivering sustainable housing.' A 'sample toolkit' for such proofing is

provided in the document, this asks five questions, three of which relate to housing needs and tenure issues and the other two asking about how the community will develop in the medium term and how it will connect to services and infrastructure (DEHLG, 2007a: 51). Interestingly, there is no reference to sustainable community proofing being applied in the *Regeneration Masterplan*.

The *LECP* (Cork City Council, 2016: 21) provides the following definition of 'sustainability': 'promoting a more resource efficient, green and more inclusive society and economy' which, though it has a social element, still leads with environmental sustainability.

In summary, these results confirm the wide use of 'sustainability' and that definitions of 'sustainable development' are often included in policy, though their formulation varies across documents. When used 'sustainable communities' is regularly regarded as relating to housing and the meaning of 'sustainable development' and 'sustainable community' is not elaborated in the *Regeneration Masterplan*.

5.5 Participation and Democracy

The following are considered under the Participation and Democracy theme:

- Active citizenship/citizens
- Community development or community education
- Consultation (public/citizen/community/local or equivalent)
- Empowerment or capacity building
- Participation (public/citizen/community/local or equivalent)

'Consultation' is used in all but one of the sample (present in 94.44% of the documents). The only document not to use the concept was the *RPGs*. When present in a document, a code from this theme was most likely to also be included in an objective, aim, action or similar.

The *Community and Voluntary Sector Strategy* (Department of Rural and Community Development, 2019: 16) contains the only definition of community development in the sample, i.e.:

> a developmental activity comprised of both a task and a process. The task is social change to achieve equality, social justice and human rights, and the process is the application of principles of participation, empowerment and collective decision-making in a structured and coordinated way.

The *National Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development* overall appears to have a narrow focus on formal education, with three uses of 'community education' (in contrast to 17 mentions of 'higher education' in the text, for example).

Though there are many references to types of participation or its benefits, the *Community and Voluntary Sector Strategy* (Department of Rural and Community Development, 2019: 37) can be said to contain the only conceptualisation of participation in the sample:

> A commitment to active participation of all stakeholders, including citizens and non-citizens. Participation is rooted in the belief that communities have the right to identify their own needs and interests and the outcomes required to meet them. Building active participation involves a recognition that policies and programmes targeted at communities and groups will not and cannot be effective without the meaningful participation of those communities in their design, implementation and monitoring.

In some instances, participation, when mentioned, can be quite limited in its utilisation or intention. For example, an action of the *Joint Housing Strategy* (Cork City Council and Cork County Council, 2009: 41) refers to residents' participation in estate management programmes specifically 'targeted at enhancing the safety of housing areas.'

Though the instances were not included in the analysis, it is notable that when the term 'participation' is used in the documents it was often with regards to the labour market rather than communities. When 'consultation' is used it is regularly about consulting with state bodies, agencies or Departments. Also, when the documents analysed refer to participation it is sometimes targeted at specific groups such as youth and older people (instances of such targeted references were not included in the analysis).

5.5.1 Regeneration Masterplan

Neither 'active citizenship', 'empowerment' nor 'capacity building' appear in the *Regeneration Masterplan*. 'Community development' or 'community education' are used twice, including an aim to 'Evaluate the needs of the community in terms of job opportunities, learning initiatives, community development and facilities' (Cork City Council, 2011: 1). Public (or similar) 'consultation' appears seven times, with the *Regeneration Masterplan's* implementation strategy (Cork City Council, 2011: 62) saying:

> The City Council appreciates that each resident has specific needs and there will need to be extensive dialogue and consultation between all to ensure that these needs are met. Precise details relating to all of these matters including timing and other logistical matter will at all times be discussed and agreed well in advance with all residents. At all times the aim will be to maintain and enhance existing community integrity and structures.

The *Regeneration Masterplan* sets out 16 steps for the first phase of the regeneration in its implementation strategy (Cork City Council, 2011: 64-65), none of these steps use terms studied under the Participation and Democracy theme, though 'tenant liaison' does appear. Notably 'Department endorsement and adoption of masterplan' is the first step. No terms in this theme appear in the vision for the regeneration set out in the *Regeneration Masterplan*, though it does reference the need to 'reinforce Community facilities' (Cork City Council, 2011: 24).

5.5.2 Cross-thematic linkages

Participation was linked to the delivery of the Sustainable Development Goals in the sample. The strategic priorities of the *SDGs Implementation Plan* (Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment, 2018: 6) include fostering public participation and providing 'stakeholders with meaningful opportunities to contribute to national follow-up and review processes regarding the Goals, and with opportunities to further the development of the national implementation framework.'

Sustainable development policy (Government of Ireland, 2018b) has linked Ireland's achievement of SDG indicator 11.3.2 ('Proportion of cities with a direct participation structure of civil society in urban planning and management that operate regularly and democratically') to the implementation of the *National Planning Framework* however such considerations are not prominent in the analysis of the document undertaken here (and as noted, Murphy et al. (2021) find that in Ireland no data is available for this indicator).

Consultation is linked to sustainable development in the *Sustainable Residential Developments Guidelines* (Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government, 2009: 17) which state 'The public consultation process can help ensure wider understanding of, and support for, strategic development objectives such as the fulfilment of housing strategy aims and the promotion of sustainable development.'

The *Housing Management Guidelines* (Treadwell Shine and Norris, 2006a: 10) link local decision making to regeneration, saying estate regeneration 'aims to encourage and facilitate all local stakeholders to take an active, decision-making role in estate regeneration.'

The *National Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development* (Department of Education, 2014: 3) also explicitly links this theme to sustainability, setting the objective 'The *National Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development* aims to ensure that education contributes to sustainable development by equipping learners with the relevant knowledge (the 'what'), the key

dispositions and skills (the 'how') and the values (the 'why') that will motivate and empower them throughout their lives to become informed active citizens who take action for a more sustainable future.'. Similar language appears in the *SDGs Implementation Plan* (Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment, 2018: 28).

In summary, these results confirm the interlinking of participation, sustainability and regeneration. They also show that though regularly used there are a variety of interpretations of participation and consultation, with it being used in a constrained way linked to limited and specific purposes in some documents.

5.6 Governance and Policy

The following three terms are considered under the cross cutting Governance and Policy theme:

- Interagency or interdepartmental work
- Local autonomy or subsidiarity or devolved decision making
- Social or Equality Impact Assessment

Uniquely, no term in this theme was defined in the documents studied. This theme also had the lowest number of mentions (n=101). The only a priori code that was not found in any of the documents analysed was 'Social Impact Assessment' or 'Equality Impact Assessment' from this theme.[15]

Though local autonomy was mentioned in four national level documents (i.e. *Community and Voluntary Sector Strategy, Housing Management Guidelines*, *Delivering Homes, Sustaining Communities,* and *Our Sustainable Future*) three features of its use merit attention.

Firstly, its appearance in national high level community, housing and sustainable development policy and regeneration guidelines confirms its relevance to this study's research questions. Secondly, it does not appear in

[15] However, *Our Sustainable Future* discusses how Sustainability Assessment methodologies could be integrated with existing policy impact assessment tools and includes this as a measure under the framework.

recent Government housing policy such as *Rebuilding Ireland*. Thirdly, and perhaps most significantly, it is not referenced in local level documents produced by Cork City Council, the actor, arguably, most affected by it. No terms in this theme appear in the vision for the regeneration in the *Regeneration Masterplan*. 'Interagency' or 'interdepartmental' work appears in over half the documents analysed and it also appears in several actions, aims, objectives or similar.

In summary, these results show that local autonomy and governance issues are considered relevant in community and sustainability policy but they do not appear in recent housing policy and are not included in the local government policies studied, though this is where perhaps it is most relevant.

5.7 Chapter conclusion

This chapter presented the results of the quantitative study in two ways. Firstly, it gave an overview of the data and descriptive statistics. This was followed by a discussion of the data using the four identified themes. Overall, these findings provide a number of insights into the use of regeneration, sustainability, participation and governance terms and concepts in a range of relevant national, regional and local policy documents.

With regard to the Regeneration, Housing and Built Environment theme, regeneration is not widely defined in an Irish context and there were limited references to regeneration in sustainable development focused policy. The *Regeneration Masterplan* contains more uses of 'physical regeneration' than 'social regeneration' and does not contain the term 'community benefit'.

The ubiquity of sustainability is evident from analysis of the theme here. 'Sustainability' is the only term present in all 18 documents analysed, while 'sustainable development' is defined in six documents, more than any other term studied. When detail on sustainable communities is provided, the focus tends to be on physical and housing aspects.

Participation terms are common in the sample. Public 'consultation' in particular is widely used, appearing in all but one of the documents but terms

in this theme can also be used in a circumscribed way. Regarding governance, there appears to be a reluctance to include local autonomy matters in both local and recent housing policy documents.

Together these findings provide important insights to consider in conjunction with the results of the qualitative study. Therefore, in line with the 'integrating through narrative' approach to mixing methods (Fetters et al., 2013), the next chapter discusses these quantitative findings with the results of the previous qualitative chapter.

Chapter 6. Towards participative regeneration for sustainable development

6.1 Chapter introduction

The two preceding chapters set out the qualitative and quantitative findings of this thesis separately and in a predominantly thematic way. This discussion chapter addresses the research questions by interpreting and integrating these results and considering them against relevant theory and previous research. The framework for integrating qualitative and quantitative methods was previously discussed in Chapter 3, where the exploratory sequential mixed methods design, i.e. (QUAL → qual) → quan, employed was described.

As explained in the introductory chapter, the present study seeks to explore how the concepts of sustainable development and participation have influenced regeneration policy and practice and how they may be more closely integrated given their normative orientation. This can further the conceptual development of these three concepts by relating them to each other. This is to be achieved through considering four research questions and the results relevant to each of these are discussed in turn below.

6.2 Addressing the research questions

Utilising a case study of the regeneration of Knocknaheeny, the thesis asks the following four research questions:

- Firstly, how do actors in the regeneration programme conceptualise sustainable development? How do these understandings relate to each other and how have they been applied?
- Secondly, has Irish policy from national to local level defined 'sustainable development', 'participation' and related terms with sufficient rigour to support a shared understanding and consistent use in the regeneration of Knocknaheeny?
- Thirdly, are there specific barriers to community participation in the Knocknaheeny regeneration?

- Finally, learning from the case study what strategies or instruments can integrate participation and sustainability in regeneration?

The research findings are discussed below under each of these four questions.

6.3 The community and sustainable development in regeneration

Roberts (2000: 17) defines regeneration as 'a comprehensive and integrated *vision and action* [emphasis added] which leads to the resolution of urban problems and which seeks to bring about a lasting improvement in the economic, physical, social and environmental conditions of an area that has been subject to change'.

The first research question asks how sustainable development has been conceptualised and applied in the regeneration, i.e. both vision and action after Roberts' definition. Therefore, the understanding and application of sustainable development (a concept which the thesis confirms is contested) in the case study, and opportunities for participation in setting the regeneration vision and strategy are considered here. This question is primarily considered through looking at the qualitative study (where respondents were asked to discuss their understanding of what made a sustainable community, what sustainability and sustainable development were, and the place of these within the regeneration) and relating it to the literature, though insights from the quantitative study are also examined where relevant.

