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Community Engagement in Ireland's Developmental Welfare State:

A Study of the Life Cycle Approach

by

Carney, G., Dundon, T., Ní Léime, Á. and Loftus C.

Irish Centre for Social Gerontology

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Glossary of Key Terms

Civic engagement/ community engagement: Refers to the drawing in of citizens and particularly disadvantaged groups to the governance of public institutions (United Nations, 2008: 9).

Civil Society Organisation: 'Civil society refers to the wide array of non-governmental and not-for-profit organisations that have a presence in public life, expressing the interests and values of their members or others, based on ethical, cultural, political, scientific, religious or philanthropic considerations. Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) therefore refer to a wide of array of organisations: community groups, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), indigenous groups, charitable organisations, faith-based organisations, professional associations, and foundations' (World Bank, 2010).

Cross-cutting group: Member organisation of the Community and Voluntary Pillar which identifies as belonging to a category beyond stages of life cycle defined in Towards 2016 report (Department of Taoiseach, 2006). For example, broad faith-based organisations, women's organisations, organisations representing homeless people, and rural issues have all identified as belonging to cross-cutting groups.

Deliberative democracy: 'a substantive form of democracy whereby all those subject to a decision can participate in authentic deliberation' (Dryzek, 2000: 85). '...democracy can be made more substantial and effective through greater efforts to include a variety of disadvantaged categories and groups for which the formal promise of democratic equality has masked continued exclusion or oppression' (Dryzek, 2000: 86).

Developmental Welfare State: The Developmental Welfare State (DWS), an initiative of the National Economic and Social Council, is a blueprint for social policy development in Ireland. The DWS is based on the premise that the task of the social policy system should be to support each individual person to meet their full potential. Such a welfare system comprises three overlapping elements: tax and welfare transfers, the provision of services and activist initiatives (National Economic and Social Council, 2005: ix-xviii).

Group deliberation: 'Deliberation is the weighing of competing considerations through discussion that is informed, balanced, conscientious, substantive and comprehensive' (Fishkin and Luskin, 2005: 284). Member organisations of the Community and Voluntary Pillar were invited to take part in 'policy sessions' to deliberate on the progress of social policy development in Ireland for the life cycle stage most relevant to their work. These sessions are referred to as group deliberations throughout the report.

Liberal democracy: At a minimum, liberal democracy refers to a system of government whereby representatives are elected through regular, competitive, multi-party elections based on the principle of universal suffrage (Dahl, 2003: 34).

Life cycle stage: 'The life cycle approach adopts the perspective of the person as the centrepiece of social policy development... The key life cycle stages are Children, People of Working Age, Older People, and People with Disabilities' (Department of Taoiseach, 2006: 40).

Life cycle framework: The life cycle is a framework for addressing 'key social challenges by assessing the risks and hazards which the individual person faces and the supports available to them at each stage' in the life course. As a framework for social policy development, the life cycle 'should help policy to evolve in a manner which encompasses actions across relevant departments and agencies' (Department of Taoiseach, 2006: 40).

Life course: The life course can be defined as 'a sequence of socially defined events and roles that the individual enacts over time' (Giele and Elder, 1998: 22).

Member organisation of the Community and Voluntary Pillar: The Community and Voluntary Pillar (CVP) is a mechanism for access to social partnership decision-making for Civil Society Organisations in the Republic of Ireland. Government invited eight member organisations to form the Community and Voluntary Pillar in 2000, and a further nine organisations were added in 2003 (illustrated in Figure 2.1).

Participant: Individual staff member from one of the member organisations of the Community and Voluntary Pillar who engaged in the research process for this project.

Policy design: Policy design refers to the policies that result from interaction between government, citizen, private sector and other bodies. 'Policy designs are observable phenomena found in statutes, administrative guidelines, court decrees, programs and even practices and procedures of street level case workers as they interact with policy recipients' Policy design reveals 'who does what, with whom, with what resources, for what reasons, and with what motivating devices' (Schneider and Ingram, 1997: 2).

Political culture: The attitudes, beliefs and values that underpin a particular political system.

Political quiescence: 'The absence of organisation for furthering the common interests of a particular group' (Edelman, 1960: 695) despite evidence of the oppression of that group, or of their unequal access to power and resources.

Voluntarism refers to a system in which there can be proactive state support and encouragement for employment protection and other rights but there is minimal direct statutory regulation, with a preference for the parties/agencies to determine for themselves the content of social policy or conditions of employment.

Acronyms

CMEs – Co-ordinated Market Economies

CRC – Conventions of the Rights of the Child

CSO – Civil Society Organisation

CVP – Community and Voluntary Pillar

DWS – Developmental Welfare State

ESRI – Economic and Social Research Institute

ICSG – Irish Centre for Social Gerontology

ICTU – Irish Congress of Trade Unions

LC – Labour Court

LMEs – Liberal Market Economies

LRC – Labour Relations Commission

NDA – National Disability Authority

NDS – National Disability Strategy

NESC – National Economic and Social Council

NGO – Non-governmental Organisation

OECD – Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development

PAR – Participatory Action Research

PLA – Participatory Learning and Action

VoC – Varieties of Capitalism

Community engagement is essential to how budgets are decided, policy is developed and public services delivered.



Executive Summary

The idea that people matter in modern democracies, often referred to as 'civic engagement' is recognised at the highest international level (United Nations 2008: 9). Civic or community engagement¹ is essential to how budgets are decided, policy is developed and public services delivered. Significantly, community engagement is crucial in developing policy for sustained economic and social development. In Ireland the idea of the Developmental Welfare State (DWS) is based on the premise that the social policy system should support citizens so as to reach their full potential. Such a system comprises three overlapping elements: *tax and welfare transfer*, *the provision of services* and *activist initiatives* (National Economic and Social Council, 2005: ix-xviii). Civil Society Organisations have been challenged to 'operationalise the DWS' using a 'life cycle framework' as part of Ireland's corporatist partnership model (Department of Taoiseach, 2006: 40).²

Aims of the Research

This study assesses the impact of the life cycle approach on policy-making for Civil Society Organisations (CSO) participating in the Community and Voluntary Pillar (CVP) of social partnership. A Participatory Action Research (PAR) methodology was used with members of the CVP, with five broad research aims in mind:

1. To demonstrate how the process of community engagement in policy-making works, and how this process can yield results in terms of policy outcomes for groups potentially vulnerable to deprivation.
2. To make a contribution to international understanding of civic engagement social policy development in an ageing society.
3. To establish policy priorities for children, older people, people with disabilities, and people of working age in Ireland.
4. To engage Civil Society Organisations as collaborators in a project adhering to the ethos of participatory action research.

1 The terms civic engagement and community engagement are used interchangeably throughout this report.

2 The three year period from when the research proposal was written (July 2008), the data gathered (July 2009-February 2010) and the report completed (March 2011) was one of change for Irish policy-making and politics. This is particularly the case with regard to social partnership. It is worth noting, therefore, that this report can only reflect the set of circumstances that existed at the time the study was conducted, not the whole experience of community engagement in social partnership over a 14 year period.

5. To disseminate research findings to the widest possible audience of policy-makers, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and academics at a national and international level.

The Participatory Action Research (PAR) methodology is fully explained in Chapter 4. Data-gathering began with individual interviews in July 2009, group deliberations took place in February 2010. A final review meeting with participants was held in March 2011.

Key Findings

The experiences shared by participants in this research suggest that Civil Society Organisations play an important role in bringing a citizen perspective to how policy is made in Ireland. The research shows that organisations in the CVP engage in advocacy on behalf of their grass-roots members, and in collective action through coalitions with other member organisations of the pillar. The quality of such democratic deliberation is affected by the institutional environment in which it takes place (social partnership). The quality of deliberation is also affected by external events such as economic conditions. Whether the process of deliberation leads to policy change depends on how fully it is endorsed by the main institutions of democracy. The research finds that community engagement is a significant asset in policy planning in all cases. After summarising the key findings in the report, six priority recommendations are outlined.

- **Mixed strategies of CVP members**

The research set out to identify what strategies Civil Society Organisations use to address persistent inequalities. The evidence shows that member organisations of the CVP use the institutions of social partnership to hold government to account on promises made. Perhaps more significantly, the research found that CVP members use political mechanisms outside social partnership to equal effect. The direct influence of politicians and broader trends within the body politic regularly overwhelm the institution of social partnership. Because of this, the importance of using tacit and experiential knowledge both inside and outside the partnership institution was a key strategic variation among CVP members. The CVP was found to demonstrate innovative and high level strategic awareness of the complex needs of vulnerable groups in society. Some organisations use equality, others gender or social justice and anti-poverty arguments to improve conditions for their constituents. Others suggest mainstreaming and/or using the life cycle as a reference point to promote the interests of their members. Importantly, strategic variation is often aligned to deal with particular priority issues at different times and depending on changing circumstances in the wider body politic.

- **Limitations of social partnership as an institutional framework**

Social partnership is the institution identified as central in devising the Developmental Welfare State (DWS). The Irish system of corporatism was found to be one of excessive or permissive voluntarism. Over-reliance on voluntary participation did not mitigate the risks encountered by vulnerable groups inside and outside the labour market. Notwithstanding a high degree of potential for social and economic inclusion, the institution of social partnership did not fully succeed in integrating the three overlapping elements of the DWS (i.e. service provision, income and support infrastructure, and activist measures for inclusion). A comparison of institutional frameworks revealed that voluntary participation meant that some government departments and key policy-makers/civil servants did not fully understand how to implement agreements made by life cycle partners.

- **A fragmented Developmental Welfare State**

A key finding of this research is that Civil Society Organisations were at times hindered from operating effectively due to a lack of institutional supports and political legitimacy within the system of social partnership. This was evidenced by a lack of active dialogue reported by participants at the time the research was undertaken (2009-2010). Participants used social partnership less following the economic crisis of 2008. The suspension of social dialogue has led to a fragmentation of the Developmental Welfare State. The institutional limitations affecting CVP member organisations include: deficient services, inadequate income supports, and constrained activism which depressed the rights of vulnerable groups in society. Inequality persists in various forms: child poverty, pension inadequacy, access to education and health, and social welfare.

- **Absence of political embeddedness**

A fourth key finding is that the DWS is not fully embedded in the broader political system, partly because of the permissive and voluntary dynamic underpinning social partnership. The broader implications affecting the DWS have intensified with the onset of economic crisis and recession post-2008. The suspension of the formal institution of social partnership in 2010 has further diminished the legitimacy of civic engagement among social partners. Consequently, important social groups and partners have had to return to other sources of power and persuasion in promoting the interests of their constituents. The implication of this finding is that any revised model of the DWS needs to be cognisant of the fact that participation and inclusion exists within a broader political system.

- **Implications of research**

Finally, the research concludes with a number of implications and recommendations for the future. It concludes, firstly, that the CVP has been and remains a significant asset that offers strategic value in contributing to the solutions facing Ireland's current economic and social challenges. Secondly, recognising and including a wide diversity of opinion can enhance a learning and capacity-building role for CVP member organisations. Thirdly, this also shows that a form of 'contentious politics' is necessary for policy development to support the interests of potentially marginalised groups. Finally, the dual role of Civil Society Organisations as social partners and as activists may potentially enhance their capacity to represent their constituents.

Recommendations

The above findings and implications relate to six priority recommendations, explained in the full report, and summarised as follows:

1. **Diverse skills of Civil Society Organisations should be used as a resource for policy-making**

One legacy of social partnership is a co-ordinated and influential CVP. The skills of these 17 organisations should be harnessed to build capacity in the many Civil Society Organisations working outside social partnership structures.

2. **Make the necessary institutional changes to realise the DWS**

A clear national strategy for implementing a life cycle approach should be developed. This strategy would include targets, frameworks and a well resourced ministerial office for each life

cycle stage. Evidence of best practice - showcased throughout this report concerning strategic planning and integrated governance - offers a template on which to base future structural evaluations. For example, the disability sector strategy and governance framework could be used as a template for other life cycle stages.

3. Community engagement should be used as a key resource in policy development

Reform of the welfare state must shift from being a concern of technocrats and policy analysts to become a concern of the broader public. Plans need to be ambitious in order for reform to be relevant, meaningful and inclusive. The media, universities and private corporations should all contribute to a national debate on major policy reform. Government should consider innovations in democratic governance such as participatory budgeting, policy labs and citizens' juries in developing policy proposals. Such institutions should build on, rather than replace, existing work.

4. Policy must be made with politicians

Plans for reform of the welfare state must outline clear roles for parliamentary committees, election campaigning and direct lobbying of politicians at national and local level.

5. Use a life course approach in social policy planning

In the coming decades, demographic ageing and the individualisation of risk could lead to inter-generational conflict in competing for resources. An inter-generational/life course perspective to political participation and policy planning should be developed to minimise the potential for conflict between life cycle stages. Awareness of critical transition points across the life course should allow policies to be designed so that group and life cycle identities are equally significant. For example, the National Positive Ageing Strategy would be gender proofed and the National Women's Strategy would be cognisant of the vulnerability of older women. A case in point is the lack of pension provision and adequacy for today's generation of older women.

6. Use international benchmarks in planning for vulnerable groups

Policy-makers should be mindful when using policy leadership from international organisations such as the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the United Nations (UN). For instance, the economic concerns of OECD recommendations may undermine the rights approach used in international covenants on human rights for women, children and people with disabilities. Policy-makers should use UN rights frameworks as minimum standards in developing policy at national level. Government and policy-makers should draw on expertise available in the NGO and university sectors in developing policies to international standards.



‘Citizens must be active participants in policy planning if their rights are to be realised’

(UN 2008: 9)

1. Introduction

The idea that people matter in modern democracies, often referred to as 'civic engagement' is recognised at the highest international level (United Nations 2008: 9). Community engagement is essential to how budgets are decided, policy is developed and public services delivered. The need to widen democratic participation is based on the fact that groups vulnerable to deprivation also tend to be excluded from decision-making. Governance in the public interest cannot be realised without the participation of *all* citizens. Citizens must be active participants in policy planning if their rights are to be realised (United Nations, 2008: 9).