This question is important. Overall, the sustainability literature assigns a positive role to visions as a necessary part of system change (Kemp and Martens, 2007) while amongst the components of social sustainability identified by Partridge (2005: 8) is a future focus. Roseland (2000) contends that for sustainability, communities must be involved in defining it from a local perspective and that the main challenge in designing a framework for sustainable communities as how to encourage democracy by supporting participatory local processes. Lombardi et al. (2011) argue that the conceptualisation of sustainability operating within urban regeneration

schemes should powerfully shape how they do or do not make manifest the principles of sustainable development. However, their study found that the definitions and conceptualisations of sustainability in urban regeneration policy are fundamentally limited. This is also apparent in this case study.

6.3.1 Action: Interpretation and application

Firstly, the variety of opinions on sustainable development and related terms in the literature was also reflected in the interview data. For example, one interviewee considered them to be buzzwords 'emptied of all meaning' while another described them as 'soft'. A Cork City Council official suggested that there were multiple interpretations which made its use impractical. This was contradicted by a senior Cork City Council official interviewed who said an agreed definition of sustainable development would be useful for decision makers as a 'decision-making framework where we can make choices, and define priorities, and then see how individual projects measure up against those priorities.' Though it had some individual supporters such as the interview quoted above, the data suggest that overall Cork City Council does not have a clear overall institutional understanding of sustainable development. This is not unusual. Analysis of the interviews found that few professionals engaged with their organisation's definition of sustainable development or believed it was used in practice despite its prominence in policy. In one case a professional openly disagreed with how sustainable development was framed in their organisation's policy, pointing to perceived contradictions.

The present study suggests that sustainable development in policy is regularly ignored or at best pursued only by sections of the administration. It is rarely, if ever, discussed in official meetings and one official acknowledged that with the Knocknaheeny regeneration Cork City Council tasked itself with creating a sustainable community without a shared understanding of what it meant other than their 'gut feeling' that it is not something residents would want to talk about with the Council. This may be said to be symptomatic of weak, managerial sustainable development (Hopwood et al., 2005). The quantitative study shows that Cork City Council's *City Development Plan* (2015: 215) lists six outcomes of

the Knocknaheeny regeneration but a sustainable community or sustainable development is not listed amongst these.

Regeneration policy and practice in Ireland has generally taken a limited interpretation of sustainable development and sustainable communities, with a focus on housing in general and tenure mix in particular (Russell and Redmond, 2009) in a trend similar to elsewhere (Doney et al., 2013, Livingston et al. 2013). The limited potential of tenure mix to create sustainable communities has been raised (Arthurson, 2002) and this was echoed in the interviews with residents and some community sector workers who believed that social sustainability ('the social goals of sustainable development' according to Dempsey et al., 2009: 290) was under considered in the regeneration. The quantitative study confirms that 'economic' appears more than 'social' and 'environmental' in sustainability definitions. This aligns with Winston's (2010) contention that the persistent failure to recognise the need for social as well as physical change in estates is a barrier to achieving sustainable regeneration. It should be noted however, that central government funding for projects under the regeneration programme's Social, Environmental and Economic Plan (SEEP) may address some of this criticism.

6.3.2 Incorporating residents' vision

The section now turns to the second part of the question—how residents' may elaborate their visions, and specifically their interpretation of sustainability, in the regeneration (while recognising that communities will also experience internal dissent, disagreement and compromise—McCloskey et al., 2013; Garavan, 2009; Edwards and Imrie, 2015; Cleaver, 1999).

Hunt and de Laurentis (2014) discuss the importance of guiding visions—participatively created frames of reference for describing and addressing a problem or 'cognitive and discursive constructs decisive for the coordination of behaviour' (Späth and Rohracher, 2010: 450)—in sustainability. Hunt and de Laurentis, after Smith and Kearn (2009), consider that such guiding visions can make abstract or jargon laden issues accessible, provide a framework for action and evaluation, and mobilise and motivate change and resources. Therefore,

they are particularly significant in a space involving the contested concepts of regeneration, sustainability and participation. Hunt and de Laurentis note that while critics suggest visions are likely to perpetuate the status quo rather than lead radical change, their key virtue is when participatory processes develop them. However, the study shows that the opportunity of participative vision building have not been grasped in Knocknaheeny.

That said, there would appear to be some openness to this. A senior City Council official interviewed said they believed the City Council should have a definition of sustainable development as 'it allows a shared understanding'. This view was echoed in the focus group and it highlights the potential power of sustainable development in developing visions or as a boundary object. However, it was expressed in the interviews that the City Council should lead on the vision for the regeneration and that overall strategy and vision for regeneration is the purview of the Council primarily, not those who will be directly affected. This was reflected in the focus group where an official felt there were visions already present in a range of Council documents and policies that could perhaps be adapted for the regeneration, rather than the need for a community-led vision statement.

The interview data suggest that consultation and engagement with residents regarding the regeneration has been, at best, uneven. There appears to be a focus on (ineffective) mass consultation initially and more intensive, targeted engagement with certain groups at key points based on personal relationships and available institutional memory, but no early visioning process where sustainable development and the vision for the regeneration could have been discussed and debated.

The qualitative data reveals that at the outset of the regeneration planning process there was little to no community involvement in preparing the initial brief for central government professionals, suggesting that at least an outline vision for Knocknaheeny was in place before any community engagement took place, and the interviews show this was physical regeneration and housing

delivery focused. This is discussed further in Section 6.4 on barriers to community participation.

The approach adopted reflects a missed opportunity to pursue more engagement with residents with an adult and community education ethos through locally resident facilitators. Such an approach would satisfy Taylor's (1998) contention that to reduce social exclusion regeneration strategies must first build confidence and social capital and empower residents by developing hard skills, experience, networks and vision through community development. Its absence accords with Imbroscio's (2006) account of administrations abandoning the 'inside game' of community development for entrepreneurial approaches. A suitable early approach here might have been asset-based community development (ABCD) which is based on the strengths and assets of communities rather than their deficits and is seen by practitioners as a socially sustainable model to support disadvantaged communities (Harrison et al., 2019). ABCD has, however, also been criticised as neoliberal (Mathie, 2017: 55) with suggestions that it justifies the withdrawal of state support and individualises disadvantage (a critique which, as discussed, has also been made of regeneration and empowerment and which is revisited further below).

Most (but not all) interviewees felt sustainability or a sustainable community depended on the area's broader socioeconomic circumstances, rather than being something that could be wholly community-led. There is a tension between this and the strong local rhetoric of sustainable development outlined in Chapter 2 (such as *Local Agenda 21*).

To conclude this section, the research shows there is a lacuna in terms of defining sustainable development in the first place with few opportunities for the community itself to express its understanding and conceptualisation of sustainability. This lack of clear vision has potential impacts in terms of what regeneration can achieve. Ellis et al. (2004: 14; also Bridger and Luloff, 1999, Roseland, 2000) suggest that allowing people to invent local sustainable development for themselves is a significant core value. This was not an aspect

of regeneration practice in Knocknaheeny and the next section considers if regeneration policy encourages or stifles such an approach.

6.4 Sustainable development and participation in policy

While the first question assessed the interpretation and application of sustainable development in regeneration practice, the second question in this research asked if Irish policy across levels has defined sustainable development and participation and related terms in a way that might support their shared understanding and application in regeneration. This question is primarily considered through looking at the findings of the quantitative study and relating it to the literature, though insights from the qualitative study are also examined where relevant. The study allows us to explore some of the sub-discourses that exist within the 'meta-discourse' of sustainable development due to the many interpretations that exist (Hugé et al, 2013). This question is significant as Lyons et al. (2001) suggest that the vagueness associated with the concepts of participation and empowerment has contributed to a poor understanding of the relationship between participation, empowerment and another area criticised for lacking definition—sustainability. Also, Ellis et al. (2004) have found that the language and communication of sustainability by local authorities was a barrier to community engagement.

The quantitative research phase showed that the Sustainability theme was the second most common theme in the policy document sample, with 'sustainability' the only term used in every document and 'sustainable development' the second most frequent term in the documents analysed. Terms in this theme are accompanied by definitions eight times across the documents, the most of any theme, though none are identical. When considering this we must recall that a central government official interviewed stated that there were contradictions in sustainable development policy, perhaps confirming Connelly's (2007: 260) description of a 'quintessential governmental approach' towards the concept where it is presented as unproblematic in principle but complex in practice.

Policy explicitly links participation to the delivery of sustainable development (Department of Environment, Community and Local Government, 2012: 83) and the Sustainable Development Goals (Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment, 2018: 28), reflecting that participation is regularly identified as a normative principle of sustainable development (Jordan, 2008; UN, 1993). However, only one document analysed, the *Community and Voluntary Sector Strategy* (Department of Rural and Community Development, 2019: 37) conceptualised participation. In some instances, participation, when mentioned, can be quite limited in its utilisation. When 'consultation' is used it is regularly about consulting with state bodies, agencies or Departments. In *Delivering Homes, Sustaining Communities* (DEHLG, 2007a) it is notable that 'galvanising' the vision of agencies comes before talking to residents. This reflects the experiences described in the section above.

As shown in the quantitative chapter, consultation is linked to sustainable development in the *Sustainable Residential Developments Guidelines* (Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, 2009) but this is consultation to build support for the housing strategy, rather than to enable communities to build their own strategy. These are clear examples of participation as top-down legitimation rather than an attempt at bottom-up transformation (White, 1996).

6.4.1 Sustainable communities' potential

Given the abstractness of sustainable development (Lombardi et al., 2011, Bridger and Luloff, 2001) and having considered the first two research questions, it is worth considering here if the concept of a sustainable community may be more suitable as a motivating, tangible aim or outcome of regeneration than sustainable development, for both residents and policy makers. The research undertaken for this thesis suggests this is not the case. The concept of sustainable community is intuitively attractive, yet it is messy, particularly in its implementation and policy articulation and it may mask ongoing structural inequalities. One community worker interviewed described

the term as 'propaganda' and 'an ideological f***ing statement' to distract from the need for broader structural societal change. The strapline of the Housing Agency (who prepared the 2011 *Regeneration Masterplan* for adoption by Cork City Council) is 'promoting sustainable communities' though many professionals felt it was still too broad a term.

The literature confirms that there is also no single accepted definition of sustainable communities and Russell and Redmond (2009) found that Irish sustainable communities policy focuses on the physical characteristics of streets and housing, tenure and density issues.

Though national housing policy as set out in *Delivering Homes, Sustaining Communities* (Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, 2007a) has the building of sustainable communities as its guiding principle, and the term is used eight times in the *Regeneration Masterplan*, it is not used in specific objectives, aims, actions or similar of the document. However the narrative does say the masterplan overall 'represents an aspiration for the development of a high quality, sustainable community' (Cork City Council, 2011: 25). Objective 14.3 of Cork City Council's (2015: 215) *City Development Plan* relates to the Knocknaheeny regeneration and lists six outcomes but a sustainable community or sustainable development is not listed amongst these. This reinforces the qualitative findings and confirms that the policy framework does not usefully define these terms or goals at the local/city level.

When sustainable communities is used in aims and objectives in the documents studied the focus is again on its housing and the built environment aspects. Only two documents studied in the quantitative phase of the research define or conceptualise sustainable communities, in similar but not identical ways.

This section has considered the use of sustainability and participation terms and concepts in policy and how this might be reflected in practice. It confirms the ubiquity of sustainability, and though there are many definitions of sustainable development present, none are identical. This appears to bolster Lombardi et

al.'s (2011: 275) statement on the 'overutilisation but simultaneous undertheorisation of sustainability as a term'. We have seen the applied results of this in answering the previous question.

Finally, reflecting on the first two questions it confirms that sustainable communities in Ireland is most often applied concerning housing, is as contested as sustainable development, and it does not provide much additional conceptual clarity.

In answer to the third question, the next section examines barriers to community participation in regeneration in particular.

6.5 Barriers to community participation

The first question considered the application of sustainable development in regeneration and how residents inputted to visions in the regeneration. The second question explored issues around sustainable development and participation in policy. This section delves deeper to answer the third question, identifying specific barriers to community participation in the Knocknaheeny regeneration. This is important given the clear links between participation and sustainable development and also between participation and successful regeneration in the literature discussed in Chapter 2. Parés et al.'s (2012) study of Spanish urban redevelopment projects confirmed this, finding that more participation leads to more holistic regeneration with more emphasis on social and community issues compared to a focus on the physical and economic aspects when participation is more residual.

To explore this research question, the discussion draws mainly from the qualitative study, where the data are set against a framework derived from MacLaran et al.'s (2007) 12 barriers to community participation in disadvantaged areas in urban planning, including regeneration (henceforth described as MacLaran et al.). MacLaran et al.'s work is considered a particularly suitable framework for this discussion as it considers participation by disadvantaged urban communities in an Irish context, while aligning with much of the relevant literature outlined in Chapter 2 (such as Cornwall and

Coelho's (2007) dimensions of meaningful participation and Bridger and Luloff's (1999) features of sustainable communities).

However, its limitations must also be acknowledged at the outset. MacLaran et al. primarily consider the experiences of community representatives rather than the wider community in their study. It is also important to restate that regeneration itself was depicted as a problematic frame by some interviewees in this study, reflecting suggestions in the literature that such area based interventions deflect from structural issues (e.g. Furbey, 1999; Oatley, 2000; Perrons and Skyers, 2003; Cochrane, 2007; Imbroscio, 2016). Structural inequalities risk being downplayed in an analysis that focuses on participation in the regeneration alone. Relevant also is Head's (2007) suggestion that the term 'community' often misleadingly seeks to impose identity or inclusiveness. It is also acknowledged that there are costs to participation (Cornwall, 2008; Young, 2002) and communities may choose to be involved at different stages in different ways, with different forms and meaning of participation likely over time in regeneration (Cornwall, 2008; Tritter and McCallum, 2006). The possibility that participation will not lead to material improvements for communities has also been argued (Cleaver, 1999), though this is outweighed by normative procedural and substantive benefits (Burton et al., 2006).

MacLaran et al.'s 12 barriers to community participation in disadvantaged areas were previously outlined in Table 2.2 of the literature review, Chapter 2. Below the findings of the qualitative study are discussed against the barriers, with reference to other literature and the quantitative study as appropriate. To aid the analysis, the 12 barriers have been organised into the three themes used in Section 2.5.2, namely: barriers relating to principles, barriers relating to process and barriers relating to people. These are set out in Table 6.1 below.

Table 6.1 Summary of MacLaran et al.'s (2007) barriers to community participation

Principles	Process	People
[1] Nature of the commitment to community participation [12] Credence given to the community's planning interests and concerns	[2] Stage at which community participation was sought [3] Adequacy of the structures [5] Adequacy of the timeframe for community participation [6] Adequacy of resourcing [10] Consistency of plan implementation	[4] The accessibility of local-authority planners, officials and planning information [7] Power differentials between community representatives, local authority officials and other stakeholders [8] Distrust, demoralisation, alienation and apathy [9] Representation, accountability and community dynamics [11] Privileging of private sector interests

6.5.1 Principles: Barriers 1 and 12

MacLaran et al. suggest that national and local government's commitment to community participation can be rhetorical and symbolic (similar to the lower rungs of Arnstein's (1969) ladder or the top-down manipulative legitimation of White's (1996) typology of interests and also Shapiro, 1999). The present study shows that regeneration policy and guidance rarely go beyond paternalistic consultation.

For example, a resident interviewed in the present study referred to Cork City Council's 'jackboot approach' to regeneration. Later they remarked that 'you could complete the challenge [of delivering a regeneration project] no bother if

you disregard how people are being dealt with.' Neither 'active citizenship' nor 'empowerment' nor 'capacity building' appear in the *Regeneration Masterplan* and no codes from the Participation and Democracy theme described in the quantitative study in Chapter 5 appear in the vision for the regeneration set out in it. One senior City Council official was reflective regarding the Council's attitude to participation however, saying that though they would like consultation processes to 'gather all the views in and present them to you in a package' they acknowledged 'the reality is that's not legitimate.'

MacLaran et al. consider how community views are weighted in decision making. The qualitative findings in this thesis show that a 'demolition and reconstruction' approach was pursued despite the opposition of some residents concerned that it may lead to better accommodation but persistent social issues—while Winston (2021) has also identified other, environmental, sustainability issues with demolition in regeneration. A lack of focus on social regeneration was evident, despite the priority community members and representatives ascribed to it.

A Cork City Council official suggested that sustainable development would not be something they could usefully discuss with residents. Another City Council official interviewed for this study suggested that some residents chose not to engage in order to hold 'their powder dry' and 'come out of the woodwork' to criticise Council plans and strategies at a late stage. This suggests a lack of empathy with legitimate community concerns that may have its background in the historically oppositional relationship between the Knocknaheeny community and the City Council. Another professional paternalistically believed residents needed 'to know that you can live in different ways'. One health sector official remarked 'There was and still is an element of "we know what's best for you, so here it is"' within the Council.

The differing agendas of the City Council and residents were also highlighted (in the focus group, a City Council official expressed the view that communities 'don't think the way we think'), while central and local government were said to have a shared agenda to increase density and change the physical form of the

area. Of course, this is related to central and local government giving time and resources to engaging with the community to hear a range of views from residents and build their understanding. This could be through dedicated regeneration participation officers working with the community or existing networks at local level, such as the (albeit local authority serviced) Public Participation Networks (PPNs). Minutes of Cork City Council (2019) do indicate that liaison officers are in place to engage directly with residents, particularly in relation to moving houses under the regeneration. Though, paraphrasing a resident, perhaps it is easy to complete your agenda for a regeneration if you don't ask people what they want.

6.5.2 Process: Barriers 2, 3, 5, 6 and 10

MacLaran et al. found that communities were regularly excluded from the key early strategic planning stages, with negative repercussions arising for the community due to this late entry. These echo the experiences of residents excluded from early decision making during the St. Michael's Estate (Dublin) regeneration catalogued by Bissett (2008).

The present study reveals that early-stage discussions regarding the regeneration strategy between national and local government progressed well ahead of any engagement with residents. It is suggested that this led to a focus on housing unit delivery. For example, in the final *Regeneration Masterplan* 'social regeneration' appears just once compared to 'physical regeneration' which appears five times. The effects of this were summed up by a resident: 'I do not believe this regeneration programme will be a success because it will only deal with the physical…It's just knock and build a new house'. Regarding consultation efforts, one resident said 'I think they've [Cork City Council] just done the basic'.

This echoes the findings of O'Sullivan et al. (2017) who found children and youth in Knocknaheeny had a broad understanding of regeneration that went beyond a 'bricks and mortar' approach, seeing a need for social, environmental and economic improvements, but that they felt they, and their parents, had not been adequately consulted.

Participation does not appear in the initial implementation strategy set out in the *Regeneration Masterplan*. Notably 'Department endorsement and adoption of masterplan' is the first step.

MacLaran et al. describe community representatives being relegated to participate in structures of no standing or only on after-the-fact monitoring structures. In this thesis, concerns about the use of 'tick box' public meetings in the regeneration were expressed by some interviewees, with one City Council community development worker remarking the 'vast, vast majority of people, 95% or 99% went out through the doors without having participated at all'. Early meetings between the Council and residents were described as 'absolute carnage' though there had been some improvement. This may be compounded by a view expressed that those leading the consultations from a Council perspective lacked the necessary skills or relied on 'traditional' 'sanitised' methods such as large public meetings. Another interviewee regretted that the Council had not worked more through community development workers active in the area. Effective relationships between residents and City Council officials seems to be based on personal relationships rather than deriving from the local authority's culture and values or the structures in place.

MacLaran et al. discuss the need for communities to have adequate time to deliberate and decide on actions. Chapter 4 shows community representatives on earlier regeneration structures faced 'borderline threats' to sign off on a decision, though overall evidence of this barrier was not particularly present in the data.

MacLaran et al. highlight the importance of consistent implementation of agreed plans. This is relevant to Pateman's (2012) contention that participatory programmes should arrive at binding outcomes. The data shows that any improvements in consultation between the first and second regeneration masterplans were not evident in the implementation phase, where community engagement remained weak.

6.5.3 People: Barriers 4, 7, 8, 9 and 11

Here, MacLaran et al. consider access to officials but also the accessibility, completeness and timeliness of information provided to the community and if communities are expected to adopt a conciliatory, quiescent stance in exchange for access and official cooperation.

In the present study, interviewees expressed concerns that City Council officials were inaccessible to residents and that officials' preference for email communication put those without technology skills or with literacy difficulties at a disadvantage. A community development worker stated that at one public meeting, maps and plans were available but nobody was there to explain them to residents, adding 'But people had to sign in when they came in so that was the consultation process.'

That the majority of community and regeneration officials do not live in the area being regenerated was highlighted by the interviewees, with a suggestion that a more locally led adult education ethos would be more effective.

MacLaran et al. consider the power inequalities of communities relative to other actors. This has been an important consideration throughout the research process for this thesis. The methodology chapter (Chapter 3) for example, notes the measures taken to address the risk of repercussions for residents interviewed. The interviews discussed in Chapter 4 include a suggestion by a local community development worker that some residents felt 'bullied' or intimidated when facing Cork City Council on a one-on-one basis.

MacLaran et al. reference the availability of technical and professional expertise and financial resources. As noted by one community worker interviewed for this thesis, residents in a regeneration area will not have experienced a large, complex, project like this before. It was suggested that funding for independent built environment professionals to review plans on behalf of the community is essential. In the focus group, City Council officials were reluctant to see communities resourced to access external expert advice, except in limited

circumstances where it may be necessary to avoid exposing them to legal liability on contractual issues.

MacLaran et al. consider the role of previous experiences of communities with national and local government and levels of distrust based on these. Callanan (2018) and Muir and Rhodes (2008) note that the history of previous experiences of community involvement in local decision making can either have a positive or negative impact on working relationships in Ireland. A historically poor working relationship between Knocknaheeny residents and the local authority was surfaced in the interviews for this thesis. A resident interviewed said senior officials in the City Council 'couldn't be trusted'. O'Sullivan et al. (2020: 83) found children and youth in Knocknaheeny expressed frustration with the City Council about the social and environmental conditions they experience 'despite the "glossy" regeneration plan' 'from the corporation man'. Disillusionment with local elected representatives was also expressed by a resident, and a community development worker interviewed.

MacLaran et al. identify issues with how community representatives are held accountable and the expectations placed on them. In Chapter 4, a national community development advocate is recorded as acknowledging that regenerations can give rise to 'all kinds of tensions in the community about trying to make decisions about who gets what and who is entitled to what and all that'. There were divergent views on whether Knocknaheeny residents were an organised and effective lobbying force for their community. The data here shows that rather than build community leadership in the area, Cork City Council engaged with residents on a more ad hoc basis, which may include some training in estate management for example, but then these residents are 'dropped' when the project ends.

Taylor (2000) identified the contradiction that community representatives are frequently criticised for not being representative while also being criticised for not speaking with a single voice. Ultimately for Taylor (2000: 254-255) their legitimacy relies on the channels that exist for them to give feedback and be accountable to the community, the community's capacity to hold them

accountable, and the routes that are created to encourage people to engage. These have been shown to be weak in Knocknaheeny.