In Ireland a number of different mechanisms beyond the basic voting system are used to enable policy-making to be more socially inclusive. These include local area partnership companies, consultative fora, Oireachtas committees and various institutions of social partnership. For the past three decades some form of corporatism has operated in Ireland, generally referred to as 'social partnership' (Baccaro, 2003; Hardiman 1988: 2006). Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) have been a pillar in this system for over a decade (Meade, 2005). This research examines how groups regarded as vulnerable are represented by CSOs within social partnership. Vulnerability is defined in relation to economic, social and labour market position and status. It can include people (and groups) who are on the fringe of the labour market or in sectors that have been marked by limited or excluded rights and protections, such as non-enforced minimum wages or little protection against discrimination. Vulnerability may also be evident if a person does not have the capacity to protect themselves or articulate their voice and concerns (Pollert and Charlwood, 2009: 334-35).

Demographic change has prompted policy-makers to target groups vulnerable to deprivation according to 'life cycle stage'³. This study compares the experience of different Community and Voluntary Pillar (CVP) organisations in representing four life cycle stages: people of working age, people with disabilities, children, and older people. By comparing the institutional contexts and decision-making strategies of Civil Society Organisations in social partnership, this research adds to previous work on the development of policy for groups vulnerable to social exclusion, in particular work on the disability sector (McCarthy, 2007).

The study set out to establish the impact of the life cycle on policy-making for vulnerable groups. This central objective shaped how the data were gathered. Research participants were those who claim to represent vulnerable groups, namely, Civil Society Organisations who use the life cycle approach in their work. The research also set out to explore the priority issues for vulnerable groups.

3 There is an important distinction between how the terms 'life course' and life cycle are used in this report. Life course refers to the socially defined progressions of an individual from birth to death. In recent times gerontologists and demographers have referred to the extension of the life course as human life expectancy increases. In this report, the life cycle (used interchangeably with life cycle framework/life cycle approach) refers to a specific policy-making mechanism as outlined in *Towards 2016* (Department of Taoiseach, 2006).

How does the life cycle approach facilitate the expression of their interests as policy priorities to government? To answer this question, researchers worked collaboratively with Civil Society Organisations that represent these vulnerable groups in social partnership. These Civil Society Organisations are referred to as participants and participant organisations throughout the report. It is worth noting that the research did not engage with any community and voluntary organisations other than the 17 member organisations of the Community and Voluntary Pillar of social partnership.

1.1 Why is this Research Necessary?

There are three principal reasons for undertaking this research. Firstly, rising life expectancy, falling fertility rates and increasing dependency ratios have prompted governments in developed nations to become increasingly concerned with the sustainability of welfare states (OECD, 2007). These evidence-based concerns, when combined with a political swing away from socialised public services, have produced a new individualised relationship between state and citizen (Fineman, 2008). Existing social contracts are being questioned, often on economic grounds. States have engaged with these challenges in various ways, though most have identified a role for the individual in charting their own life course (OECD, 2007). Leading scholars refer to this turn as 'the individualisation of the social' (Walker, 2006). For this research project we seek to embrace the potential of this broad demographic change to lead to 'a more contentious and political approach to the policy process' (Gaventa and McGee in Gaventa and McGee 2010: 5). It is only through embracing the potential of such seismic policy change that we can begin to predict how future resource constraints and policy debates might evolve.

A second reason for undertaking this research is based on international evidence that policy design for vulnerable groups has important links to the issue of their political representation (Carney 2010; Pollert and Charlwood, 2009; Schneider and Ingram 1993; 1997; 2005). Those concerned with the quality of democracy in Ireland question the extent to which modern representative democratic systems allow for citizen engagement in important policy changes (Harris 2008, Harris et. al., 2005;). Is it possible for vulnerable groups to influence policy development so that plans are designed in their favour? Does this experience affect their engagement with the political process? Where groups cannot or will not speak for themselves, the task of speaking for the voiceless often falls to Civil Society Organisations. Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) become important 'intermediate institutions' in modern representative democracies, forging complex and multi-faceted links between state and citizen (Schneider and Ingram, 1997). Examining the role of CSOs as intermediate institutions reveals much about the quality of democratic deliberation in Ireland.

The third reason for undertaking this research is to provide a scientifically robust and ethically sound research design which captures the complexity of CSO engagement in social partnership in Ireland. Previous research on community engagement in social partnership has tended to conclude that the formation of the pillar has led to co-option (Daly 2007; Larragy 2006; Meade, 2005; Murphy and Teague, 2004). Arguments are made that the independence of the community and voluntary sector has been compromised in favour of promoting economic stability and a neo-liberal consensus (Meade, 2005). This Irish literature resonates with one side of an international debate with similar concerns about the professionalisation of Civil Society Organisations in democratic systems (Fyfe, 2005). In the Irish case, much of this research is valuable, but has been conducted on an *ad hoc* basis. This has made it difficult to produce substantive findings on such a complex area of representative democracy. This research explores a third view that 'policy change would come neither through state reform on the one hand, nor social action on the other, but through their interaction, through

'working both sides of the equation' (Gaventa, 2010: 10). The capacity and indeed the necessity of CSOs to 'work both sides of the equation' in order to shape policy change is further elaborated in the closing chapters of this report.

1.2 Report Structure

Chapter 2 of this report identifies the Developmental Welfare State (DWS) and the life cycle as the Irish response to a changing international context for social policy-making. In particular, the implications of such a strategy for vulnerable groups in the context of Irish social and political institutions are outlined. In Chapter 3 we argue that the relationship between vulnerable groups and those who represent them is more complex and more significant than previously recognised. These relationships are further complicated by the gradual individualisation of risk. Chapter 4 outlines a number of methodological issues, not least how the use of a participatory mode of engagement can enrich research findings. This is evident in the amount and richness of the data jointly generated by research participants and the research team. A special section of this chapter draws on the reflections of participants on the research process.

Chapter 5 presents the data co-generated at five separate group deliberations with member organisations of the CVP. The data are presented in a format which foregrounds analysis undertaken by research participants at each deliberation. The data demonstrate the complexity of issues facing each life cycle stage. Results also highlight the added value in co-generating data on an area of public policy development so dependent on collective action. It is clear from these data that the tacit knowledge of those working closely with the life cycle framework reveals much about its strengths and limitations as an approach to policy-making. The co-generated data are followed in Chapter 6 with a number of interpretations of the data by the research team. A key finding from the co-generated data in Chapter 5 is that the Developmental Welfare State is a significant vision of welfare state reform in Ireland. As a research team, we recognised that our key contribution would be to examine how the data co-generated from the life cycle group deliberations might inform realization of the Developmental Welfare State. Researchers also worked to identify whether the DWS model of *income*, *public services* and *activation measures* (Figure 2.3) might serve to provide a cohesive but individualised model of social welfare.

The final chapter of the report identifies conclusions arising from the research findings, highlights potential implications of the research, and makes a series of recommendations to government and policy-makers. The report now turns to national and international perspectives on the life cycle approach to policy-making.

Ireland is at a crossroads in terms of the alternative routes and policy options available to reform the welfare state.



2. National and International Perspectives on the Life Cycle Framework

2.1 Introduction

The chapter begins by framing the research within a discussion of demographic ageing and the individualisation of risk. Economic, social and political implications of demographic ageing are identified. Next, the chapter provides some context to the Irish response to broader international trends in social policy development. In particular, we identify the role of the social partners in leading the national response to welfare state reform. The Developmental Welfare State is recognised as significant progress for the Irish state in terms of social policy planning. The chapter identifies Civil Society Organisations as supporters of change in Ireland, and concludes by linking welfare state reform to the quality of citizenship in Ireland, particularly for vulnerable groups.

2.2 Demographic Ageing and the Individualisation of Risk

International organisations (IOs) report a growing concern that ageing populations and falling fertility rates are rendering existing social welfare arrangements unsustainable. Governments express concern that welfare states will be unable to meet future demand for pensions, health care and public services (OECD 2005). In 2005, social affairs ministers of OECD countries agreed that 'the OECD should identify how social and economic goals can be best achieved, for example by policy interventions at certain critical transition points or by redistribution of income from one point in the life course to another' (OECD, 2005: 1). On life course issues, The World Bank and the International Monetary Fund have taken similar approaches to income redistribution (Holzman, 2005). Demographic ageing is just one of the motivations for increasing EU intervention in social policy-making through the open method of co-ordination (de la Porte and Nanz 2004). For International Organisations, economics is at the heart of this re-distribution debate: 'The OECD should further assess the best ways of financing social policies across the life course' (OECD 2007; 15). Arguably, a purely economic approach is limiting as it ignores broader debates around the potential for inter-generational solidarity and inter-generational justice (Moody, 2007). Shifting responsibility for social welfare from the state to the individual has attracted the interest of politicians, policy-advisors and academics. With more choice in terms of fertility, marriage, employment opportunities, travel and family status, individuals are expected to take 'more responsibility for their employability, social insurance and financial planning' (Bovenberg,

2007: 17). The individualised approach implies keeping social policy interventions to a minimum in order to allow markets, families and private institutions to meet the needs of individuals. While individualisation appears to have taken on a 'mainstream economic perspective' (Maitre and Whelan, 2008: xi), it is by no means the only policy option for reform of welfare states. One alternative perspective is to re-distribute economic resources amongst age groups to meet greater demand for social supports at critical points across the life course. In this option, state policies can be more pro-active in order to ensure flexibility of the labour market and maintenance of human capital (Bovenberg, 2007). With this approach, high levels of labour force participation provide a basis for 'ensuring solidarity with vulnerable elderly, children and disadvantaged adults' (OECD, 2007: 16).

While the economic repercussions of demographic ageing are well documented, its social and political implications are not. Socially, existing norms of behaviour and expectations are being questioned. For instance, it may no longer be feasible to expect to retire at 65, or to assume that caring roles will continue to be undertaken primarily by women. Politically, the changing demographic balance between generations raises the question of how agreement on the re-distribution of resources will be reached. Concern has been expressed that older generations will demand retirement income and health care spending for which there will be insufficient numbers of economically active younger people to support (Commission of the European Communities, 2006). In democratic systems, where one person has one vote, elected representatives have a perpetual incentive to please the majority. If that majority is older, the political mobilisation of older people will become increasingly relevant (Goerres, 2009). International organisations such as the OECD and EU are mindful of this political risk: 'With increased longevity, earlier retirement and the compression of the working life, the aging European continent risks becoming entangled in a vicious circle of early retirement and lower fertility in which politically stronger older generations favour generous passive spending on pensions and health care at the expense of investments in the human capital of younger generations' (Bovenberg, 2007: 28). By reforming policies so that they are more consistent with the changing demographic structure, there is an expectation that inter-generational discord can be avoided (Commission of the European Communities, 2006).

2.3 The Irish Response: Life Cycle Approach

Adopting a life cycle approach in the Irish context involves recognition of 'new' trajectories of risk relating to matters such as work, family, parenting, age, caring responsibilities, more diverse family forms, marital breakdown, and higher levels of female labour force participation (Maitre and Whelan, 2008: xi). For previous generations in Ireland, these matters were seen as private affairs of the family, in which the state played little or no role. Over the past forty years Irish economic and social life has become more open to external influence, particularly from the European Union. Secular values such as equality, women's rights and laterly human rights have replaced the predominance of Catholic Church teaching. It is a mark of globalisation, secularisation and changing gender relations that key life events are now considered in the development of social policy.

The life cycle approach recognises that policy design must take account of persistent inequalities for groups who are marginalised or cannot access the labour market. Children, older people and people with disabilities are recognised as groups for whom the labour market has tended not to provide income or social protection. People of working age are also recognised as being vulnerable to social exclusion and disadvantage during periods of unemployment, due to lack of educational attainment or family/caring commitments. In 2005, the National Economic and Social Council launched the '*Developmental Welfare State*' - a strategy for social welfare reform. The concept of the life cycle

is central to the Developmental Welfare State (DWS) (NESC, 2005). The life cycle is linked to commitments in the most recent social partnership agreement, *Towards 2016* (Department of Taoiseach, 2006) wherein it can be viewed as an implementation mechanism for the DWS.

2.3.1 Ireland: reforming the welfare state in a corporatist system

Social policy development in Ireland has been led by a diverse range of actors involved in a corporatist system of social partnership. Social partnership is a process of consensus-led policy-making whereby government agrees pay levels and social and economic policy with five key pillars: employers' organisations, trade unions, farmers groups, and community and voluntary organisations.⁴ Partnership first emerged out of the 1980s fiscal crisis, beginning with the negotiation of the Programme for National Recovery in 1987 (O'Donnell and Thomas, 2002: 167). The primary objective of social partnership is to develop an integrated approach to policy development among social and economic actors in the state (Teague, 2007). While the National Economic and Social Council pre-dates social partnership (founded in 1973), it and the National Economic and Social Forum are associated with the seven social partnership programmes between 1987 and 2006. Partnership negotiations take place at each political cycle, to establish a five or ten year National Development Plan, with a mid-term review after two or three years. During the period of implementation, bi-annual plenaries of all the social partners, and bi-lateral meetings between individual pillars and government are held. The current agreement, *Towards 2016: ten year framework social partnership agreement 2006-2016*, is the first to include a life cycle approach.

Larragy (2006) identifies the origins of social partnership as an institutional shift, made initially to facilitate a period of sharp fiscal correction following the economic crisis of the late 1970s. Rather than seeking confrontation with the trade union movement, government sought a new consensus. The inclusion of farmers indicated that the agenda was already wider than industrial relations. Government has since expanded membership of social partnership to include organisations of civil society. 'Only those who have shown an interest in signing agreements based on a mutual understanding are invited. Excluded actors are left with the possibility of influencing negotiations only by lobbying, media campaigns, or other forms of manipulation from outside' (O'Donnell, 2007 cited in Adshead, 2011: 91). Membership of the Community and Voluntary Pillar (CVP) is a mechanism for regulated access to decision-making for organisations representing vulnerable groups. Initially eight member organisations were asked to form the CVP in 2000, with a further nine organisations added in 2003 (illustrated in Figure 2.1).

Previous research on the role of the CVP in social partnership includes critical analyses of the co-optation of Civil Society Organisations against an emerging neo-liberal agenda (Daly, 2007; Meade, 2005; Murphy, 2002). Neo-liberalism can be defined as a particular phase in global capitalist stages of accumulation which intersect with national and local policy developments. These stages of accumulation include; increased labour mobility within and between states, a renewed emphasis on wealth through market liberalisation, by limiting the regulatory functions of state agencies and private corporations, and ease of access to finance to fuel competition (Kirby, 2008).