The interview data suggest that being a community representative on regeneration structures or taking a leadership role in the regeneration from a community perspective is a thankless, time consuming (described as taking up 20 or 30 hours a week sometimes by one resident) and difficult task where you might be treated badly by Cork City Council, as well by your neighbours who may stop engaging once their immediate concerns are addressed. In the focus group, a City Council official argued that involving community representatives on tender assessment panels, for example, might expose them to legal risk and community pressure, reinforcing the importance of appropriate support and reporting structures for community representatives.

MacLaran et al. consider how commercial interests are accommodated, including regarding the introduction of tenure mix and regeneration dependent on private investment and achieving gains for actors other than the community themselves. This echoes the 'corporatist' Irish housing policy described by Hearne and Kenna (2014) which excludes critical community voices. The Knocknaheeny regeneration lacks the market led Public Private Partnership model pursued by Dublin City Council in some regenerations as criticised by, for example, Tenants First (2005 and 2009) and Bissett (2008).

However, interview data records views that adult education and social protection policy has become very focused on employment, investment and the 'economic' dimension of sustainable development, to the detriment of community development and capacity building (despite the identified need for this in the area). Pertinent to this study, Ó Tuama (2016) has considered the European wide focus on labour force activation following the 2008 economic crisis, and advocates a model of co-designed 'reflexive activation' to bridge the potential gap between activation and traditional adult education values.

A reluctance to introduce community benefit clauses in regeneration contracts (and its limited presence in the policy documents studied quantitatively) is also

notable in this regard. It is also relevant that regarding redistributive policies such as regeneration and investment in areas like Knocknaheeny one senior City Council planning official took a somewhat neoliberal view that 'the big question for sustainable development is do you, do you continue to put resources into somewhere where it isn't making a difference?' This leaves sustainable development and regeneration open to the same critique made of regeneration (Furbey, 1999), empowerment (Cleaver, 1999), and also ABCD discussed earlier (Mathie et al., 2017), i.e. justifying the withdrawal of the state and individualising disadvantage on the grounds that intervention is not sustainable.

6.5.4 Summary of barriers to community participation

In conclusion, the assessment undertaken for this research question confirms that most, if not all, of MacLaran et al.'s barriers to community participation are present in the regeneration of Knocknaheeny. These extend from issues with national government, to local authority ambivalence, to how agencies in the area interact with communities. Given their breadth and depth, significant policy, governance, institutional and strategic changes and innovations are required to remove these. They must be developed mindful of Dagnino's (2007) 'perverse confluence' between participation's presentation as deepening democracy and influence on one hand and being associated with shrinking state responsibilities in favour of broadening personal responsibilities on the other. Such a confluence may also be seen in regeneration where participation is sought in a constrained way.

Based on the links between participation and sustainability in the literature it is clear that these must be considered when looking at regeneration for sustainable development. A proposal to achieve this is set out in the next section which considers the fourth research question.

6.6 Ways to integrate sustainable development, participation and regeneration

This section addresses the final research question—what is to be learnt from the case study regarding strategies or instruments to integrate participation and sustainability in regeneration? The discussion of this question draws from both the qualitative and quantitative research findings, as well as the literature, with a focus on multi-level governance and reflexive governance and consideration also of the role of community development.

Treadwell Shine (2006) applied complexity theory to show that embracing the unknown in self-organising regeneration across multiple levels can lead to innovative, holistic and inclusive outcomes. This thesis considers the role of reflexive, multi-level regeneration governance as an innovative way of integrated sustainable development, participation and regeneration and delivering such outcomes addressing each of these domains.

The absence of early engagement with the community regarding the Knocknaheeny regeneration, and the admission of one official that Cork City Council tasked itself with creating a sustainable community without a shared understanding of what it meant, suggests that a more reflective local authority may have considered the benefits such early work would bring for legitimacy and efficiency (Burton et al., 2006). A key early part of the regeneration should have been the participatory definition and articulation of issues and solutions, and the building of a sustainable regeneration discourse across all actors. Such a process would have allowed for relationships to develop and mature and for the exploration of problems in a holistic way. This is particularly relevant in respect of sustainability where contestation is inevitable (Connelly, 2007).

Neither 'active citizenship' nor 'empowerment' nor 'capacity building' appear in the *Regeneration Masterplan* (Cork City Council, 2011). 'Community development' or 'community education' are used only twice, despite the obvious potential of community development to strengthen communities (Cavaye and Ross, 2019).

Building on the other findings, this section proposes an empiric reflexive, multi-level regeneration governance taxonomy as a means of integrating and advancing regeneration, sustainable development and participation in Knocknaheeny.

Firstly, the rationale for a governance-based instrument is explained. Then, reflexive governance and multi-level governance are revisited in the context of the research before the usefulness of these theories to regeneration together is elaborated in a novel taxonomy.

6.6.1 Why a governance instrument?

According to Bovaird and Löffler (2003: 316), 'there are few terms which are as vague in social science and in practice as "governance"', but for Farrell et al. (2005: 143) sustainable development is 'a political concept, replete with governance questions' and it is also essential when considering participation and regeneration. Goffman (2007: 70) suggests that governance theories can be abstract and difficult ('they are needed to get anything done, but when removed from empirical application come across as slippery and esoteric'). It is for this reason that the present study considers regeneration and sustainability governance empirically.

Given its complexity, sustainable development has fundamental implications for the governance of modern society, with the organisation of processes towards a sustainable pathway considered as significant as particular outcomes themselves (Voß and Kemp, 2006; Voß and Borneman, 2011). This aligns with the suggestion of a fourth 'governance' or 'institutional' pillar of sustainable development (Čiegis and Gineitienė, 2008; Valentin and Spangenberg, 2000). Though participation is seen as 'inextricably linked' to sustainable development (Green and Chambers, 2006: 2), Mullally (2016: 67) warns that it is not sufficient alone and requires addressing structural and governance factors also.

6.6.2 Multi-level governance and reflexive governance

As seen in the case study, the interpretation and implementation of policy goals for regeneration and sustainable development have been shaped by forms of

governance that stretch across geographical scales, with a range of tensions and entry points for citizens, and therefore a multi-level governance perspective is required. It is acknowledged that despite its widespread use and popularity, multi-level governance as discussed in Chapter 2 is still ambiguous (Tortola, 2017). Here, it is furthered by considering it with reflexive governance in the context of regeneration.

A participatory process is one of the components of social sustainability identified by Partridge (2005: 8) while Cuthill (2010) suggests that social sustainability consists of four dimensions: engaged governance (e.g. providing a methodology for participatory democracy, citizen participation and community engagement); social infrastructure; social justice and equity; and social capital.

Reflexive governance theory offers an adaptable, networked 'learning based approach to governance' (De Schutter and Lenoble, 2010), better suited to challenges such as sustainability, and, it is argued, regeneration, than technocratic management of issues. However, it is also contested with Torgerson (2018), suggesting that its emphasis on some steering of sustainable development in fact perpetuates managerial, rationalist thinking. The evolutionary nature of the process and the role of community development which may address such criticism is discussed further below.

Reflexive governance theory provides for a framework in which participatory procedures support deliberation and mutual learning between individuals and organisations (Voß et al., 2006). This has significant potential for regeneration and also for participation. The application of ideas of reflexive governance to regeneration is novel. Van der Jagt et al. (2021) argue that reflexive arrangements can potentially be more impactful at the micro- and meso-scales of neighbourhoods and cities given the increased potential for informal networks outside mainstream decision-making processes. Kemp and Loorbach (2006) suggest that though sustainable development may be difficult to implement, it can be applied in a specific context, such as an area which can develop sustainably. As the interpretation of both sustainable development and

regeneration shift over time and in response to needs and pressures, they become a 'learning by doing' process suited to such a reflexive approach. Bulkeley and Betsill (2005) adopted a multi-level governance perspective in their study of sustainable cities, arguing that analyses of urban sustainability tend to focus on technical indicators and assessments, neglecting political discursive and material struggles, which take place in defining what urban sustainability might entail. Reflexive governance addresses such a criticism and provides a means to 'break through the dominance of the past and history over the future' and 'inform actors how particular patterns are rooted in past structures, which reflect earlier orientations of societal development; and how other patterns, orientated to sustainable development, may contribute to and benefit from structural change' (Grin et al., 2010: 234). It is therefore ideally placed to shine a spotlight on structural issues such as those highlighted by critics of regeneration, something further strengthened by its multi-level perspective.

The potential for such an approach is spurred by the research findings themselves. There are some glimpses of reflexivity in the case study, though it is typically of the lower-order, ex-post type which refines, rather than reimagines. For example, one community development worker described Cork City Council making a small change to their consultation practices, before adding 'they've done that and carried on as before'. Reflexive multi-level governance also addresses the recommendation of an adult and community education academic interviewed who believed that agencies need 'to relearn how they need to engage with the poor and disadvantaged people' involving an 'interrogation of their own practice in some kind of professional development process.' Another adult and community education academic interviewed said for them a sustainable community should be 'self-reflexive'. Discussing mechanisms for participation an official in the focus group remarked that the City Council has to be 'more flexible' and more 'receptive to information coming in from different channels and from different avenues'. Reflexive governance permits this.

However, as Kjær (2009) notes such arrangements may make it more challenging to hold the powerful to account given the diffusion of roles and potential for obfuscating responsibility. Hendriks and Grin (2007) argue that project level reflexive governance arrangements must recognise the discursive socio-political context in which they operate and where they interface, and cannot be disconnected from the wider political landscape they are attempting to influence. That is why this thesis integrates the multi-level perspective.

Existing tools such as impact assessments are reflective at best but not reflexive due to their limited policy influence (Feidnt and Weiland, 2018; Meadowcroft and Steurer, 2018). Such tools were raised as part of the policy interventions discussed at the focus group where they were considered important.

6.6.3 Taxonomy of reflexive, multi-level regeneration governance in Knocknaheeny

For Ersoy and Hall (2020) the reflexive governance literature comprises, primarily, theoretical and normative, rather than empirical, contributions. Here, an empirically derived reflexive, multi-level regeneration governance taxonomy for Knocknaheeny is presented.[16]

It triangulates the topics under scrutiny in this thesis—regeneration, sustainable development and participation—by identifying the features of adaptive and interactive regeneration governance for Knocknaheeny's regeneration, distinct from the traditional, hierarchical and deterministic practice and weak managerial sustainability demonstrated so far.

The taxonomy operationalises Voß and Kemp's (2006) three strategy elements of reflexive governance for sustainability, as extended by van der Jagt et al. (2021). It comprises an iterative process with three analytical dimensions of (I) system analysis, (II) goal formulation, and (III) strategy implementation, all applied in the context of the Knocknaheeny case study. Structural system constraints which may seek to constrain reflexivity are also identified. It

[16] Although more associated with biological, rather than social, sciences the description 'taxonomy' is preferred over 'typology' given the empirical foundation of these characteristics of reflexive regeneration governance in the thesis research (Smith, 2005).

acknowledges that conflict between actors and these constraints is likely at different points. In it, the goals chosen are continuously reassessed, together with the policies to move closer to those goals. It seeks to achieve higher-order reflexivity which 'evokes a sense of agency, intention and change' (Hendriks and Grin, 2007: 334-335) in the regeneration. It captures the dimensions of reflexive governance summarised in Chapter 2 (i.e. those of Hendriks and Grin, 2007; Feindt and Weiland, 2018; Ersoy and Hall, 2020).

Table 6.2 Taxonomy of reflexive, multi-level regeneration governance in Knocknaheeny

Iterative strategy dimension	**Strategy requirement in Knocknaheeny**	**Structural constraints**
I. **SYSTEM ANALYSIS** (A) Transdisciplinary knowledge development	Early involvement of community in developing the sustainability vision for the area and ongoing commitment to participation Ensure opportunities for all, including most vulnerable to participate All pillars of sustainable development considered, with social, economic, environmental and institutional expertise and considerations acknowledged and promoted	Democratic deficit in local government Powerful central government Limited funding and lack of multiannual funding mechanisms Unclear sustainable development visions, definitions and conceptualisations Institutional and community apathy and distrust
(B) Evidence for experiments and adaptivity of strategies, policies, and institutions based on	Supporting such a reflexive governance approach would be an experiment in itself	Inadequately resourced communities Neoliberal policies and hollowed out state

outcomes of their piloting and roll out	Pilots and funding for locally led initiatives, including capacity building and voter education, developing education, economic and employment, strategies Social and sustainability impact assessments Accessible, locally based officials and recruitment to Cork City Council from the community Community benefit clauses in regeneration contracts Community access to independent professionals Strategies to develop whole of City Council and interagency capacity and understanding of sustainable development Acceptance of messiness Multiannual funding models for regeneration Documentation of lessons from Knocknaheeny for national regeneration policy	Resistance from local elected councillors fearful of losing influence Executive resistance to uncertainty and 'messiness' Consensus driven, social partnership political culture Community fears of co-optation Potential to shore up incumbent systems Uneven participation across community Threat of state withdrawal from arrangements Reflexive governance treated as a project rather than an iterative, long term transformative process Limited opportunities for local communities to access central government decisionmakers

	Citizen juries/forums	
(C) Anticipation of long-term systemic effects of actions at different temporal and spatial scales	Awareness of how regeneration interacts with social, environmental, economic and governance systems of the city Actively engage and support most vulnerable Intergenerational equity considerations and their synergies and cobenefits with climate action, for example Exploration of perception of Cork as a divided city Recognition of importance of community education, not just employment orientated education Acknowledgement of potential for regeneration to create better houses with the same social issues Recognition and mitigation of power imbalances	

(D) Congruency of governance and problem space	Removing vertical and horizontal silos to ensure sustainable development, regeneration and participation and considered holistically and mainstreamed, not limited within existing institutional or conceptual boundaries	
II. INTERACTIVE AND PARTICIPATORY GOAL FORMULATION	Meaningful, early community involvement in goal development Plain English proofing of proposals, plans and documents to ensure accessibility	
III. STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION	Influence of reflexive approaches in wider agency strategies and activities Commitment to integration of a range of perspectives at implementation stage Community involvement in monitoring and evaluation mechanisms and community seats on contract awarding panels	

Kates et al. (2005) argue that sustainable development requires the participation of diverse stakeholders and perspectives, with the ideal of

reconciling different and sometimes contradictory values. The approach set out in this section allows this, through its reflexive and multi-level approach.

A more detailed or prescriptive model is not considered appropriate as, taking after the approach of Voß and Kemp (2006), to do so would be to undermine the actual working of the open-ended reflexive governance arrangements.

6.6.3.1 Opportunities

Reflexive governance is in keeping with the present study's pragmatic perspective, aligning well with Dewey's (1922) call for 'reflective choice' over 'unreflective habit'. Reflexive governance embraces 'the full, messy, intermingled natural reality" (Voß and Kemp, 2006: 5) and the 'uncertainty, ignorance, heterogeneity, ambiguity, unintended effects, error and lack of control' that modern problem solving has sought to eliminate (Voß et al., 2006: xv).

The taxonomy takes the lessons from Perrons and Skyers (2003: 27) who found 'real empowerment was about the community having the freedom to make mistakes particularly as local government officials had been making mistakes for years and had left the community to suffer the consequences.' Trommel (2020) describes this as organising 'public irony' by demonstrating pragmatism and acceptance of failure which can build public trust.

Participatory decision making is compatible with reflexive governance. Dryzek and Pickering (2017) regard deliberation as central to reflexive governance, providing a space for professional experts and the public to engage through citizen forums for example.

Metze and Van Zuydam (2018) relate the opportunities for reflexive governance to boundary objects, considering that their ambiguity is well suited to reflexive visioning discussions. Discussing transport policy and sustainability, Evans et al. (2001) have described an ideal 'reflexive city', aware of the consequences of policy choices with users, employers and other actors involved in identifying problems and solutions. The idea of a 'reflexive Knocknaheeny' may be a suitable boundary object to frame the next steps as it implies participatory,

sustainable regeneration and embraces uncertainty and distributed power as opposed to the ineffective, disengaged certainty of rationalist problem solving and control. This taxonomy offers a useful means of addressing power relations in regeneration where decision makers may 'dehumanize people, treating them as inanimate objects to control, manipulate, and dominate because they may hold very specific so-called rational assumptions about what is good and right' (Cunliffe and Jun, 2005: 233).

If implemented in Knocknaheeny, such an arrangement would represent an example of Hooghe and Marks' (2003, 2004, 2010) task specific, problem solving focused Type II multi-level governance, embedded in a more limited Type I jurisdiction.[17] As we have seen, regeneration governance is already a multi-level governance system based on the interplay of national, regional and local policy-making structures, however, to date this has been of Type I and it is considered that a Type II model offers more potential.

However, despite its potential Feindt and Weiland (2018: 669) recognise reflexive governance is 'an ambitious endeavor'. How it can be instituted in Cork City Council, given the structural constraints identified in this chapter, is also a consideration.

6.6.3.2 Enabling factors and considerations

Hendriks and Grin (2007) describe reflexive governance as a way of 'steering for sustainability'. Feindt and Weiland (2018) anticipate that reflexive governance would take place at multiple levels simultaneously but acknowledge that it is uncertain as to who would set the conditions and steer the overall reflexive process itself, speculating that such a steering institution would likely be motivated to constrain reflexivity.

[17] Hooghe and Marks (2003, 2004, 2010) distinguish between Type I and Type II multi-level governance. Type I multi-level governance thinking originates in federalism, with authority limited to a number of non-overlapping jurisdictional boundaries at a limited number of levels. Type II multi-level governance provides a vision of governance that is complex, fluid and overlapping with an emphasis on percieved flexibility rather than Type I's perceived stability.

Here, it is anticipated to be evolutionary, beginning with pioneers in Cork City Council and agencies willing to include more deliberative elements in the governance structures for the regeneration, with a commitment to reflexivity. This would also somewhat meet Cork City Council's desire for more roles in the regeneration as expressed in the data. These, though, may be different to the powers and resources they suggested, confirming the need for a shift in institutional thinking away from top-down legitimation to an openness to transformative empowerment. This steering role within the Council may also prevent a known risk of reflexive governance—that uncomfortable state actors withdraw from discursive and reflexive arrangements. Kallis et al. (2009: 640) recognise that if adopted such arrangements 'may be symptomatic of policy-makers avoiding hard decisions', warning that more collaborative governance 'is not a substitute for a good, fair and effective government', while Feindt and Weiland (2018: 669) acknowledge that the open ended nature of reflexive governance does not guarantee more sustainable policies and practices.

Government generally prefers predictability (Head, 2007; Burton et al., 2006; Lyons et al., 2001) and reflexive governance may be difficult for Irish administration more used to building consensus driven community structures which mirror bureaucratic structures (Mullally, 2013: 158-159), but it is necessary for sustainability. A safeguard against attempts to constrain reflexivity, and also against Torgerson's (2018) managerialist critique presented above, would be ongoing community development to deepen community capacity and thus increase momentum and demand for further reflexive governance. This is key to enabling people recognise their own political agency through education and mobilization, something essential for meaningful participation (Cornwall and Coelho, 2007; Lyons et al., 2001).

This steering role could also reside with a new independent regeneration board (though a proposal for a similar, but less reflexive, arrangement was rejected at the focus group). This approach could be underpinned by a national urban regeneration framework based on reflexive governance principles. Such national regeneration policy is not in place currently.

Hendriks and Grin (2007) state that reflexive approaches may face opposition from officials, politicians and the market (these are recognised in the structural constraints included in Table 6.2). Other challenges for reflexive governance include power struggles and democratic legitimacy concerns (Voß and Bornemann, 2011; Lawrence and Molteno, 2012).

Co-optation is a potential weakness of reflexive governance identified by Hendriks and Grin (2007: 336)—that is the expectation that civil society actors will happily cooperate in reflexive governance thus potentially constraining radical voices, which are an important dimension of reflexive action. Feindt and Weiland (2018: 666) suggest that even where reflexive governance arrangements reach out to citizens, participation is often dominated by the more educated and wealthy. Rip (2006) warns that they may give 'the illusion of agency'. Community development approaches may address these issues, though Harvey (2009) has described the vulnerabilities of community development structures to state coercion, particularly regarding funding. Community participation in such regeneration structures however has been critiqued also (Edwards and Imrie, 2015) with Pollock and Sharp (2012) describing a 'tyranny' of participation where participation is tokenistic and intended only as legitimation.

Finally, Hooghe and Marks (2003) discuss 'the coordination dilemma' of multiple actors, spillovers and overlaps in multi-level governance, while reflexive governance brings its own coordination challenges. Goffman (2007: 70) notes reflexive governance theory must balance uncertainty while leading to action. This is the 'efficacy paradox' and paralysis of decision making described by Voß and Kemp (2006), related to Stirling's (2008) dilemma of opening up and closing down in governing complex problems. Ultimately though, the open ended deliberation of the process itself is key to its coordination.

Drawing on the literature and findings chapters, the discussion above has extended existing research by incorporating multi-level governance and reflexive governance perspectives for regeneration. It presented and discussed

a taxonomy for embedding the principles of reflexive governance into regeneration in a fundamental reconsideration of existing regeneration practices and structures.

6.7 Chapter conclusion

This study set out to integrate sustainable development and participation in regeneration, thus furthering their conceptual understanding and considering the implications for regeneration theory and practice.

The two preceding findings chapters and this discussion chapter investigated how the concepts of sustainable development and participation are understood and have influenced regeneration policy and practice, using the regeneration of Knocknaheeny as a case study. This chapter integrated the qualitative and quantitative research results, raising intriguing questions regarding how sustainable development can be operationalised in regeneration and how the community can be involved in this.

These results confirm that the multiple interpretations of sustainable development, and delimited official understanding of the concept, limit its application in regeneration practice. They also show that engaging on visions for sustainability is an avenue of discussion and exploration closed off to communities, mainly because of official scepticism or antipathy compounded by a weak and uneven policy grounding. Irish policy has not provided a firm conceptual foundation for either sustainability or participation in regeneration and regeneration policy is biased towards physical regeneration, which limits the possibilities for holistic sustainable development. This study has been unable to demonstrate that a shift in emphasis to sustainable communities when working with residents and policy makers offers a clearer path to sustainability in regeneration. The results provide further support for the hypothesis that there are several specific barriers to community participation in the Knocknaheeny regeneration.

Lastly, reflexive, multi-level regeneration governance is proposed as an empiric framework for considering regeneration, sustainable development and

participation together in a way that addresses the other key findings. Together, the present study's findings have important implications for future regeneration research, policy and practice. These are elaborated in the final chapter.