4 An environmental pillar was added in 2009.

Neo-liberalism is a particular phase in global capitalist stages of accumulation including:

- Increased labour mobility within and between states
- Renewed emphasis on wealth accumulation through market liberalisation
- Limited regulation of state agencies and private corporations
- Easy access to finance to fuel competition

Against such global neo-liberal trends is the interplay of policy-making at a national and local level. Whatever happens at international level, it falls to the state to respond. The persistence of the state as the only actor capable of extracting and re-distributing resources to an extent which allows for the provision of public goods is notable (Houtzanger and Moore, 2005: 4 cited in Gaventa and McGee, 2010: 6). This research notes the resilience of the state in the analysis of global trends in policy development. The research is also mindful of the original purpose of social partnership: to provide long-term social planning to compensate for the short-termism of electoral politics (O'Donnell, 2007). The decision to participate in social partnership by some Civil Society Organisations has been attributed to a realisation that when it came to initiating social development 'other methods yielded little success' (Larragy, 2006: 393).

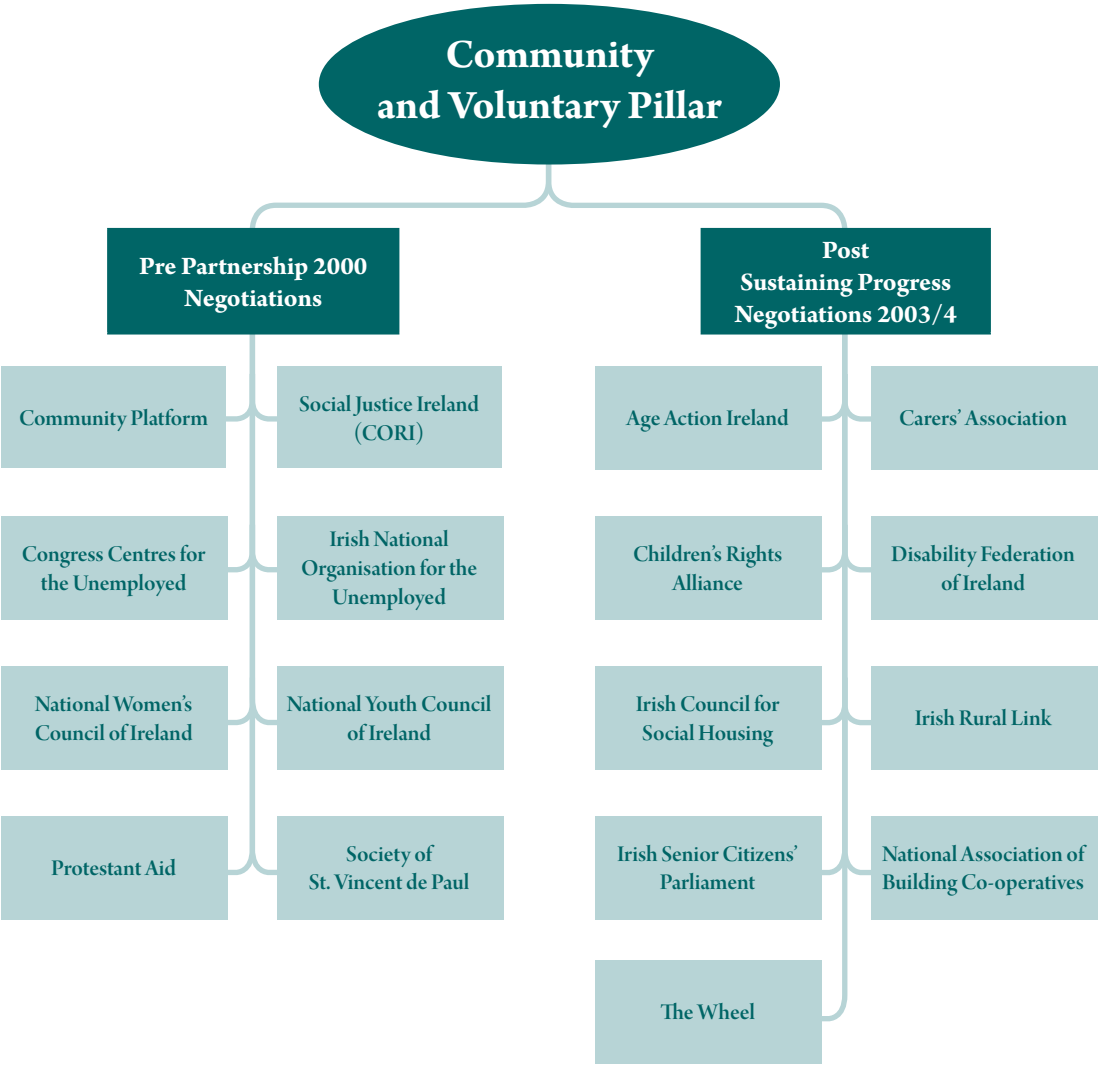
In the 20-plus years since social partnership began, social policy has been developed in recognition of the persistence of social problems, despite the economic prosperity of the Celtic Tiger (1994-2007) (see Berger and Compston, 2002). This development can be more clearly linked to developments at the international level than domestic publications suggest (NESC, 2005). The global economic system can be characterised as increasingly 'competitive' and 'liberalised' (Larragy, 2006: 380-1). At the same time, the social partnership framework in Ireland displays 'corporatist' features, many of which are supported by state agencies and labour market actors. Thus 'corporatism combined with market liberalisation' results in a permissive form of voluntary regulation towards economic and social policy development, a key feature considered next.

2.3.2 Permissive voluntary nature of Irish social partnership

The Irish system of social partnership is, first and foremost, a voluntary model between government, employer associations, trade unions, farmers organisations and several civil society and community organisations. Unlike other voluntarist regimes (notably the UK and USA), Ireland adopted a centralised arrangement in which the social partners share decision-making capacity at national level (Teague and Donaghey, 2009). Of note however, social partnership was virtually suspended in early 2010 after a severe economic recession and the Irish government unilaterally introduced austerity measures by cutting social welfare and reducing public sector pay to help reduce the public deficit and support an ailing banking system.

Significantly, there is limited evidence on the contextual and institutional conditions promoting and preventing social dialogue and cohesion; in particular, the links between national institutions and diffuse labour market actors at a local, grass-roots level. Critics understate the potential for social partnership to build coalitions around shared agendas by implying that co-operation between

Figure 2.1 Membership of the Community and Voluntary Pillar



competing groups is contrary to inherent capitalistic conflicts of interest in market economies (Allen, 2000; D'Art and Turner, 2005; Kelly, 2004). In contrast, advocates often promote an excessively upbeat tenor to the 'presumed' rather than the 'real' outcomes of national co-ordination through social partnership, and either dismiss or by-pass the view that permissive voluntary systems of co-operation expose labour market participants to the volatilities of capitalism more so than in regulated market regimes (Donaghey, 2008; Donaghey and Teague, 2007; Geary, 2008). This dichotomy between 'voluntarist' social inclusion and more 'regulated' models of engagement raises issues for the trajectory of the Developmental Welfare State (DWS) in Ireland, reported more fully in Chapter 6. In particular, the intersection of multiple strands and actors in producing a functional DWS is significant when evaluating outcomes for groups deemed more vulnerable in society.

In Ireland, the voluntarist nature of social partnership has constituted what can be termed a permissive system because it places few constraints on corporations and state agencies, aside from a tendency towards minimalist transposition of European-wide regulations. The voluntary dynamic has implications for the function of a Developmental Welfare State. In free market regimes, such as Ireland, the idea that labour market participants can be social and economic stakeholders goes against the grain of a deeply embedded ideological mindset that private corporations have unilateral authority to make labour market decisions that affect others, including vulnerable groups across society. From the perspective of government, the responsibility of family or care provision is deemed to be the exclusive preserve of the private citizen, not the state. The significance of the voluntarist tradition underpinning social partnership is exacerbated by the dominance of short-term shareholder capitalism rather than alternative (European) stakeholder variants (Hutton, 2002). Arguably, permissive voluntarism and the notion of free choice, despite its linguistic and self-evident logical appeal, actually places few constraints on labour market and welfare transactions, which ultimately renders Ireland more exposed than other, more regulated European economies. These contradictions operate at the macro and micro level. At the macro level, capitalism is subject to periodic volatility and Ireland has fared particularly badly in the latest economic crisis in this regard (O'Toole, 2009). All ideals of social and economic inclusion, such as social partnership, imply a sharing of 'risk' between labour market actors (Martinez-Lucio and Stuart, 2005). However, the risks are considerably more unequal for those who are at the lower end or have difficulty accessing the labour market in the first place: for young and old workers, unemployed people, women and other vulnerable citizens. For groups who cannot access the labour market, such as retired people, children or those challenged in their personal autonomy, these risks are considerably higher. Understanding the unequal distribution of risk in Irish society is central to unpacking our potential to negotiate a more equal system of social welfare within a voluntary market-led social partnership model. One variant is the interplay of voluntarism and regulation that can be accommodated within such a regime, which may lead to the potential benefits of inclusion and participation, briefly considered next.

2.3.3 Beneficial constraints

In what is labelled the 'varieties of capitalism' (VoC) literature, Hall and Soskice (2001) distinguish between institutional contexts in 'Liberal Market Economies' (LMEs) and 'Co-ordinated Market Economies' (CMEs). The characteristic features of LMEs include: (1) the economy primarily operates according to free market principles; (2) there is little engagement of labour market actors (especially employers and worker representatives) concerning government policy; and (3), regulations promoting co-operation and economic and social cohesion are weak. The US, UK, Australia and New Zealand are often described as adopting these liberalised tendencies. In contrast, CMEs include Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Germany, the Netherlands and Sweden that have complementary linkages between state institutions promoting co-operation across various levels and for vulnerable groups.

Some argue Ireland is a hybrid of the LME and CME models. For example, Hamann and Kelly (2008: 144) suggest Ireland has moved from a LME towards a more co-ordinated variant by adopting some CME-type strategies, in particular its national system of social partnership. Policy debates ask whether Ireland is closer to 'Boston or Berlin', invoking a contrast between the *laissez-faire* doctrines of American liberalisation, or European social market regulation (Collings et al., 2008). Teague and Donaghey (2009b: 74) lend weight to the hybrid model owing to an Irish blend of 'institutional complementarities' which created a particular symbiosis among social and economic institutions. Among other features, these included trade unions accepting wage restraint for employment growth; economic liberalization and market openness; the accommodation of foreign multinational capital; a minimalist welfare state; and the truncated adaptation of European rights. However, Ireland seems to lack what Hancke et. al. (2007:5) note is the all important architecture of 'institutional comparative advantage', by which is meant an institutional complementarity across different levels rather than via a single, national system: in other words between labour relations actors, amongst corporate governance institutions, between training systems, and across inter-firm relations. These relationships determine the degree to which a political economy is 'co-ordinated' in pursuit of a re-distribution of wealth and competitiveness. Ireland clearly displays tendencies of each of the Liberal Market Economies and Co-ordinated Market Economies dimensions, but arguably gravitates more towards a voluntarist neo-liberal market system than a co-ordinated wealth distributing regime. In particular, free market principles and cost-value ratios overshadow almost all public finance decisions predicated on the creation of a surplus generation rather than as a principled public good, as can be found in other regulated economies (for example, Nordic countries). The LME dimensions are further underpinned by the government's light-touch regulatory approach among Irish labour market institutions rather than limiting or constraining the power of organisational decision-makers for the good of society. One consequence of the fusion of LME and CME dimensions is that while Irish partnership has the hallmarks of a corporatist or regulated model based on indirect representation at a national level, including distinct social and economic 'pillars', the extent to which the arrangement is highly voluntarist results in an imbalance of the potential benefits being skewed to a political and economic elite in society.

Streeck (2004) takes the idea of institutional complementarity further by introducing the concept of 'beneficial constraints'. According to Streeck (1997: 197), contrary to neo-liberal arguments that economic performance improves the more that regulations are removed, 'socially institutionalised constraints on the rational voluntarism of interest maximising behaviour may be economically beneficial'. The notion is that beneficial constraints improve social well-being and economic performance when government intervenes to regulate market activity in limiting the unfettered pursuit of profit-maximisation. Similarly, rather than encouraging a value system that assumes individual risk-taking as the basis for wealth creation, society can gain more by limiting the excesses of free enterprise to ensure a wealth distribution function across groups and life stages. Evidence of the claim for beneficial constraints includes national minimum wages, equal access to education and training, and statutory labour market participation in decision-making (Streeck, 2004). Other examples include return-to-work and training schemes for the unemployed, or programmes to engender greater female labour market participation by legislating for workplace supports, such as childcare provision. Furthermore, not only are such constraints economically beneficial for all citizens, the system helps stabilise uncertainty by preventing vested interest groups from doing certain things they simply prefer to do, by compelling them to do things they would normally avoid but which can be shown to be in their own interests. For example, employers may opt for low over high wages, would like to hire and fire workers at will, ignore or circumvent equality and other citizen rights, and prefer to make decisions unilaterally.

Yet in more established Co-ordinated Market Economies, such as Germany, Streeck (1997) cites five institutional features promoting equality and supporting quality competition and consensus: strong proactive unions, protective labour market legislation, co-ordinated industry bargaining; statutory national vocational training; and a set of binding rules enshrined in the Work Constitution Act (1972) which enables robust participation in decision-making. In addition, the Danish 'flexicurity' model successfully reconciles contradictory pressures for flexibility on the one hand, and security on the other, because 'beneficial constraints' are placed on corporations and state agencies through rights for social dialogue at *both* national and local labour market levels (Jorgenson, 2005). To this end flexibilities are provided as fluid for employers and policy-makers, while employment security or welfare provisions protect workers and those more vulnerable to unregulated market transitions. One consequence is that all parties are more willing and able to take the 'risks' necessary for meaningful and genuine collaboration that helps to foster innovation and limits low-cost competition and discrimination, while sharing a degree of power in decision-making.

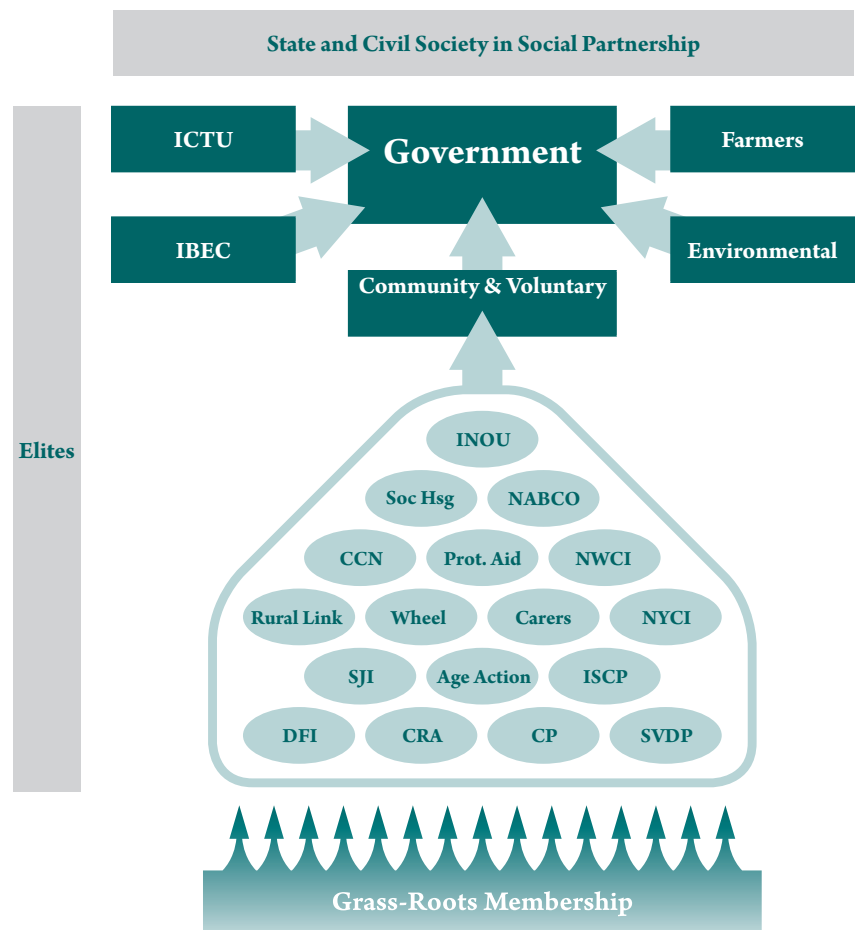
Ireland resembles neither a pure LME nor CME regime. Social dialogue and inclusion is premised not on mandated regulations but a permissive form of voluntarism that results in a liberalised blend of corporatist decision-making. Consequently, there has been concern about the unequal distribution of risks across social groups. Ireland is at a crossroads in terms of the alternative routes and policy options available to reform the welfare state.

2.4 Reform of Irish Welfare State: the Developmental Welfare State

The Developmental Welfare State (DWS) proposes a model loosely based on voluntarist social democracy. The DWS proposes to re-calibrate policy-making by adopting a 'life cycle framework' (NESC, 2005). The approach works on the assumption that social exclusion differs according to a person's life stage (NESC, 2005: 22-23). Children, people of working age and older people are identified as having distinct needs according to their life stage. People with disabilities are recognised as facing difficulties throughout the life cycle. Each group is referred to as a 'stage' and incorporated into the social partnership framework through what is known as the Community and Voluntary Pillar (CVP). Figure 2.2 provides a graphical representation of the position of the CVP vis-à-vis the other social partners. (Member organisations of the CVP are listed in full in Figure 2.1).

The Developmental Welfare State report, identified at the time of its publication in 2005 as the future of social policy development in Ireland, was crafted by the social partners in response to international neo-liberal economic trends, considered earlier. It advanced a modernisation agenda for social policy (NESC, 2005: 197). This report engages with the Developmental Welfare State as a model for social and economic development, its interplay with a permissive voluntary tradition for decision-making, and the role of a life cycle approach in its realisation.

Figure 2.2 The Six Pillars of Social Partnership



2.4.1 The Developmental Welfare State in comparative perspective

The idea of a ‘Developmental Welfare State’ is used to describe diverse approaches to social welfare provision and reform in Asia, Africa, Europe and Latin America (Aspalter, 2006; Hassim, 2008; Kwon, 2009). Aspalter’s (2006: 290) comparison of ‘developmental states’ shows underlying similarities of approach in terms of (1) small governmental spending, (2) relatively flexible labour market, and (3) the application of social security as an instrument to target politically important interest groups (Aspalter, 2006: 291). In general, Developmental Welfare States have a recognised concern with the integration of social and economic development. Experiences from Asia, South Africa, Latin America and Europe confirm links between economic crises and the move towards Developmental Welfare States. There are wide disparities in stages of evolution of welfare states depending on the broader political economy. For instance, in many developing countries the concept of the welfare state is relatively new. In some cultures, welfare claimants are viewed as ‘parasitic on public resources, rather than as making legitimate entitlement on ethical claims’ (Hassim, 2008: 107). Other problems encountered by Developmental Welfare States are exemplified in the Korean case, where the welfare state was unable to offer support for citizens who lost jobs during the Asian economic crisis of 1997-8 ‘because it had been based on the assumption of full employment’ (Kwon, 2005: 480). However, there are remarkable elements to the East Asian model of ‘inclusive welfare development’ which is founded on ‘productivism, universal social investment and democratic

governance' (Kwon, 2005: 478). Korea has since introduced a minimum living standard guarantee, a national system of health and pension insurance, and an employment insurance programme. Similar reforms have been made in Taiwan and Thailand (Kwon, 2009: S15).

International evidence suggests that the issue of demographic ageing and the individualisation of risk has become a source of concern for welfare states in diverse national contexts. China's system of social protection has embraced the prospect of demographic ageing by 'moving from an employer-based labour insurance model introduced in 1951 to a social insurance model' (Tang and Ngan, 2001: 258). Setterson's (2007) analysis of development and demographic change highlights changing life course trajectories as a key concern for welfare states in the future: 'Societies have not yet begun to address the significant ramifications of the economic and social changes that have resulted from the extension of schooling, the delay of work and the postponement of marriage and childbearing' (Setterson, 2007: 253). This changing life course trajectory has significant potential ramifications for inter-generational relationships as younger generations remain dependent on parents for much longer periods. Setterson's (2007: 266) noteworthy conclusion is that these changes necessitate the introduction of social policies that are capable of integrating life course issues into population wide programmes: 'a policy that affects the life course is not the same as a life-course policy designed with the whole of life in mind and connecting and integrating different life periods.' This analysis suggests that the Irish concern with both life course and development of the welfare state reflects a sea change observable across different national contexts.

Examining the Irish case from this global perspective reveals the extent of welfare reform in Ireland comparative to 'developed' welfare states. The first point of note is that 'Ireland is the only European country to undercut the American level of social spending' (Alber, 2006: 403). Alber's comparison of European and US welfare states shows that the 'progressive' European states, which out-perform the US in growth and equality, are the social democracies of Luxembourg, the Netherlands and the countries of Scandinavia (Alber, 2006: 408). Locating the Irish welfare state within this international typology suggests lower spending than the European average: 'While many other European states were facing the first crisis of the welfare state following the oil crisis of the early 1970s, the Irish welfare state, as measured by social expenditure, was only emerging' (O'Sullivan, 2004: 323-324). This reflects a narrow perspective on comparative social policy. Scholars such as Esping-Andersen have moved the debate away from amounts of expenditure to ways in which social protection resources are distributed (Arts and Gelissen, 2002).

In fact, the development of a state-led secular form of social protection based on equal rights of citizenship is perhaps even more recent in Irish socio-economic history than current commentaries suggest. Up until joining the EEC in 1973, the state's role in social protection was contingent and *ad hoc*. Social service provision was often church led and organised, or provided within the family, with minimum state support. The beginning of a Developmental Welfare State can perhaps be traced to the first Programme for National Recovery (1987-90) which began the process of developing social and economic policy planning in concert. As such, it would seem that the Developmental Welfare State is very clearly rooted in social partnership, not just in institutional terms but also in terms of partnership as a mechanism for society and politics to begin to negotiate not just economic, but also social progress for the foreseeable future.

2.5 Ireland's Developmental Welfare State

During the Celtic Tiger era (1994-2007), there was a growing realization amongst policy-makers in Ireland that the increase in spending on services at times of unprecedented tax revenue had not produced the desired outcome in terms of quality and access to services. During a period of

sustained economic growth, the social partners felt the need to formulate new thinking on social development (NESC, 2005: xiii). The Developmental Welfare State (DWS) was an effort to devise a means of developing this debate. Taking into account the Irish policy context of 'process fatigue, uneven progress and even contradictory developments in the formulation and implementation of social policy' (NESC, 2005: xiii), the DWS sought to find a way to more clearly converge with EU and OECD priorities and standards of social protection. Some of the international priorities recognised include demographic ageing, economic internationalization, and the re-calibration of the labour market to deal with changing family structures. The DWS recognised that meeting these challenges would necessitate reform: 'New ways of working, new policy instruments and institutional innovations are required if additional resources are to be effective in significantly improving social outcomes' (NESC, 2005: xv). It was this key recognition, that achieving positive social outcomes requires more than simply monetary investment, that motivated the identification of a new vision for social spending. Central to the re-balancing of the role of state and market in providing social protection was recognition of the role and potential of the individual. 'Developmental,' therefore, was to refer to the need for public services and the welfare state to provide means for every individual to reach his or her potential through 'tailored universalism.' Social investment in people as citizens and workers was to be central to this new welfare regime, which was to provide a 'services dividend' following strong economic performance (NESC, 2005: xix).

2.5.1 Composition of the DWS

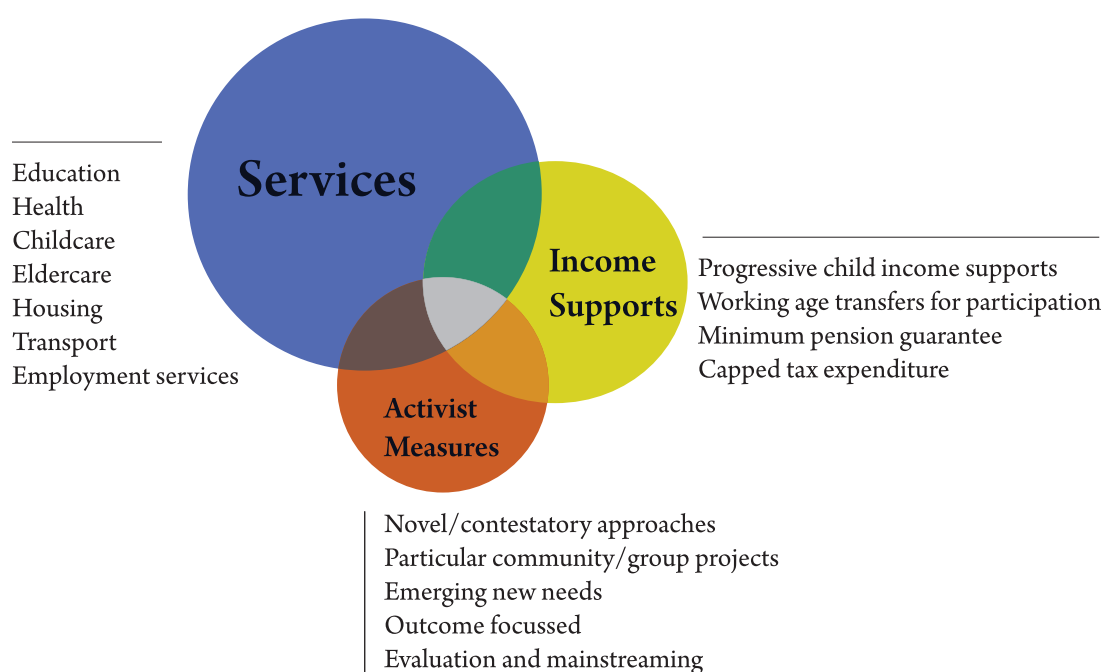
Three central and overlapping strands for reform and investment are identified in the DWS: *services*, *income supports*, and *activist measures* (NESC, 2005: xviii). Universal '*services*' is perhaps the most significant strand of the DWS: 'to ensure that every member of Irish society has access to the level and quality of service he or she needs' (NESC, 2005: xix). The DWS expresses no preference as to whether services are provided by state, market or non-profit providers as long as standards are met and government adequately 'regulates' and guarantees service provision (NESC 2005; xix). This presumed regulatory function in service provision potentially transforms social policy development in line with the guarantees of a more co-ordinated regime. Crucially, it is envisaged that the majority of the population use the same set of services, to promote social cohesion.

The second core element of the DWS is *income support* for the life cycle groups. Ensuring equal access to developmental opportunities for children, regardless of their parents' circumstances, is identified as leading to 'progressive universalism' where all children are supported, but the most needy receive additional, early interventions (NESC, 2005: xx). The fact that older people are vulnerable to poverty on retirement is also used to validate income supports for all on retirement (NESC, 2005: xx). Income supports for people of working age are to provide 'tailored progression pathways where payment rates raise all people to a minimum threshold of income adequacy while payment *arrangements* facilitate as many people's eventual participation as possible in employment or other social activities' (NESC 2005; xx). The DWS seeks 'to minimise disability as a social obstacle' and recognises reliance on disability benefit as an indicator of 'the deeper underlying issues of low skills and poor employment prospects' for people with disabilities (NESC, 2005: 10). These recommendations suggest the DWS has ambitions to re-distribute income and wealth in favour of the most vulnerable, while seeking to avoid permanent benefit traps. A key issue in this regard is whether agreements arising from a voluntarist model of social partnership can be implemented or whether a more regulated and mandated regime is required.

Finally, *activist measures* are identified as the 'R&D sphere of the Developmental Welfare State' (NESC, 2005: xx). This refers to the need to reward not for profit organisations that run successful or innovative pilots with 'a settled status as it becomes a niche service, with the organisation behind

it enjoying autonomy and long-term funding in return for meeting agreed performance targets' (NESC, 2005: xx). The report is clear, however, that this element is more ambitious than the extension or replication of pilot programmes: 'Maximally, it is the challenge of re-conceptualising what the programmes are for and how they should be delivered' (NESC, 2005: xx). A pioneering role is identified for community and voluntary organisations in developing and testing ways of addressing social disadvantage for 'individuals, families and communities' (NESC, 2005: xxi). A key support role is also recognised for government departments in facilitating such experimentation and innovation in 'developing new forms of public-voluntary and public-private partnerships' (NESC, 2005: xxi). The three overlapping strands - *services*, *income supports*, and *activist measures* - are outlined in Figure 2.3.