Chapter 7. Conclusion

7.1 Chapter introduction

In this concluding chapter, I revisit my research questions and the objectives of the thesis. As the study is both evaluative (appraising current policy and practice) and generative (identifying strategies for how regeneration might engage with sustainable development and participation in the future), the findings have important implications for future practice and a set of empiric recommendations based on the preceding chapters are presented. This chapter also considers the study's limitations and presents the contribution it makes to knowledge. The thesis closes with some final reflections.

7.2 Thesis summary

The basic premise underlying this thesis is that while the concepts of sustainable development and participation inherently share much in common and are widespread in public and political discourse locally, nationally and internationally, opportunities to further integrate them in regeneration may exist given their normative orientation.

To explore this a mixed methods approach was adopted which is particularly suited to pragmatic social research such as the present study (Feilzer, 2010; Morgan, 2007). Knocknaheeny is consistently shown as one of the most disadvantaged Electoral Divisions in Cork City and it was chosen as a case study as a typical example selected from the broader category of 'socially deprived' areas undergoing regeneration in Ireland. The data generated from the qualitative research (interviews and a focus group) and supplemental quantitative content analysis, was assessed using the four themes of Regeneration, Housing and the Built Environment; Sustainability; Participation/Democracy; Governance and Policy, and their associated subthemes. The key findings for each of the four specific research questions are now summarised in turn.

7.2.1 Research question 1

The first research question asked how actors in the regeneration programme conceptualise sustainable development, how these understandings relate to each other, and how they have been applied. The study finds that the application of these concepts in Knocknaheeny's regeneration has been limited with uncoordinated narrow, incrementalist interpretations used over more collectively developed transformative and integrative approaches.

It has been shown that allowing people to formulate local sustainable development for themselves is one of its significant core values (Ellis et al., 2004; Bridger and Luloff, 1999; Roseland, 2000; Koontz, 2006; Evans and Jones, 2008). Sustainability literature also assigns a positive role to visions as a necessary part of system change (Kemp and Martens, 2007), while conceptualisations of sustainability within a regeneration scheme shape how the principles of sustainable development are made manifest (Lombardi et al., 2011). Despite this, the research shows that there was little community involvement in shaping the regeneration at an early stage and limited discussion of what sustainable development would mean in the context of the programme. This is also considered in the context of the third research question, below.

The contested nature of sustainable development was reflected in the interview data. Overall, the data suggest that Cork City Council has a limited institutional understanding of sustainable development. It has been argued that evidence and examples of sustainable development may be more concrete at the local level (e.g. Bridger and Luloff, 1999), which the case study represents, but officials interviewed were dismissive of the potential of community-led sustainable development visions as they felt sustainable development was not of interest to residents or dependent on broader socioeconomic circumstances rather than being bottom-up. This reinforces Ellis et al.'s (2005) finding that Irish local government consider themselves "too busy for that kind of stuff", despite the clear academic and policy direction towards local sustainable development action.

7.2.2 Research question 2

The second research question asked if 'sustainable development', 'participation' and related terms were defined with sufficient rigour to support a shared understanding and consistent use in the regeneration of Knocknaheeny. The study shows that Irish policy has not provided a firm conceptual foundation for either sustainability or participation in regeneration, confirming Lombardi et al.'s (2011: 275) description of sustainability's 'overutilisation but simultaneous undertheorisation'.

The quantitative study shows that despite sustainability's near ubiquity in national housing and development policy, no document contained identical definitions of sustainable development (though some are similar) and sustainable community or sustainable development is not listed as an outcome of the Knocknaheeny regeneration in the city's development plan. National sustainable development and sustainable community conceptualisations are shown to be limited, focusing on economic, rather than social, sustainability, and on housing and the built environment (in particular mixed tenure), aligning with previous research findings (e.g. Winston, 2010; Cuthill, 2010; Mullally, 2004). This reinforces the qualitative findings and confirms that the policy framework does not usefully define these terms or goals at the local/city level. Despite its inclusion as a guiding principle in much housing policy, sustainable communities is not more clearly conceptualised or understood than sustainable development. Overall, the lack of a well-defined policy vision around regeneration and sustainable development or sustainable communities is evident.

Reflecting discursive struggle rather than shared understanding, the qualitative data include divergent views around the prioritisation of physical regeneration over its socioeconomic aspects and the fundamental ability of regeneration to address structural inequalities in Knocknaheeny (while a community worker who has worked with regeneration projects in Dublin bluntly described sustainable communities as 'an ideological f***ing statement' distracting from the need for broader structural societal change). The study also shows that

policy explicitly links participation to the delivery of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and sustainable development, though participation is also not clearly conceptualised.

7.2.3 Research question 3

The third research question investigated specific barriers to community participation in the Knocknaheeny regeneration. Using the framework of MacLaran et al.'s (2007) 12 barriers to community participation in disadvantaged areas in urban planning, including regeneration, the study confirms that though participation is a normative aspect of regeneration and sustainability, barriers to participation in the regeneration exist. These can be considered in terms of barriers relating to principles (e.g. the official commitment to community participation), barriers relating to process (e.g. participation structures) and barriers relating to people (e.g. the accessibility of officials and levels of trust and power differentials).

Regarding barriers relating to principles, the study found evidence that paternalistic consultation at the lower end of participation typologies (e.g. Arnstein, 1969 or Shapiro, 1999) dominates in the Knocknaheeny regeneration (for example, a public sector agency worker noted an attitude of 'we know what's best for you, so here it is' within the Council). A City Council official did, however, acknowledge that consultation that brought views in a neat package would be convenient but not realistic or legitimate. The qualitative findings in this thesis show that a 'demolition and reconstruction' approach was pursued despite the opposition of some residents concerned that it may result in better accommodation but persistent social issues. A lack of focus on social regeneration, despite the priority some on the ground and regeneration best practice ascribed to it, was evident, as was a lack of empathy with community concerns amongst some officials, one of whom regretted that communities 'don't think the way we think'.

In terms of barriers relating to process, the late entry of the community in regeneration decision making was observed as allowing a focus on new housing delivery and the built environment, rather than social issues. Concerns around

'tick box' public meetings were expressed while some resident representatives had felt rushed into decisions in previous regeneration structures. The data shows that any improvements in consultation between the first and second regeneration masterplans were not evident in the implementation phase, where community engagement remained weak.

Finally, considering barriers relating to people, distrust between officials and residents was a common theme and there was reference to the Council's 'jackboot'. Residents also felt officials were inaccessible and unavailable. It was said that residents had limited capacity to read technical maps and drawings proffered by the Council in consultation events, hindering participation. City Council officials were reluctant to see communities resourced to access external expert advice except in limited circumstances. Mechanisms to support resident representatives on official structures are also weak.

7.2.4 Research question 4

The fourth research question asked what is to be learnt from the case study regarding strategies or instruments to integrate participation and sustainability in regeneration? The research considers that when it comes to regeneration, sustainable development and participation present both challenges and opportunities for Ireland's traditionally centralised and managerial institutions and decision-making processes, as well as the communities involved.

An empiric, reflexive, multi-level regeneration governance taxonomy was put forward as an innovative way of integrating sustainable development, participation and regeneration and delivering holistic and inclusive outcomes addressing each of these domains. While the reflexive governance taxonomy presented in this thesis may provide a blueprint for embedding experiential knowledge in decision making, the complexity of establishing such a model and further operationalising the concepts of sustainable development and participation in regeneration is acknowledged.

7.3 Implications for policy and recommendations

The four themes of Regeneration, Housing and the Built Environment; Sustainability; Participation/Democracy; and Governance and Policy form the spine of the qualitative and quantitative analysis. As outlined in Chapters 3 and 4, having concluded the interview phase, nine 'policy intervention proposals' grouped under the four themes were developed based on an initial analysis of the interview data (Figure 4.1) and these were presented to a focus group of Cork City Council officials. Now, on foot of the preceding literature, findings, and analysis, these 'policy interventions' are refined to four high level recommendations, one per thematic area. These four recommendations are clearly interrelated. For instance, reflexive, multi-level governance starts with the assumption that local government is more empowered and open to deeper, rather than surface level, participation.

7.3.1 Regeneration: Reorientate local government in regeneration with a national policy

The centralised structural barriers under which local authorities in Ireland are required to operate has shaped the regeneration strategies adopted and contributed to the implementation challenges under examination. It would be beneficial if Cork City Council had a more defined leadership and coordination role in regeneration, with greater local discretion and responsibilities. A holistic national regeneration policy clearly setting out the ambition and arrangements for regeneration is required as a cornerstone. Though regeneration is delivered locally in Ireland, the local level has little control over how it is funded and there are clear instructions on how it is to be spent. This recommendation from the case study research is relevant to all Irish local authorities.

Boyle and O'Riordan (2013) found a recognition amongst Irish local authority staff of the need to be more innovative in interacting with local communities but that working with the community and other actors in a centralised system is challenging. Any national regeneration policy would have to address such issues. However, this recommendation requires more than new policies or changes to administrative practices as it also implies whole of organisation

transformation at local authority level. It would necessitate a shift in how local government views regeneration away from seeing it as a predominantly housing and engineering issue to an overarching one.[18] A properly resourced, multidisciplinary, multicomponent Planning Directorate with a strong sustainability, community development and engagement focus could be responsible for regeneration delivery.

Relevant is Norris and Hayden's (2018: 87) finding that skills and expertise deficits in local authorities (due to their organisational structure and management and promotion arrangements which see built up knowledge and capacity lost as non-expert staff move around roles as part of their career progression) weaken the quality of housing management. Also, by the time of the second Knocknaheeny regeneration masterplan, local government had experienced one of the highest levels of staff reductions across the public service since the fiscal crisis (Boyle and O'Riordan, 2013: 17). Deficiencies in this area shown in this study are also recognised by local authorities themselves. In a 2017 report by the National Oversight and Audit Commission (2017: 40) local authorities put forward suggested initiatives to improve social housing, including setting objectives to develop sustainable neighbourhoods and building good community participation. In the same report the expertise levels of local authorities was identified as a barrier to achieving their objectives and one of the solutions was to exploit the experience of current staff and their excellent relationship with communities.

Callanan (2018: 225) notes that local actors such as officials can act as barriers or enablers of participation in Ireland. This thesis has confirmed the importance of personalities and relationships in effective interagency cooperation and in building trust with residents. The fragility of these can be undermined if there are personnel changes (which is an inherent feature of the local government

[18] The proportion of Irish local government staff with an educational background in the natural sciences or engineering is higher than in central government, reflecting its role in infrastructural development (Boyle, 2014: 12). Conlon et al. (2017) find that sustainable development is marginalised in the engineering education paradigm in Ireland, with a limited interpretation where present at all.

system), demonstrating the need for a cultural shift in the local authority to embed principles such as participation and holistic sustainable development and regeneration.

Recently, local government has been given more of a coordinating role in local economic and community development which may offer potential to progress this recommendation, though Boyle and O'Riordan (2013: 11) suggest that this was more enthusiastically welcomed amongst senior management than other grades, and that the challenges of ensuring cooperation amongst agencies remained. Boyle and O'Riordan (2013: 24-25) found that local authorities need to develop a different set of competencies that will enable them to expand on these enhanced responsibilities.

Just as the Wright Review of the Department of Finance following the collapse of the Irish property bubble found too many generalists in positions requiring technical and other skills (Wright, 2010)—something Boyle (2018: 469) suggests is common across government—this thesis argues for greater community and sustainability skills in regeneration. It must be borne in mind that this thesis also shows that it is important for residents that Council officials come from or live in the area when they work there. Whelan's (1990) early concerns about the professionalisation of community development are also a consideration.