Figure 2.3 The Developmental Welfare State



Source: Adapted from National Economic and Social Council, 2005; 156

'Supporting people across the life cycle' is identified as a one of five key challenges to realising the DWS.⁵ Significantly, the life cycle is identified as 'a fundamental standpoint from which to judge the adequacy and effectiveness of overall social protection' (NESC 2005; xxii). For the current analysis, the life cycle is identified as 'a good framework for choosing among competing priorities and mobilising the social actors to implement the Developmental Welfare State' (NESC, 2005: xxii).

5 The others are 'Governance and leadership,' 'Rights and standards,' 'Integration at the local level,' and 'Operational requirements' (NESC, 2005: xxii).

2.6 Summary

This chapter has provided a brief overview of national and international perspectives on welfare state reform. Demographic ageing and the individualisation of risk were noted as key international trends. The introduction of a life cycle approach in Ireland was identified as the response of a corporatist system to national and international pressures to reform social spending. The system of social partnership was identified as the mechanism for agreeing this change on a basis of voluntary rather than regulated social pacts. The role of the Community and Voluntary Pillar in representing vulnerable groups in this system was outlined. The chapter then offered a comparative perspective on the nature of liberal corporatism in order to clearly situate this understanding in a contemporary context of global developments. Taken together, the Irish system was defined as one of permissive voluntarism. This differs to the notion of a beneficial constraints model used to mitigate the risks encountered by vulnerable groups inside and outside the labour market. The chapter subsequently outlined the DWS as one contemporary vision for social protection in Ireland. The extent to which vulnerable groups may influence social and economic policy was raised, and is picked-up in chapter six of this report. For now, the report turns to the role of Civil Society Organisations as 'intermediate institutions' in negotiating with the state on behalf of vulnerable groups.



*‘Leading change agents are domestic NGOS...
often middle class, urban, professional
and fairly elite...’*

(Gaventa and McGee, 2010: 18)

3. Policy Design and Political Mobilisation: The Role of Civil Society Organisations

3.1 Introduction

This chapter draws on theories of social movements in democratic systems. The primary purpose of the chapter is to show that in order to understand the crucial link between the state and citizens, it is necessary to look at the role of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs). Firstly, the work of American political scientists in linking policy design and political mobilisation provides some insight into the role of CSOs as 'intermediate institutions' between the state and vulnerable groups (Schneider and Ingram, 1997). Secondly, particular relationships between the state and children, older people, people with disabilities, and people of working age are explored. The chapter outlines a broad thesis of vulnerability and leading theories of social change for each of these groups: the social model of disability, the structured dependency of older people, children's rights, and equality for people of working age. Each perspective provides a conceptual background to the institutional arrangements outlined in Chapter 2, and for the articulation of interests demonstrated by Civil Society Organisations in Chapters 5 and 6. It is necessary to consider the quality of civic engagement available in a democratic system if we are to understand what capacity exists for civil society to effect change. The chapter concludes by linking the distinctiveness of each life cycle stage to the work of Civil Society Organisations representing each group. We argue that roles for political representation and political mobilisation of vulnerable groups must be found if the programme of welfare state reform, articulated in the DWS, is to be fully understood. Finally, the chapter provides a clear foundation for the participatory methodology explained in Chapter 4.

3.2 Deserving and Entitled⁶ : Policy Design for Vulnerable Groups

The design of the Developmental Welfare State gives rise to a number of questions about policy design for vulnerable groups. Is it possible for vulnerable groups to successfully influence policy development to the extent that policy is designed in a way that reflects their needs? Lessons from the USA suggest that in a liberal democracy, complex relations between vested interests and politicians lead to consistently unsatisfactory outcomes for children, minorities, single mothers and other 'target populations' (Schneider and Ingram, 1993). Schneider and Ingram (1993, 2005) identify a

6 The title 'Deserving and Entitled' is borrowed from Schneider and Ingram's (1993) target populations model which was later developed into a book called *Deserving and Entitled: Social Constructions and Public Policy* : New York: SUNY 2005.

key link between political quiescence (defined as lack of political mobilisation) and disadvantageous policy outcomes.⁷ They argue that the social construction of some groups as deserving and entitled and others as deviant, dependent, or simply not the responsibility of the state, allows elected officials to neglect the interests of the latter. In a crowded system where multiple interests and lobbies demand policy outcomes that are favourable for their constituency, groups that are politically ineffective, unmobilised or politically excluded can suffer neglect. The experience of continually encountering illogical, piecemeal or contingent policy design is internalised by these groups, leaving them convinced that politicians will never listen to their interests or meet their needs. Ultimately, vulnerable groups continue to ignore the potential of political action, and a cycle of political apathy prevails (Schneider and Ingram, 1993). A number of different approaches to understanding how this cycle might be broken have been developed by theorists, activists and political actors in modern liberal democracies. For the purposes of this report, we now turn to current and recognised theories of social movement, social change and deliberative democracy as conceptual frameworks for understanding the findings and analysis presented in later chapters.

3.3 Perspectives on Vulnerability, Equality and Social Movements

Numerous perspectives and theories have been developed relating to vulnerable groups and how they are oppressed in various ways by state agencies, social institutions such as the family, or by virtue of the fact that 'they are deprived of knowing their own interest' (Gaventa, 1982). A recent contribution to this debate is 'the vulnerability thesis' (Fineman, 2008) which recognises the limitations of formal notions of equality, anti-discrimination and identity politics. Fineman's (2008) work has much to add to the current analysis as she articulates a particular and substantive interpretation of 'vulnerability,' firstly by identifying what vulnerability is not: '...the concept of vulnerability is sometimes used to define groups of fledgling or stigmatized subjects, designated as "populations." Vulnerability is typically associated with victimhood, deprivation, dependency or pathology' (Fineman, 2008: 8). This definition resonates clearly with Schneider and Ingram's (1993) claim that the identification of certain groups as 'target populations' and their social construction as deviant, dependent, advantaged or contenders, leads to unequal policy outcomes. Fineman (2008: 8) claims 'the term "vulnerable" for its potential in describing a universal, inevitable, enduring aspect of the human condition that must be at the heart of our concept of social and state responsibility.' The possibility of vulnerability exists for everyone, it is a universal trait of the human condition. Fineman (2008) outlines a clear role for the state in equalising the individual's susceptibility to material, social or physical deprivation throughout the life course.⁸ When we refer to vulnerable groups in this report, it is this substantive form of vulnerability we imply. Given the centrality of language and argument in the representation of vulnerable groups, it is important to investigate how the interests of each of the life cycle stages are represented by leading theories pertaining to their social exclusion or oppression. The following sections draw out relevant theories for each life cycle stage.

3.3.1 The social model of disability

People with disabilities have a long history of theorising their oppression in critical terms (Dowse, 2001; Heap et. al., 2009). Leading theorists such as Barnes (1992 a; 1996) articulated a radical view

7 See the work of John Gaventa, particularly his influential (1980) book 'Power and Powerlessness: quiescence and rebellion in an Appalachian valley; Chicago: University of Illinois Press.

8 She has since added existential and ecological assets to the thesis (Fineman presentation at NUI Galway June 8, 2010).

of their oppression in the social model of disability. The strength of this model is its ability to remove the personal from the treatment of disability. Instead, the model argues it is society, rather than the person, that makes a disability become a barrier to participation. McCarthy (2007: 118) quotes Barnes et al. (1999; 69) who note that 'disability is socially constructed in the sense that 'disability' is what policy makers define it to be.' This tendency of decision-makers to define disability limits the potential of CSOs to argue for more radical versions of the social model, as policy-makers can limit disability to a problem of health. McCarthy's (2007) investigation of how the principles of the social model have been translated into policy and practice in the Irish context reveals political will as a missing element in emancipating people with disabilities: 'One of the central obstacles faced in efforts to secure the rights of disabled people was the lack of political will with respect to the disability issue' (McCarthy, 2007: 118). McCarthy's (2007) thesis argues that politicisation of the social model by NGOs in the disability sector is central to what has been achieved and to what is still outstanding for people with disabilities. While the 'principles of the social model have successfully found expression ... in the National Disability Strategy and ... *Towards 2016*' (McCarthy 2007: 281) there is a need to further politicise the model: 'The question of disability in terms of who and how it is defined, represented and engaged with in terms of policy and practice, are fundamentally political questions' (Barton, 2001 cited in McCarthy, 2007: 286). McCarthy notes a particular role for 'voluntary disability organisations' in politicising the social model: 'The closeness of these organisations to disabled people means they are in a unique position to identify the needs, risks and sites of disablement that act as real restrictions to people's participation' (McCarthy, 2007: 282). There is a need to develop the political potential of the social model of disability. While not without its critics, the successful adoption of the social model in practice contrasts with the more theoretically bounded notion of structured dependency for older people.

3.3.2 Older people and the notion of structured dependency

Leading scholars in ageing (Estes, 1979, 2001; Townsend, 1981, 2006; Walker, 1981, 2006; Wilson, 2000) have argued that age interacts with social norms and political institutions to produce an unequal distribution of power and resources in society. Of particular note is the work of Peter Townsend (1981, 2006) which began with a classic statement on the role of social policy in producing dependence amongst older people, known as 'structured dependency.' Townsend's work developed over 30 years to eventually link older people's dependency to the concept of human rights (Townsend, 2006). His critical gerontology resonates with the social model of disability and the vulnerability thesis, in that it ascribes a major role for institutions and societal structures rather than the attributes of the individual in producing dependency (Townsend, 1981). According to structured dependency theorists, older people's identity becomes defined by their chronological age. Chronological age is then socially constructed to give it weight in terms of how societies justify the allocation of power, resources and public investment away from older people (Estes, 1979; Estes, 2003; Duncan, 2008; Carney, 2010). When justification of neglect is accompanied by the commonplace disadvantage of growing older such as distance from the labour market, decrease in independent income, and failing health, the effect can be devastating for the individual (Carney, 2010). Where populations are ageing, the possibility arises of an increasingly large cohort of people who are outside the workforce, likely to encounter health problems, and experience social isolation and exclusion.

In political terms, older people have had a reputation for passivity. Such a reputation is problematic; as Estes (2003) argues, powerful groups grow more powerful over time as a reputation for power, can lead to actual power: '...if people believe that something is so (e.g. that the elderly have political power), it becomes so through a form of self-fulfilling prophecy' (Estes, 2003: 129). As such, like disability and other vulnerabilities, theorists recognise a central role for social movements

in improving the status of older people. A social movement will communicate the needs and aspirations of oppressed minorities to those who hold power (Fraser, 1989, cited in Harbinson and Morrow, 1998: 696). 'Social movements have become a powerful force for social change. History has shown repeatedly that even the powerless have power when they are able to come together and resist dominant constructions, oppose oppressive policies, mobilize, and associate themselves with widespread fundamental values of fairness and justice' (Ingram and Schneider, 2005: 10).

Research has attributed the paucity of a social movement of older people in Europe to a number of potential barriers: the feminisation of ageing and women's gendered role orientation (Harbinson and Morrow, 1998: 704); traditional roles for elders as dependent and passive (Evers and Wolf, 1999: 47); the lack of capacity amongst 'pensioners' organisations to adopt strategic alliances with élites (Vincent et al., 2001: 40); or the high level of diversity along class, gender and race lines amongst older people (Wilson, 2000; Vincent et al., 2001: 155). Whatever the reason for lack of political mobilisation of older people in Europe to date, this situation seems destined to change. A recent example of this was the political mobilisation of older people in Ireland to retain their right to free primary medical care (Carney, 2010). The political participation of older people, and those lobbies who support them, remains under-researched, though initial studies suggest that it will become a significant concern to both politicians and researchers in the coming decades (Goerres, 2009).

3.3.3 Children's rights as human rights

While there is a wide range of theories exploring the participation, voice and roles of children in modern society, there is general consensus in the literature that the issue of children's rights is central to developing both theory and practice in the area. In the Irish context, recent years have seen a growth in the recognition of children's rights, as outlined in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC): 'Overall, the CRC is unrivalled insofar as it recognises the rights of children and young people and it details how they are to be promoted and protected in all areas and at all stages of the child's life. As a result, it is widely regarded as the 'touchstone for children's rights throughout the world' (Kilkelly, 2007: 9). Proponents of children's rights argue that previous conceptions of children as the property of their parents, or as incomplete adults (Archand and McClland, 2001), are no longer acceptable. The challenge for those theorists is to re-draw the social contract so that ratification of the CRC can lead to real change in terms of the representation of children in the constitution. While advances have been made, reflective theorists such as Gilligan (2009) takes a rather more cynical view of the capacity of the Irish state to fully endorse and protect children. Gilligan's analysis of the state's reluctance to engage with the 'public child' points to multiple inequalities between children. He notes it is only over the past 20-30 years that the state has begun to accept responsibility for children, who were previously cared for within the family or, in cases of neglect or poverty, by non-governmental organisations. Children who become the responsibility of the state are particularly susceptible to having their rights ignored: 'Unlike the private or adopted child, the public child's marginal status meant that it lacked sufficient advocacy on its behalf in the political or policy world' (Gilligan, 2009: 267). Gilligan's conception of the public child is useful as it helps to articulate the dependence of children on adults for vindication of their rights. As such, it is not surprising that the family as a private institution, endorsed and supported by state policies, is a key concern of those researching children's lives. Gilligan (2009) outlines a number of areas of children's lives which are completely dominated by the capacity of their family to meet their needs. (For instance, children of married parents cannot be adopted). While the idea of children having rights as individuals is powerful, it is not accompanied by a clear awareness of the necessary political implications of such a change. Of all vulnerable groups, the exclusion of children from the democratic process on the basis of age perhaps leaves them most vulnerable to being ignored by politicians, who are motivated by the perpetual incentive to produce electorally popular policies.