Clearly, financial, as well as personnel, resources would also have to be available to the Planning Directorate envisaged and this requires addressing persistent funding issues in local government. Local authority officials interviewed by Norris and Hayden (2018: 71) argued that funding available from central government for the maintenance, refurbishment and regeneration of council housing was inadequate, despite arguments from central government to the contrary. Overall, local authority expenditure in Ireland is well below the European average, with little fiscal autonomy (SNG-WOFI, 2019) and they are reliant on central government and agencies for over a quarter of their funding (Murphy, 2019). Recognising this, Norris and Hayden (2018) conclude their

study by recommending greater local fiscal autonomy is granted for local authorities to spend locally raised revenue on housing and regeneration.[19]

7.3.2 Sustainability: Prioritise a common understanding of sustainable development in regeneration

It is clear that the institutions involved in regeneration are challenged by operationalising the concept of sustainable development, interpreting it in a limited or inconsistent way, contrary to its integrative underpinnings. They have been unable to mainstream it into regeneration decision making and lack the ability to build on the foundations of a common understanding. This experience is perhaps, in part, an unintended consequence of a deliberate political strategy not to define sustainable development in the 2000 spatial planning legislation the sector operates under. At the turn of the millennium this was intended to ensure sustainable development's dynamism was not stifled by a static legal definition (Grist, 2012) but it may in fact have reinforced perceptions that the concept was unimportant or too vague to be useful, freezing the discussion in the loose but delimited, rather than holistic, conceptualisation of the time.

This study suggests that the notion of 'sustainable communities' in regeneration does not provide any further conceptual clarity than sustainable development. It does not appear to offer any more utility as a malleable but broadly understood unifying boundary object when compared to sustainable development. Conceptualisations or discussions around sustainable communities in the literature or data were no more commonly understood than sustainable development. There was no clamour to adopt the term as a vision for the regeneration amongst interviewees, with some considering it too broad and others disagreeing with its neoliberal ideological underpinnings. The Cork City development plan reproduces 'the Egan wheel' of placemaking for

[19] Turley and McNena (2019) however are critical of local authorities who, given the opportunity to locally raise revenue for services such as social housing by increasing the Local Property Tax (which they have the power to vary), instead decided to reduce the rate. It should be noted that Cork City Council has voted to increase the rate in recent years following several years of no increase (Cork City Council, 2021b).

sustainable communities (ASC, 2006) which includes equity and effective governance, but notably the plan only discusses its built environment dimensions, missing any holistic potential. In light of these findings there should be a renewed focus on sustainable development in regeneration rather than risk further diluting or confusing the discourse with a term such as 'sustainable communities', or indeed 'community resilience.'

Evans and Jones (2008: 1421) remind us that sustainability in regeneration is a 'grounded phenomenon, situated in places and performed by actors and institutions, rather than as a formalised ideal', while Roseland (2000) contends that for sustainability, communities must be involved in defining it from a local perspective. Therefore, rather than enforce a common interpretation of sustainable development in any national regeneration policy (a policy called for in the section above), it should identify some common principles and require that a local statement be developed. The overdue national SDG implementation plan for the period 2021-2023 may be an opportunity to progress this.

As discussed above, allowing people to set their own vision for local sustainable development is a core value of sustainability. The next two recommendations discuss mechanisms to steer towards this.

7.3.3 Participation/Democracy: Shift from promenade theatre consultation in local government

Though national and local government is more familiar with applying the concept of participation in regeneration than sustainable development, significant weaknesses remain in how participation is considered in practice.

Writer Derek Thompson (2020) is credited with first coining the term 'hygiene theater' during the Covid-19 pandemic to refer to safety protocols that did not reduce risk but made people feel safer, while other riskier, behaviours continued. The term follows the idea of 'security theatre' which emerged after the events of 11 September 2001 (McHendry, 2016). Here, the neologism 'promenade theatre consultation' is used to describe a site-specific situation (such as an area regeneration) where the community are placed in the role of a

promenade theatre performance audience, moving around and interacting with officials (performers) working to a set script towards a centrally choreographed outcome. Such a situation reflects Bissett's (2008: 11) experience where the 'rules of engagement for the regeneration game were being written and modified from a distance'.

In the case study data, examples of 'sanitised' 'promenade theatre consultation' include 'tick box' public meetings where a record of residents attending is seen as sufficient evidence of consultation, or the making available of maps and plans to residents with nobody there to explain them. Meanwhile, regeneration and housing officials talk to government or agencies before talking to residents. These are clear examples of consultation as top-down legitimation (White, 1996) and there should be a shift away from this towards the higher degrees of Arnstein's (1969) ladder of participation.

This shift would have clear benefits for sustainable development and regeneration. As Parés et al.'s (2012) found, more participation leads to more holistic regeneration with more emphasis on social and community issues compared to a focus on the physical and economic aspects when participation is more residual.

Such a shift requires not just a change in procedures, it also requires capacity building at both official and community level. A view expressed in the qualitative findings is that those leading the consultations from a Council perspective lacked the necessary skills. This reflects a wider capacity issue within the public sector as introduced in the first recommendation. Notably, a role of the Housing Agency (2016: 25) is to support local authorities with 'architectural, engineering, planning, project management, procurement and quantity surveyors services.' There are no community engagement or consultation skills provided.

Callanan (2018: 369) discusses the need for Irish local government to develop 'paradiplomatic skills of listening, dialogue, communicating, mediation and arbitration skills, and developing mutual understanding between different

parties' if it is to be more participative. The potential of adult and community education (seen as under threat from an increased emphasis on vocational and economic focused education in the interviews) to build community capacity as part of this process is also important.

7.3.4 Governance and Policy: Instigate reflexive, multi-level regeneration governance in Knocknaheeny

Good governance is seen as essential for sustainable development and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (Čiegis and Gineitienė, 2008; UN, 2015). The empiric taxonomy of reflexive, multi-level regeneration governance (RMLRG) presented in Chapter 6 shows that regeneration can be governed in a way that steers for sustainability, underpinned by deep participation.

Lowndes (2009) describes the emergence of 'new institutionalism' in urban politics, which recognises the role of diverse, multi-level actors in policy making and—most significantly for this study—that institutions are evolving processes. Reflexive, multi-level governance provides an opportunity for institutional change (rather than more superficial organisational change) by promoting new ideas and narratives, disrupting the path dependence of institutions set in their old ways (Pierson, 2004).

Jenkins and Hague (2005: 219) describe the emergence of various 'experiments' attempting to integrate modern participatory and representative democracy. This has also taken place in Irish local government (Callanan, 2018: 369). It is inherently recognised that the taxonomy described here may be considered another 'experiment'. Despite the constraints of a centralised system, local government has been an innovator in public participation in Ireland (Quinlivan, 2017) and reflexive, multi-level governance could begin with Cork City Council and agencies being willing to include more deliberative elements in the governance structures for the Knocknaheeny regeneration with a commitment to reflexivity. Implementing it in Knocknaheeny would require government at all levels to concede a measure of influence and the empowering of

communities in decision making, but it would also help policy makers better understand the needs and motivations of residents, reducing the uncertainty that policy makers fear participation might bring (Head, 2007).

While conceptual clarity has been linked to better policy making generally (Peters, 2005; Ilott et al., 2016), and with regard to sustainable development policy in particular (OECD, 2016), the contention that such contestation is inevitable, and indeed necessary for creativity and innovation (Jacobs, 1999; Connelly, 2007) is compelling. However, even then, mechanisms that seek to ensure common understanding of the challenges rather than seeking a common definition are needed. Reflexive governance allows this.

Its application would be novel in Ireland. In their discussion of stakeholder input shaping policy processes in Ireland, Brown and Scott (2009: 3) describe a 'limited penetration of such reflexive governance processes in Irish public policy', with reflexivity being 'invisible' and involving a limited range of participants. It would also be an opportunity to challenge the dominant market led discourse in Irish regeneration (Galvin and Mooney Simmie, 2017) (and the dominance of continued incremental, rather than transformative, narratives of sustainable development), shifting regeneration from the state dominated 'invited spaces' to more citizen-led 'popular spaces' which recognise structural inequalities, local priorities and the lived experience (Cornwall, 2004; also Lefebvre, 1991). It also recognises that communities are not homogenous and residents will also have differing views and agendas (McCloskey et al., 2013; Edwards and Imrie, 2015).

Cuthill (2010) includes social capital as a dimension of social sustainability, while Taylor (1998) has identified it as part of a comprehensive regeneration strategy. Amongst his ingredients for growing social capital, Putnam (2000) identified civic education including through adult education, community involvement in decentralised decision making, institutions that are alert to local bonds and the need to 'transcend our social and political and professional identities to connect with people unlike ourselves' (Ibid.: 411). These are all evident in the reflexive, multi-level regeneration governance taxonomy

described, potentially realising social capital which is essential for long term (sustainable) gains from urban policy programmes such as regeneration (Saegert and Winkel, 1998: 48).

Fundamentally democracy would be enhanced. Dahl (1998: 38) describes democracy from the local organisation level up as providing opportunities for, *inter alia*, effective participation and control of the agenda which reflexive governance allows.

7.4 Contribution and constraints

Taken together this study gives a unique and detailed perspective on how sustainable development and participation are applied in regeneration. It has interrogated and refined these critical, but complex, concepts and discussed mechanisms for their integration. By triangulating the concepts in a detailed empirical case study, the thesis has made a significant contribution towards clarifying them and developing potential tools for furthering their integration in regeneration theory, policy and practice.

The proposed reorientation of local government regarding regeneration, increased attention to sustainable development as a foundation, review of traditional consultation methods and adoption of reflexive, multi-level governance, aims to address the subjective and contested nature of the concepts under scrutiny. It provides a mechanism to create a common understanding amongst actors and unpack underlying structural issues and inequalities that explain actors' discourses and behaviours. These go beyond current approaches to participation and consultation and may play a role in addressing the implementation gap between policy and practice (Pressman and Wildavsky, 1984; Stone, 2009). By putting forward a novel taxonomy for reflexive, multi-level governance for regeneration, the thesis addresses Roseland's (2000) contention that the main challenge in designing a framework for sustainable communities is how to encourage democracy by supporting participatory local processes.

Such an arrangement would also build coherence with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) policy agenda, clearly contributing to the advancement of SDG 11 ('Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable'), SDG 16 ('Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels') and SDG 17 ('Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development') in particular.

The mixed methodology chosen was appropriate and generated data that allows the research to speak to both policy and academic audiences (Ritchie, 2003; Bryman, 2012) and the findings will be of interest not only to academics, but also to communities and policy makers. As seen in the previous section, the findings of this study have several important implications for future practice and it lays the groundwork for future research, such as further content analysis of regeneration and sustainability policy, perhaps through a policy coherence lens. The quantitative study here was inherently delimited as a supplemental part of the mixed methods research design. The relationship between the SDGs and sustainable development policy in Irish regeneration, and also the role of international standards in community, sustainable development and regeneration policy in Ireland may also merit further attention.

As discussed in the methodology, the research does not purport to make claims for all residents, given the pragmatic constraints on the number of residents interviewed. Deeper research on the community's experiences of the regeneration or vision for the area, perhaps using innovative techniques to engage with a greater number of residents to corroborate further the findings identified, may be appropriate. However, the reflexive model proposed here recognises the reality that, rather than expecting consultation to present the residents' views in a neat 'package', there will inevitably be conflicts within the community about its needs.