3.3.4 People of working age, cross-cutting groups and the concept of equality

Fineman's (2008) vulnerability thesis is applicable to people of working age, and also to the forms of oppression and disadvantage articulated by groups identifying themselves as cutting across the life cycle. Her critique of the anti-discrimination/formal equality paradigm is based on two key premises: individual versus collective identity and the narrowness of 'lack of opportunity categories' which blame the individual when (s)he fails to progress autonomously. Fineman (2008: 4) identifies a limitation of anti-discrimination and formal equality approaches in their lack of capacity to account for differences across as well as between vulnerable groups. Poverty and other forms of inequality transcend group boundaries and cannot be accounted for by the failure of certain types of people to access social, political or material resources. In short, the anti-discrimination/identity politics approach to seeking equality will always struggle to encapsulate privileged women or minorities and/or disadvantaged white men. The strength of the vulnerability thesis is that it is universal, arguing that regardless of identity 'we are positioned differently within a web of economic and institutional relationships, our vulnerabilities range in magnitude and potential at the individual level' (Fineman, 2008: 10). The diversity of potential and realised disadvantage experienced by people of working age and those belonging to cross-cutting groups (e.g. migrants, homeless people, the working poor), can be encapsulated in this thesis as it questions the very notion of the liberal, autonomous, individual. Rather, Fineman (2008: 6) argues that we are all 'vulnerable subjects,' and only social and state institutions can determine the extent to which we experience that vulnerability as disadvantage. In particular, she is cognisant of the dangers of individualising risk, as once the state withdraws from social protection, we are all rendered more vulnerable. The vulnerable subject has a life course dimension, in that we are all more vulnerable at either end of the life course (Fineman, 2008: 12). Fineman's vulnerability thesis (2008) is compelling in terms of coming to a more substantive interpretation of the life cycle and the potential it has to be a means of developing universally applicable policy. In particular, Fineman's (2008) vulnerable subject has the potential to rescue the life cycle from becoming a hierarchy of the vulnerable, where only the most vulnerable can justify state support or investment. Within the vulnerability thesis, identity is ascribed a secondary role, though it is not denied. Some women suffer gender inequality; racism works to produce disadvantage for members of minorities. However, 'it is not multiple identities that intersect to produce compounded inequalities, but rather systems of power and privilege that interact to produce webs of advantages and disadvantages' (Fineman, 2008: 16). Like the social model of disability, the vulnerability thesis shifts the focus away from individual attributes and towards the impact of social structures on individuals. In a democratic system, how do elected officials know how to provide for groups that are unwilling or unable to voice their own demands? In such situations advocates for vulnerable groups step in to fill this gap: 'Intermediate institutions such as interest groups, parties, media, professional associations and the like are central to the capacity of the policy-making system to hold government accountable for what it does' (Schneider and Ingram, 1997: 16).

3.4 The Role of Civil Society Organisations as 'Intermediate Institutions'⁹

Schneider and Ingram's (1993) contention, that policy design can produce certain types of political behaviour, raises questions for citizenship in Ireland. It certainly throws into sharp focus the significance of the actions of organised advocacy coalitions, lobby groups comprised of vulnerable

9 This identification of Civil Society Organisations as 'intermediate institutions' is made by Schneider and Ingram (1997: 16).

groups, and those who speak for vulnerable groups. It is worth considering how advantaged groups might support vulnerable groups in seeking changes to policy. Examples include clergy leading anti-poverty or social justice campaigns. Catholic clergy were historically key service providers to Ireland's poor. Other groups with a legitimate role in national social partnership, such as trade unions, can also lend support to the campaigns of vulnerable groups within decision-making institutions.

Irish literature on the role of civil society in social partnership has critiqued this structure, arguing that social partnership membership amounts to the co-option of civil society, and that member organisations of the CVP do not represent the whole of the community sector (Meade, 2005; Murphy, 2002). However, international comparisons suggest that the profile of member organisations of the Community and Voluntary Pillar in Ireland are fairly typical of 'leading change agents' in national movements: 'Leading change agents are ... domestic NGOs, often middle class, urban, professional and fairly elite, identified by profession of faith, sometimes explicitly advocacy focused or rights based and sometimes strongly service-delivery oriented' (Gaventa and McGee, 2010). The Gaventa and McGee (2010) study draws on eight cross-national case studies. It goes on to argue that such organisations play important intermediary roles, as policy shapers and influencers, compensating for lack of independence from the state 'with their influencing power over the state, by reason of their allies within, articulateness, and professional and strategic experience.' The other lead change agents recognised in the Gaventa and McGee (2010: 18) case studies are 'professional groupings of academics and the intelligentsia, acting as individuals or members of their professional associations.' There is less evidence of such a group working effectively on behalf of vulnerable groups in Ireland, though to be fair, neither have there been attempts to analyse the role of academics in leading policy change. That said, some influential academics have been recruited as salaried policy analysts or as authors of reports in their specific areas of expertise. Whether this amounts to co-option of the intelligentsia has not yet been discussed in an Irish context.

The Irish state has had a long-term dependence on CSOs to provide leadership, services and moral guidance on how to deal with social problems (Gilligan, 2009). Fahey (2010) cites the political mobilisation of interest groups as an important element in protecting the welfare state. We can surmise from recent institutional changes in the area of children's rights, older people's policy and the rights of people with disabilities, that there is now recognition of the role of the state in addressing the needs of vulnerable groups. There are also a number of underlying commonalities in terms of the political reputation of such groups. Distance from the labour market, low levels of political participation, either because of social status, age or lack of consciousness of the need to vote strategically in their own interests, characterise relations between these groups and the political system. In such instances, the role of Civil Society Organisations is important. International evidence suggests that where there is a history of voluntary activity in a society, what seem to be *ad hoc* responses on the part of CSOs are shaped by previous state-civil society relations, and are part of a longer-term cycle of state-society relations (Gaventa and McGee, 2010: 14). We return to the strategies of CSOs in later chapters. The next section draws on the literature on policy implementation to clarify the main focus of this project: to investigate whether representation of group interests impacts on the design of social policy.

3.4.1 Policy-making and democratic deliberation

While this research engages the expertise of CSOs to gather data, it is essentially a study of how policy is made. This section highlights some insights from 'implementation studies' (Hill, 2009) to contextualise the project and its subject matter.

It is worth noting that attempting to understand how and why policy is made has long been

recognised as the most slippery of academic endeavours. Even the definition of policy is contested, with some commentators recognising the process and others identifying discrete stages. A policy can involve significant action or complete inaction on the part of implementing bodies. What begins as one policy can be significantly altered by events. Hill and Hupe report a scholarly consensus that the process of implementation is far from straightforward (Hill and Hupe, 2009: 7). The point here is to illustrate that policy analysis in any form is complex. The current project is particularly ambitious, given that we are endeavouring to investigate the development of multiple policy priorities simultaneously. To deal with this complexity we take an institutional approach, locating the research within a clearly identified and described policy environment (Hill and Hupe, 2009: 36). The project investigates the life cycle approach as an initiative of social partnership in Ireland, a sub-process of the Developmental Welfare State project, observable in the work and discourse of the member organisations of the Community and Voluntary Pillar (CVP). A limitation of this research applies to all research on the welfare state: 'So many things are happening at once that it is difficult to list and grasp them all' (Fahey, 2010: 2). Institutions are important actors in any attempts to make significant policy change. March and Olsen (1984: 738) see political institutions as 'political actors in their own right.' For the current project, the central role of Civil Society Organisations means that what we learn about the life cycle must be linked to what we know about the quality of democratic deliberation in the Irish context. The configuration of institutions of state and civil society can be viewed as presenting 'political opportunity structures' which 'signal to social and political actors which either encourage or discourage them to use their internal resources to form social movements' (Tarrow, 1996: 54 cited in Gaventa and McGee, 2010: 12).

The quality of democratic deliberation in a society plays an important role in determining what new political spaces are available for civic engagement (Gaventa 2006; Gaynor 2009). Recent calls to devolve power to the citizen, referred to as 'the deliberative turn' in democratic theory, is about expanding democratic participation beyond periodic voting in elections (Dryzek 1996). Rather, the aim is to 'extend the scope of citizen involvement from defining priorities, to shaping policy proposals, to monitoring implementation' (Gaventa and McGee, 2010: 7). Deliberation is even recognised by some as a 'revolutionary political ideal' (Fung, 2005 cited in Bächtiger et al., 2010). For some scholars of social policy, the incorporation of social movements into policy planning is a 'genuinely new development affecting social policy' which can 'offer some of the most significant insights for the future of social policy' (Beresford, 2006: 142). So, the engagement of Civil Society Organisations is an important means of understanding social policy. It is also an exciting development for 'democracy reformers' who believe that 'expanding citizen engagement in the policy arena is about the deepening or extension of democracy itself (Dryzek, 2000; Fung and Wright, 2003; Gaventa, 2005)' (Gaventa and McGee, 2010: 7).

3.5 Summary

This chapter has sought to link policy design, Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and vulnerable groups. In particular, we have sought to trace the roots of CSO discourse to social and political theory. Linking each life cycle stage to various principles of equality, rights and forms of democratic participation, provides a basis for further investigation of the relationship between CSOs and vulnerable groups in subsequent chapters. Fineman's (2008) identification of a particularly important role for institutions in producing advantages and disadvantages across and between identified groups makes it a powerful theory for moving forward with the Developmental Welfare State. If state institutions are to 'empower the vulnerable subject' then 'the state has an affirmative obligation not to privilege any group of citizens over others and to actively structure conditions

for equality' (Fineman, 2008: 21). Like Schneider and Ingram, Fineman identifies positive repercussions of such a clear role for the state in protecting individual citizens from the inevitable vulnerabilities of human life: 'Imagine how much more fruitfully political and policy discussions might proceed if this framework were the one by which legislative and executive actions were gauged' (2008: 21). This change requires a focus on institutions rather than identities. This research project identifies CSOs as 'intermediate institutions' in the negotiation of rights, access, participation and voice for vulnerable groups. In particular, the tacit knowledge of CSOs in how the state interacts with social groups adds considerably to our knowledge of how the vulnerable subject may be exposed to or protected from life's catastrophes. The following chapter outlines our commitment to capture accurately this form of knowledge through the use of participatory action research.

'Participatory action research is a way of doing research with people, not on them.'

(O'Reilly de Brún and de Brún, 2009: 2)



4. Methodology

4.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines key methodological considerations in research design, execution and reporting of findings. The research set out to shed light on the implications of policy design for vulnerable groups. The researchers' motivation for undertaking the work is based on a commitment to a philosophy of 'engaged scholarship' (Cuthill, 2009). Rather than claiming an objective stance on which Community and Voluntary Pillar (CVP) members work was to be evaluated, members of the research team gave a commitment to seek to understand the complexity of the pillar's work. While the literature on corporatism had been critical of social partnership as undemocratic due to the secretive nature of negotiations, no research had attempted to devise a methodology that could 'open up' social partnership without compromising the confidentiality of the process. Researchers of social partnership have relied on individual interviews as a method of data gathering (Adshead 2011; Gaynor 2010; Meade 2005). Some participants in this project identified the results of some of this research as overly simplistic. It is not surprising that as a research method, undertaking anonymous interviews with a partial sample of key informants, reveals little evidence of one coherent 'pillar' stance. It would seem that the use of individual interviews to investigate the activities of a collective may be inadequate, particularly if the research is to draw conclusions and present the analysis as offering insights into the behaviour of the collective (in this case the CVP). At the very least, it is impossible to tell from such results whether the lack of commonality between respondents is a result of the research method or is a consistent characteristic of the 'pillar' as an institution of government. For the current project, we devised a methodology capable of being inclusive of participants' views and democratic in how those views are represented. The natural development for the research design was to engage in participatory action research.

4.2 Participatory Action Research

Participatory action research (PAR) is designed to be a learning experience for both researchers and participants. Most importantly, participants guide the process, helping focus the research agenda and, expressing concerns and reservations at times (Chambers, 1997). PAR belongs to a broad family of methods generally referred to as PLA or Participatory Learning and Action: 'PLA is a way of doing research *with* people, not *on* them' (O'Reilly de Brún and de Brún, 2009: 2). This process leads to co-production of knowledge, a joint investigation of a topic by participants and researchers. For this project, the research team positioned themselves as 'facilitators who join in determining the agenda, issues and concerns and in collecting the material, interpreting it, and acting on it' (Kane and O'Reilly de Brún, 2001: 305).

As a research method, 'PLA encourages key stakeholders to focus together on issues of joint concern' (O'Reilly de Brún and de Brún, 2009: 3). This approach places an emphasis on gaining the participation of *all* member organisations of the Community and Voluntary Pillar. Maximum engagement of members of the Community and Voluntary Pillar was necessary if the full strength of PAR was to be realised (O'Reilly de Brún and de Brún, 2009: 3). In practice, the research team engaged with members of the pillar on multiple occasions, at both individual interview and in collective group deliberations. The following section outlines the methodology in more detail, including how participants were recruited, pilot deliberations undertaken, co-generation of data with participants, and methods for communicating with participants throughout the research process (see communications in Appendix 1). The approach to reporting the research findings is also outlined.

4.3 Offering Research Opportunities to Participants

From the outset, we sought to include all member organisations of the CVP in the research. This was important to avoid any selection bias. When a sample is identified, it is natural that certain groups agree to participate, while others do not. Mindful of the possibility that only some of the pillar may wish to take part in the research, leading to only a partial view of the process of decision-making being represented in the research, we made every effort to engage *all* members in the research process. We communicated the participatory ethos of the project in a number of ways, offering potential participants multiple opportunities to engage with the research.

4.3.1 Individual interviews

Firstly, we contacted the pillar via their secretariat, who responded by recommending that we consult with member organisations of the CVP on an individual basis. In summer 2009, a member of the research team (Áine Ní Léime) conducted individual interviews with either the CEO or the person responsible for dealing with social partnership in each member organisation of the Community and Voluntary Pillar. The purpose of the interviews was to provide background information for the research project. The semi-structured interviews invited participants to reflect on their attitudes to the life cycle approach, the impact of the recession on the work of member organisations, and their level of involvement in social partnership. The possibility of taking part in group deliberations was suggested in individual interviews. The interview data were also used to inform development of the research methods and later proved central to optimising the content of the group deliberations. The interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed verbatim. Following the interviews, all member organisations of the CVP were invited to an information meeting with the research team in December 2009.