The reader should also bear in mind that the regeneration of Knocknaheeny discussed here, which can be traced back to limited refurbishment efforts in

1997, is ongoing. The 2011 masterplan indicated a five-phase process, with Phase 2 to come to completion in 2021. The regeneration case study and data presented therefore remains part of a work in progress.

When this study first began it may have been anticipated that it would put forward a single definition of sustainable development for regeneration but in light of the research undertaken, it is clear that any such attempts would be managerial and unrealistic. This research confirms that there is no common vision of sustainable development in regeneration in Irish policy and practice, however it is suggested that structures to recognise and harness this are necessary, with one organisation taking a leading role while allowing dialogue and reflexivity on sustainable regeneration. The thesis does not claim to present one 'true' sustainable regeneration but proposes a taxonomy that can contribute to its advancement. This implies an institutional shift away from deploying limited conceptualisations of sustainable development and participation in regeneration, in part as a strategy of legitimation, towards deeper, integrative and reflexive understandings.

Such a finding may be supported by the researcher's pragmatic stance, as simply rejecting ambiguity such as this can be considered as deconstructive (Wright, 2011) and there is increasing acceptance of ambiguity as inevitable (Connelly, 2007). For Jacobs (1999) once a concept is accepted as inherently contested, there is greater opportunity to understand how it is used and what it might look like in practice. Indeed, Evans and Jones (2008) consider that such ambiguity around sustainable development is desirable, potentially leading to creativity, innovation and space for compromise in regeneration. To deliver these benefits however, ambiguity must first be acknowledged, and mechanisms seeking common understanding of the challenges (rather than a common definition) is necessary. Reflexive governance allows this.

Fainstein (2010) has criticised the focus of pragmatic and rationalist planning and public policy literature on processes of participation rather than the content of policy on the character of the desirable city, and she questions communicative planning's assumption that more inclusive processes will result

in more equitable outcomes. While the findings of this thesis are undoubtedly communicative orientated, procedural, and aligned with Deweyan pragmatism, their explicit focus on operationalising sustainable development and participation in regeneration goes some way to addressing a criticism such as Fainstein's.

Piven and Cloward (1999) are pessimistic about the prospect for community empowerment within the present political-economic structure. However, I am reminded about the discussion of *The Just City* where Fainstein (2010: 5) limits her analysis to 'what appears feasible within the present context of capitalist urbanization in wealthy, formally democratic Western countries'—what she later calls 'nonreformist reforms' (2010: 19). I do the same, though an authentic and motivated government actor, alive to the benefits of a multiplicity of perspectives and seeking to solidify important but slippery concepts (as discussed in this thesis), breach the barriers to participation described, and embrace reflexive steering for holistic (not just economic or environmental) sustainability, may create momentum for wider transformation. This reflects Smith's (2011) contention that institutional democratic innovations can be significant and offer the potential to reenergise democratic theory and practice.

A transformative, entrepreneurial regeneration discourse persists in Ireland, with the *Covid-19 National Recovery Plan* published in June 2021, for example, promising regeneration funding for 'enterprise ecosystem-strengthening initiatives' (Government of Ireland, 2021: 41). The Recovery Plan also proposes new governance arrangements in support of this discourse, saying 'New city delivery boards will be established to drive the strategic co-ordination of metropolitan public investment and transformational regeneration, with the support of national and regional agencies and Government Departments, in order to achieve the pace and scale of growth required' (Government of Ireland, 2021: 44). Viewed through a sustainable development lens such an approach can be said to endorse continued growth and does not address the paradox of sustainable growth (Bridger and Luloff, 1999). This discourse has also been identified in the Knocknaheeny case study but work on the transformation

discourse in Irish regeneration policy and practice, and the views of communities on this, would be important.

Most (but not all) interviewees felt sustainability depended on the area's broader socioeconomic circumstances, rather than being something that could be wholly community-led. There is a tension between this and the strong local rhetoric of sustainable development. This suggests that sustainability may also require meso, rather than solely micro, level action which has not been articulated in Irish sustainability policy. We may need to see *Local Agenda 21* reimagined as *Meso Agenda 21*, addressing a regularly bypassed tier (Payne and Stafford, 2004).

7.5 Concluding reflections

The experience of completing this thesis confirms John's (2009: 22) conclusion that given their characteristic propinquity and numerosity, urban spaces make for tractable, interesting and data-rich research. I want to thank again those who participated in the research and contributed in particular to the rich qualitative data gathered and examined.

In a different field, Kongsager (2018) used the analogy of a hedgehog to describe integrated climate action across mitigation and adaptation as it 'sticks out (in many directions) and moves slowly only in the dark (lack of frameworks and clear concepts), which is why it can easily be run over (by separate measures or 'doing nothing').' The description may also apply to the subject of this thesis.

What is recommended above may be part of what Keane (2009) describes as the modern, messy 'monitory democracy', where, in Keane's chosen idiom, governments, unlike turkeys, sometimes vote for Christmas, by putting in place additional scrutiny, checks and balances. Shifting species, Keane (2009: 715) makes clear that such arrangements are not just watchdogs, but can also act as guide dogs with new ways of participatory decision making, as is put forward here.

My research journey began as a result of my academic and professional experience. I am now convinced that regeneration, sustainable development

and participation policy and practices are in need of change and can become more integrated and potentially powerful. The study is offered as a potential tool to inform communities, policy makers, community educators, academics, and other interested parties on how this can be achieved and the barriers which will need to be overcome. Unless policy makers and practitioners recognise that there are a number of barriers to community participation and reflect the need for inclusive, reflexive arrangements (beginning with wide ranging visioning) in regeneration and elsewhere, I am convinced that holistic regeneration and sustainable development will be harder to achieve.

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Appendix 1 Semi-structured interview questions

1. How long have you lived in Knocknaheeny and are you involved in any organisations or community work in the area?
    a. How do people get involved in the community?

[How long have you been involved in Knocknaheeny and can you tell me a little about your current role in the area?]

2. Has Knocknaheeny changed in the last 10 years?

3. I'm interested in the Regeneration Masterplan.

    a. Did you get involved in the current Masterplan or the first one, did you attend a presentation or anything?
    b. Did you feel you were listened to?
    c. Do you have any thoughts on the regeneration overall?

4. Do you think Knocknaheeny is sustainable, is it a good place to live?
    a. Is there a good community spirit?

[Does sustainable development or sustainable communities come into your work? Do you see it in documents etc or is there a definition that you use? Do you think it's important?]

5. Can anything be done to encourage more people to get involved in the community?

6. The Masterplan talks about sustainable tenure mix, more people owning their own homes I think, is that your idea of sustainable? Is employment, services, environment, more important maybe?

7. What does adult and community education mean to you?

    a. Have you done any citizenship courses, community development courses?

8. What do you think could be done to get people thinking about sustainable development and sustainable communities and what it means and how they can best have a say in it?
    a. If I was to run a course in the morning, say, to try do that what would it look like?

9. Is there anything you want to add that I haven't asked? Is there anyone else you think I should talk to?

Appendix 2 Qualitative thematic chart example

Theme: Governance and Policy

Subtheme / Interviewee	Focus on economy, employment and investment	Powers, roles and structures	Coherence	Regeneration policy	Effectiveness
Education and training official	Changes in education policy could be more employment focused meaning 'the training end could well overshadow the education end'. [p.10]	Attending meetings and getting involved in initiatives that are extra to core work but have a value even with fewer staff. [p.7]	'Blind spot' around coordination, 'independent republics' A lot of interagency work but more integration amongst agencies possible. [p. 8]		
City Council senior community official		Irish administration 'compatmentalised' and also centralised etc. [p.5]			Initiatives relying on paid workers not community members [p.2]
City Council community worker		Committed people in agencies on the ground but less obvious 'higher up the food chain'. [p.16]	More joint planning, less silos than before – working jointly with the community too. [p.2]		
Health sector official	'we've made investment into local communities where other agencies haven't and I think that has paid off for us'. [p.8] Increased policy focus on economy or economic and jobs meaning less on community	'would make sense to have one body running everything' 'We wouldn't be the most popular with other agencies'. [p.8] City Council was reluctant to meet residents before, meetings were 'carnage'. [p.7]		'things have worked in spite of policy rather than because of policy' due to the commitment of agency and other staff on the ground [p.6]	'you're looking at third and fourth generation engagement with services…by rights if we had done our job properly people wouldn't be engaging with the crisis services?' Same for the CDPs. [p.10]

	development ('dumbing down'). [p.4]				
Education sector worker					You should be 'working yourself out of a job'. [p.4]
National community development advocate	Response includes a funding package as well as interagency work etc. [p.5]			Certain indicators should 'trigger a state response'. [p.15]	
Dublin based community worker	Government policy reduces funding for community development projects and work that might lead to dissent [p.11]	Community regeneration boards needed 'to hold Council to account'. [p.13] Even on successful community regeneration boards typically agencies are missing or only have junior staff on them. Need an independent chair. [p. 6-7]	Different bodies and officials will have different agendas. Will be different to the communities' too. [p.7]		
Social scientist with experience of Knocknaheeny		Difficult, more oppositional relationship between local groups and City Council, more so than in maybe other parts of city. [p.3]		Have to accept there needs to ne special treatment for areas. [p.13]	
Central government regeneration adviser		Regeneration might benefit from a centrally coordinated interdepartmental group. [p.5]			
City Council regeneration official		Local government has limited roles in the areas key to regeneration, need to coax people along because it can't coerce. [p.3]			
Local elected representative					Residents need to know officials can work within the resources they

					have… not to raise expectations. [p.7]
Community development worker		Need to educate people on the political system. [p.16] City Council officials even if based in Knocknaheeny becoming less accessible [p.6]		Councillors claim they're getting things done for the area but it's actually regeneration policy dictating its needed because of the characteristics of the area. [p.9] Disconnect between what councillors say area needs and what people want. [p.8]	
Knocknaheeny resident		Outside of election time tackled councillor 'where the fuck have you been'. [p.7] 'We actually don't need councillors' [p.9] if estate management was allowed work there would be no need for councillors [p.4]			Good relationship with individual City Council staff but then they move or senior staff get involved. [p.2] A lot of achievements are down to the council staff on the ground, not the interest of senior people in City Hall. [p.3]
Knocknaheeny resident		Approach is 'divide and conquer' [p.8]			

Appendix 3 Quantitative content analysis codebook

Seán O'Leary PhD quantitative content analysis codebook						
Section 1						
Title of document:						
Author/published by:						
Year published:						
Section 2						
	Q1.	Q2a.	Q2b.	Q3.	Q4a.	Q4b.
	Term used?	Term defined?	Insert definition and page number if Yes	Number of mentions (count) excluding table of contents, indexes, appendices and bibliographies	Used in objective, aim, action or similar of the policy?	Insert relevant text and page number if Yes
	No 0 Yes 1	No 0 Yes 1			No 0 Yes 1	
Active citizenship/citizens						
Community benefit						
Community development OR community education						
Community resilience						
Consultation (public/citizen/community						
/local or equivalent)						
Empowerment or capacity building						
Equality Impact Assessment OR Social Impact Assessment						
Interagency OR interdepartmental work						
Participation (public/citizen/community						
/local or equivalent)						
Regeneration OR urban renewal						
Sustainability						
Sustainable community/communities						
Sustainable development						
Sustainable housing						
Social regeneration						
Local autonomy OR subsidiarity OR devolved decision making						
Physical regeneration						
TOTALS						