4.4 Group Deliberations (Co-Generation of Data)

In order to capture the collective experience of member organisations of the CVP in using the life cycle as an approach to policy-making, we held a number of meetings with members of the pillar over a three-month period. The first meeting, held in December 2009, was designed to introduce the collective element of the research process to the whole pillar. All member organisations of the Community and Voluntary Pillar were sent a letter inviting them to this meeting. The research team made every effort to provide a date which suited all member organisations of the pillar. This involved a process of communication via e-mail and telephone until a suitable date was found. The December meeting also provided an opportunity for members to get feedback on interview data and to ask questions of the research team. Finally, a demonstration of the research methods was held at this deliberation. The question 'What are the strengths and limitations of the life cycle approach in social

partnership?’ was used to demonstrate the research methods. Thirteen of the seventeen member organisations of the CVP were represented at this meeting. Following the meeting, most member organisations were able to commit to taking part in group deliberations for each life cycle stage. At this point, some participants suggested that they would be uncomfortable with recording of the group deliberation so it was decided that note-takers would be used instead.

This meeting was significant in the identification of a common purpose between researchers and participants in representing vulnerable groups. In fact, engaging with the research demanded a long-term view by CSOs, as ultimately they would be revealing how they work to reach collective decisions, and how they form strategies for engagement with government and other social partners.

4.4.1 Pilot group deliberations

Preparations for group deliberations began in mid-2009, with the organisation of two pilot deliberations. Following in-depth and intensive training on participatory action research methods by Mary O'Reilly de Brún of the Centre for Participatory Strategies (<http://www.platrainig.com/>) in August and October 2009, two pilots were held. The first pilot was held with postgraduate students in NUI Galway on October 19. This pilot allowed the research team to test the research question, and to refine practical elements of running the deliberation. This pilot led to the team deciding to pose fewer questions and use fewer methods at the second pilot. The second pilot was held with members of staff of the Department of Economics at NUI Galway on November 11 2009. This pilot revealed that a high level of clarity in explaining the research method, a strong facilitator, and a skilled note-taker were necessary in order to ensure that all participants' views were heard and recorded at the meeting.

The structure of the life cycle clearly suggested that a group deliberation (referred to as a policy session) was needed for each life cycle stage. Therefore, following the December meeting to which all member organisations of the pillar had been invited, deliberations on children, people with disabilities, older people and people of a working age were developed. As both interview data and feedback from the December meeting revealed that many organisations viewed their target group or issue orientation under a further category of 'cross-cutting groups', two further deliberations with cross-cutting groups were held. All but one of the meetings were held at the Catherine McAuley Centre in Dublin, as most member organisations of the pillar are Dublin-based. One meeting was held at the offices of the Disability Federation of Ireland. Each stage of the data gathering process is summarised in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1 Data Gathering Stages

July-Aug 2009	Individual interviews with CEOs or social partnership officers of member organisations of CVP (17 in total)
October 2009	Pilot group deliberation 1 (co-generation of data)
November 2009	Pilot group deliberation 2 (co-generation of data)
December 2009	Group deliberation (whole pillar)
February 1, 2010	Group deliberation (cross-cutting x2)
February 2, 2010	Group deliberation (older people)
February 15, 2010	Group deliberation (children)
February 16, 2010	Group deliberation (people with disabilities)
February 18, 2010	Group deliberation (people of working age)
March 11, 2011	Results sharing (whole pillar)

4.5 Participant-Researcher Relationships

At each stage of the data gathering process researchers and participants engaged in a flow of communication. These communications included questions of clarification, concern with the precise focus of the research (often based on previous experience of taking part in academic research on social partnership in Ireland), and possible outcomes of the research. At every stage of the process of data generation, researchers adhered to the participatory mode of engagement referred to above. This process was more complex than the once-off engagement between researcher and participant used in most social science research. A number of key issues complicated this relationship. Firstly, an amount of time was needed to build up trust and rapport between the research team and participants. The diversity of organisations and participants who are members of the Community and Voluntary Pillar meant that multiple relationships and modes of engagement emerged. Some organisations engaged fully and wholly with the research while others simply did not have the time or resources to invest in an ongoing research process. Participants were asked to sign a declaration consenting to participate. The research proposal was passed by the ethics committee at NUI Galway. As the life cycle log (Appendix 4) demonstrate every organisation engaged with the research more than once in the process of data gathering.

The whole research process was a collective rather than an individual experience for participants and researchers. Some of the advantages of co-generating data in group deliberations are outlined below. However, it must also be noted that this is a complex approach, not without its challenges. PLA methods aim to be 'organic and iterative' where 'stakeholders engage in cycles of research, co-analysis, reflection and interaction over time' (O'Reilly de Brún and de Brún, 2009: 3). The research team acted as facilitators, making every effort to include all perspectives, but also to ensure that 'differentials in power are acknowledged and addressed' (O'Reilly de Brún and de Brún, 2009: 3). There was some discussion of how the life cycle sits with the target groups or main concerns of member organisations. Women, migrants, homeless people and unemployed people were identified as vulnerable regardless of life stage. Some organisations had success in representing a range of target groups through broad anti-poverty, social justice or equality platforms. The breadth of experience enjoyed by these groups added a great richness to the data gathered, particularly in terms of refining the research question.

In particular, these participants expressed a keen interest in using the research as an opportunity to return to the Developmental Welfare State as a model for social policy development. The importance of the Developmental Welfare State for vulnerable groups had been identified at the December deliberation. These views were taken on board by the research team, who adjusted questions for further deliberations in light of these suggestions.

4.6 Final Research Design and Execution

The PLA method revealed that through an interactive process, researchers and participants could devise a timely, accurate, usable and relevant research design. The final design maintained key elements of the original plan to compare how different lobbies use institutions and processes of social partnership to represent vulnerable groups. However, the PLA process allowed the research team to adjust the design in light of changes to the significance of social partnership as a policy-making institution. Also, the mode of engagement allowed for refinement of the research design in tandem with participants. This allowed the research team to capture what they now saw as

most relevant to the implementation of the life cycle approach, given participants’ experience of having worked with the concept since 2006. An important part of this participatory strategy was to allow participants the freedom to choose which deliberations they wished to attend. Therefore, all member organisations were invited to attend all deliberations. Take-up between deliberations varied enormously. Cross-cutting groups attracted by far the greatest number of participants. By contrast, two deliberations involved only two participant organisations. This was to be expected given that some life cycle stages were represented by only three organisations in the CVP. All member organisations of the CVP that could not attend an individual deliberation had been interviewed or had attended an earlier group meeting.

At the deliberations held for cross-cutting groups, participants were given the following scenario: ‘Imagine there is a rumour that a policy measure that is important to you is to be removed in the forthcoming budget. Name the issue that you consider important.’ It was clarified that any policy issue that participants themselves considered important could be named, i.e. the issue did not itself have to be cross-cutting. Participants were then asked to identify the strategies they would use to try to prevent their chosen policy from being removed. The questions put to participants at group deliberations on older people, children, people of working age, and people with disabilities are outlined below:

- What are the priority issues for each life cycle group?
- What strategies are used to address these issues?
- What impact has the life cycle framework on strategies used?
- What potential has the life cycle approach to enhance or undermine inter-generational relationships?

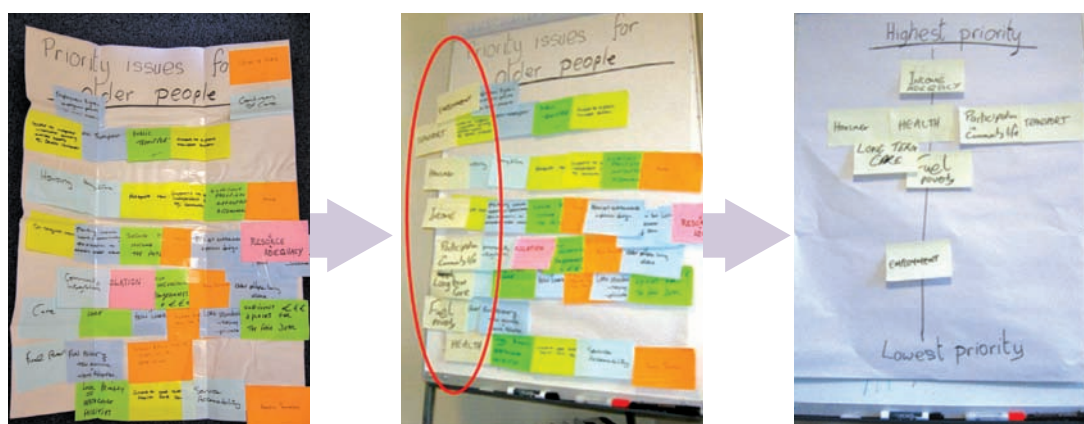
In the final analysis both participants and members of the research team were happy with this approach as it fore-grounded the life cycle, while still capturing the importance of strategies of engagement across life cycle stages. The final research design therefore took the following shape:

Table 4.2 Participatory Modes of Engagement		
Method	Mode of Engagement	Purpose
Semi-structured interviews	Individual interviews between one member of research team and one member of CVP organisation	Provide information to participants on an individual basis and gather background information to inform the research design.
Information meeting	Group meeting to which all members of CVP were invited.	To provide information on project, feedback from interviews and demonstration of research methods. Brainstorming, grouping and ranking in two groups of seven.
Individual group deliberation	Group meeting to which all members of CVP were invited.	Brainstorming, grouping and ranking in groups from 2-6.

4.7 Research Methods

A number of different research methods were used at each deliberation. The research team had been trained to engage participants in brainstorming, diagramming, mapping, ranking and use of matrices to co-generate data. (A detailed description of each method is outlined in Appendix, 3, *Guidelines for facilitators*). All or some of these methods were used at each deliberation. PAR methods are designed to be inclusive, democratic and simple. Essentially, participants are invited to engage with a research question using inclusive and equal means. Each participant is provided with a set of post-it notes and asked to list one idea per post-it in response to the question posed. The ideas are placed on a flip chart by the facilitator who then invites group discussion. After discussion participants are invited to group similar ideas, and rank them in order of importance. Relationships between ideas can be mapped. Where there is disagreement on ideas, a ranking exercise can help to work out differences. The result is a dataset which includes a list of ideas, group decisions around those ideas, and a final diagram or matrix illustrating group impressions on the issue. There are many examples of the final results of this process of engagement in Chapter 5. However, Figure 4.1 outlines the evolution of data gathering and analysis from raw data to analysis by participants. The first photo shows all the issues identified as priorities by those attending the session for the older people's stage. These priorities are written on post-its. Then participants were asked to agree on headings for groups of priority issues (these headings are circled in red at the left of the second photo). Finally, photo 3 shows how the participants ranked the grouped issues.

Figure 4.1 Data Trail Using Participatory Action Research.



Each policy deliberation revealed different issues, strategies, diagrams, rankings and agreed results for each life cycle stage. Handwritten notes were taken at each deliberation, though the data were independently reviewed at least three times by a different member of the research team. The initial handwritten notes were typed up by the note-taker. Next, the facilitator took the type-written notes, along with post-its from each deliberation, producing a succinct report on each deliberation. Finally, the research assistant reviewed these notes and formatted diagrams from each deliberation to produce finished reports. By March 31, 2010, final reports were circulated to participants, who were given two weeks to make comments or clarifications. No substantive changes were suggested by participants. However, as Chapter 5 outlines in more detail, an amount of co-generated data from across each life cycle stage was generated.

A further level of validation was added to the analysis by forming a qualitative panel. In May 2010, the multi-disciplinary research team met to discuss the research findings. Each team member took a copy of the reports generated at the individual group deliberations and worked separately to establish, on a question-by-question basis, the most significant insights or data co-generated. For the most part, researchers autonomously identified similar themes as prominent. Where there was full agreement that a particular point was relevant, it was included. Where there was disagreement, discussion followed until the team reached agreement. In some instances, it was decided that the insights more usefully belonged in Chapter 6 which links the work of the CVP to the Developmental Welfare State.

4.8 Feedback from Participants

Feedback and reflections from participants were sought at the end of each group deliberation and again at the March 2011 results sharing meeting. This section summarises participants' reflections at both time periods. Participants were e-mailed a draft of the research report on March 1st, 2011. They were invited to send in comments by e-mail and invited to attend a meeting with the project team in Dublin on March 11, 2011. Participants who were quoted in the report were contacted directly to ensure they were happy with the context in which their anonymous quote was used. All participants were given two weeks to offer responses. Participant organisations who had engaged enthusiastically with the research process in earlier data gathering stages, again demonstrated their commitment to the process. In all, eight organisations provided e-mail responses to the report and/or attended the March 11 meeting with the project team. Participants made valuable contributions to the report, particularly in refining implications of the research given the changed political and policy environment following Election 2011.

4.8.1 Strengths of methodology

Several participants stated that they found the sessions to be useful because it gave them space to reflect on the process of social partnership rather than simply having to respond to immediate needs and day-to-day issues. Some participants reported that the research process gave them a chance to tease out issues and they welcomed the opportunity to answer difficult questions. It enabled them to reflect on achievements, aired differences in priorities and enabled mutual learning. It allowed organisations to track their own thinking and to realise that there were common themes across the pillar and that the pillar is quite cohesive.

Some participants liked the fact that the methodology allowed for interaction and feedback in contrast to their previous experience of being interviewed in isolation for research. They learned from each other. They reported that using post-its gave participants more control over ideas and enabled those who were less vocal in the group to ensure that their point of view was articulated. At the final meeting of participants and the project team, there was a discussion of the merits of using the participatory approach. Some participants reported feeling constrained by the research methods used in the group deliberations. As the methods are designed to reach consensus, some felt that some of the disagreements worked through during the session were not obvious in the report. While participants had been given an opportunity to comment on reports sent in March 2010, it is only now, one year later that the finality of what is agreed becomes fully apparent. On reflection, participants noted that engaging with the research had been useful. At a difficult time for social partnership and the pillar as a whole, the research process had created a space for the CVP to reflect. The research process facilitated discussion amongst pillar members. Some participants noted that the process allowed them to see where their organisation fits into the bigger picture.

4.8.2 Limitations of methodology

Those who were in the sessions with few participants said it would have been better to have more people in order to have a variety of views. Some participants felt that the outcome may have been different had more participants engaged in some sessions. There was agreement, though, that this was partly due to the high level of engagement of groups in deliberations for 'cross-cutting' groups. Participants in Cross-cutting group 1 felt that the research should focus more specifically on the life cycle model, particularly on the limitations of this model for cross-cutting groups and the need for it to be strengthened to take into account group identities; others felt that the research should focus on the Developmental Welfare State. The suggestion to focus more specifically on the life cycle was taken on board for the subsequent sessions. Participants also felt that the limitations of the life cycle model in relation to group identity would be an interesting area to explore. Participants also noted that the method was labour intensive for Civil Society Organisations, who operate with limited resources.

4.8.3 Timeliness of the research

A key issue for both participants and researchers involved in this project was the unique set of circumstances facing the Republic of Ireland in the 2008 to 2011 period. The almost-three year period from when the research proposal was written (July 2008), the data gathered (July 2009-February 2010) and the report completed (March 2011) was one of huge change for Irish policy-making and politics. This is particularly the case with regard to social partnership. It is worth noting, therefore, that this report can only reflect the set of circumstances that existed at the time the study was conducted, not the whole experience of community engagement in social partnership over a 14 year period. In order to capture changes over time, a longitudinal study would need to be undertaken. While this is not possible at present, some participants did recommend re-visiting the study in five years time to see how community engagement in social partnership and life cycle planning has progressed

4.9 Summary

This chapter presents the research methodology used. We include an emphasis on the ethos of participatory engagement which underpinned the philosophy of the research. The study had set out to capture, as accurately as possible, the collective experience of Civil Society Organisations engaged in the social partnership process. This chapter provided an overview of the ethos of participatory action research, drawing out the empirical implications of such an approach for the project. The processes of building relationships with participants and the co-generation of data by researchers and participants, including piloting of methods, are included. The chapter also reviews the number and type of data gathering stages, revealing a high level of engagement with the research process by Civil Society Organisations. A section outlining the final research design and execution of the research methodology reveals the extent to which a participatory mode of engagement can shape and re-shape the research process. A review of the process of identifying issues, strategies, diagrams, rankings and agreed results during group deliberations is illustrated using photographic evidence from the deliberations. Finally, the validation of results from the group deliberations via the use of a qualitative panel is outlined.



‘The success of the C and V sector is as both an inside activator and an outsider agitator.... .. some people can only yell from the outside, they don’t see that being on the inside you can still change things’

(Participant in Disability Stage session).

5. Co-Generated Data Across Life Cycle Stages

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the data co-generated by member organisations of the Community and Voluntary Pillar (CVP) and the research team at a series of group deliberations held between December 2009 and February 2010. The chapter offers some detail on how the representation of vulnerable groups within social partnership operates, and how the life cycle has impacted on this work. The research team worked to explore and present the data in a format that remains faithful to the ethos of participatory engagement, adhering as closely as possible to the data as they emerged from each deliberation.

The analysis is presented under headings broadly converging with the questions asked at each deliberation. Summary findings, key insights and significant outcomes of the group deliberations are presented as follows. Firstly, the experience of participants in prioritising important issues across life cycle stages is reported. This includes ranking of priorities and descriptions of the process of reaching agreement. Participants' experience of working with the life cycle as an approach to policy-making, as a pillar, and as individual organisations, is presented in the next section. The chapter goes on to review the strategies used by groups in representing their constituents. Finally, the impact of the life cycle on their work, as reported by member organisations of the CVP, is included. These findings relate to both the process of working with the life cycle and how it converges with broader strategising of organisations. The chapter concludes with a brief summary of the findings.

5.2 Semi-Structured Interviews

All member organisations of the CVP agreed for either the CEO or person responsible for social partnership to participate in an individual interview at the beginning of the research process. These interviews yielded an amount of data on the impact of the life cycle on CVP organisations' work. The impact of the life cycle was also the subject of a group deliberation and is re-visited later in the chapter. Almost all participants referred to the impact of the recession on the work of member organisations at interview. Most referred to the slowdown in activity by the CVP with the virtual suspension of government's engagement with the pillar from 2008. Some suggested that since the recession, there had been a lack of commitment by the government to social partnership. Others suggested that the recession demonstrated the vulnerability of the pillar and of social partnership itself, citing various commitments made by government in *Towards 2016*, but which are now not being implemented. Many organisations said that their funding and that of their members had been cut since the recession. Some feared that the recession may encourage divisiveness and competition between groups.

Others stated that the recession had presented certain opportunities and that the pillar members had responded cohesively. Initiatives included a communications campaign to highlight the social impacts of the recession and the consequent cuts in spending, and a performance indicators sub-committee to track commitments made by the government. Since the recession, most organisations now strived to retain existing benefits for their members, rather than looking for new policies to be developed. As outlined in Chapter 4, interviews were followed by a series of group deliberations for each life cycle stage. The remainder of the chapter presents the findings from these group deliberations, according to the questions posed.

5.3 Working with the Life Cycle

All participants were asked their views on the life cycle, at various stages of the data gathering process. At individual interviews participants were asked to give their general impressions of the life cycle. At the December 2009 meeting, attended by 13 of 17 pillar member organisations, the following question was asked: *‘What are the strengths and limitations of the life cycle approach in advancing the objectives of Community and Voluntary Pillar members in social partnership?’*

Participants were divided into two groups to respond to this question. The responses generated by both groups at this deliberation are summarised in Table 5.1. Ranking of strengths and limitations was not always possible. However, both groups generally agreed that lack of political commitment and administrative reform were primary limitations. Likewise, providing access to government and the potential of the Developmental Welfare State were recognised as potential strengths.

Table 5.1 Main Strengths and Limitations of Working with the Life Cycle	
Strengths	Limitations
Access to government	Lack of political commitment
New vision of Developmental Welfare State	Structural, administrative and budgetary reform lacking
Provides a framework to advance objectives for some groups	Lack of focus on equality, social inclusion
Person-centred approach	Complexity of policy-making limits prospect of implementation
Creation of space for issues and potential to integrate issues (e.g. women and pensions)	Limitations of organisational resources
Response to cumulative disadvantage	Government could manipulate life cycle for its own purposes
Learning between life cycle stages	Categories unsuitable for some groups

Some participants maintained that strengths of the life cycle were *potential* strengths at that time (December 2009). There are no clearly observable implications of the life cycle as yet in the policy-making system. For most participants, the life cycle approach is a framework, which some argue is a strength as it provides a structure around which member organisations of the CVP can lobby. Others see limitations in having the person at the centre of the policy-making process. Certain vulnerabilities can fall between government departments (e.g. migrants, homeless people). For such groups the life cycle can seem irrelevant. For organisations representing them, the life cycle can represent a source of frustration rather than an enabler in terms of influencing policy design. Amongst officials, there is a lack of understanding of the multiple identities of people; for example, the focus on chronological age may be less useful when employment or gender is a more important variable.

One of the strengths of the life cycle identified is that it allows groups to integrate their responses with other NGOs. Such collaborations could then lead to producing a stronger 'collective punch' through working together. On a similar basis, the life cycle allows for access to a number of government departments simultaneously. Linked to this is the potential of the life cycle for learning and integration across life cycle stages. However, this capacity for integration could become problematic as the life cycle may bring government departments together but does not guarantee that they will work together. This limitation was linked to two factors. Firstly, the life cycle could be manipulated by government which wished to be seen to be 'doing something' for particular groups. Secondly, a lack of political commitment to the life cycle, in government or at senior levels of the civil service, poses a challenge to implementation.

A number of participants observed that the question posed made it difficult to distinguish between strengths of the life cycle as an approach and strengths of the CVP which may exist with or without the life cycle. An example given is the capacity of the life cycle approach to allow members of the CVP to 'hold officials to account.' The social partnership agreement *Towards 2016* has the same function, as even without the life cycle the CVP could use it to 'hold officials to account.' Lack of clarity as to what the life cycle is, and what it is supposed to mean in terms of real outcomes, was identified as both a potential problem and a benefit. The benefits appeared to accrue to politicians, as its ambiguity may enable them to stonewall issues. Some expressed the belief that the Developmental Welfare State is a more fruitful focus for policy-makers. Participants suggested that the distinction between the DWS, the life cycle approach and the *Towards 2016* document has significant implications.

5.4 Prioritising Issues Across Life Cycle Stages

For each life cycle stage, participants were asked to list the priority issues for their constituents. In all cases, this process followed a broadly similar pattern where somewhere between 20 and 40 issues were generated. However, groups differed in how they expressed those priorities. The task of prioritisation was demanding for all groups, and some groups found ranking of issues unfeasible. Instead, groups worked creatively to express the complexity of issues facing their constituents. The result of these efforts was a number of diagrams depicting the multiple issues facing constituents. A number of findings were consistent across all life cycle stages.

5.4.1 Findings common to all life cycle stages

All stages reported access, participation, income, and some variant of health or well-being as important priorities for their constituents. All stages also referred to one major policy change which

Common Priorities Across Life Cycle Stages

- Access to services
- Participation
- Health, well being and quality of life
- Income
- Policy Change

These headline priorities are the core challenges facing all life cycle stages. All participants campaign for better access to services. Civil Society Organisations also argue that supports which allow everyone to participate as citizens and as members of communities are required if vulnerable groups are to avoid social exclusion. Various health and well-being issues arise for all groups. In some cases mental health issues are a priority; for others, technology can aid independent living. All CSOs prioritise income for their constituents, whether through a campaign to end child poverty, ensure adequacy of social welfare payments or minimum wage rates. One key policy change was identified as potentially transformative in all deliberations. In most cases, implementation of the Developmental Welfare State was cited. The challenge of designing policy to benefit all groups is reflected in key differences both in what participants prioritised for their life cycle stage, and in how that process of prioritisation took place. Different approaches to ranking priorities are outlined below.

The implementation of the Developmental Welfare State was recognised as a significant policy priority for three out of four life cycle stages, and for cross-cutting groups.

Table 5.21 Common Priorities Across Life Cycle Stages in Detail

Life Cycle Stage	Theme				
	Access to Services	Participation	Health/ Well being/ Quality of Life	Income	Policy Change
Children	Employment for parents Education and health care for children	Participation/ Listening to the voice of children	Mental health services	End child poverty	Rights of children in constitution to be recognised Implementation of recommendations in Ryan Report*
People with Disabilities	Services	As citizens	Integrated transport, supports for community participation	Employment	Implementation of National Disability Strategy Implementation of Developmental Welfare State
People of Working Age	Services	Supports to participate if one chooses	Information, support to deal with life's challenges; choice about where to live.	Salary/wage	Awareness of and protection of rights/ equality Implementation of Developmental Welfare State
Older People	Health care	In community (opposite of social isolation)	Technology, built environment, housing.	Adequacy of pension, pension design and securing future income.	Implementation of Developmental Welfare State

5.5 Ranking Priorities Across Stages: Process and Outcomes

Some differences emerged between groups in terms of what participants prioritised, but also in the process of prioritisation. Most deliberations were consensual, with participants reaching agreement after some discussion. This is not surprising given that the research method used is designed to help groups reach consensus. For example, in the session for the older people's life stage, initially there was disagreement about what issues should be prioritised. However, following discussion, all participants agreed that income was the most important issue, followed by housing, health, participation and transport (all regarded as equally important). Long-term care and fuel poverty were ranked as less important, and finally employment was a good deal less of a priority for older people (see Figure 5.3). Participants established that, at times, certain issues such as long-term care might be at the forefront.

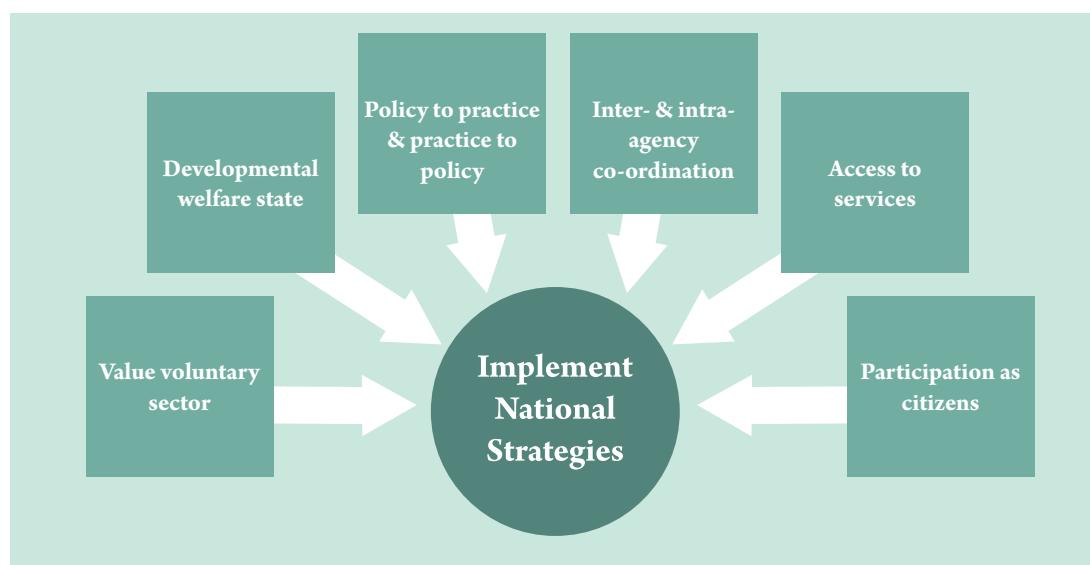
* A copy of the report of the Commission to Inquire into Child Abuse, referred to as the Ryan Report is available to download at <http://www.childabusecommission.com/rpt/ExecSummary.php>.

When a clear ranking could not be agreed, this was often because participants felt that a dynamic or interactive representation of key priorities was more meaningful. Further deliberation within the group led to agreement that a diagram or other more fluid form of ranking communicated the reality of life for vulnerable groups more clearly.

5.5.1 People with Disabilities

At the deliberation on disability, access to services and supports which allow people with disabilities to participate (as citizens, in the labour market and in their communities) was identified as a key priority. When asked to rank these priorities, participants opted to produce a diagrammatic representation of the relationship between priority issues for people with disabilities (Figure 5.1). For participants, changes in everyday life for people with disabilities are linked to key policy changes at national and governmental level.

Figure 5.1 Relationship Between Priority Issues for People with Disabilities



National strategies are identified as central to achieving change for people with disabilities. The diagram reflects the participants' conviction that a number of priority issues for people with disabilities must be sought simultaneously if the National Disability Strategy is to be implemented and the National Carers' Strategy realised. A consistent barrier to implementation for this stage is lack of co-ordination between relevant actors at the local level.

5.5.2 People of Working Age

At the deliberation for people of working age, participants agreed that ranking priorities was less meaningful than exploring the relationship between policy priorities. Again, the group chose to draw a diagram (Figure 5.2), though the relationship between priority issues was expressed differently.

Figure 5.2 Representation of Grouped Priorities for People of Working Age

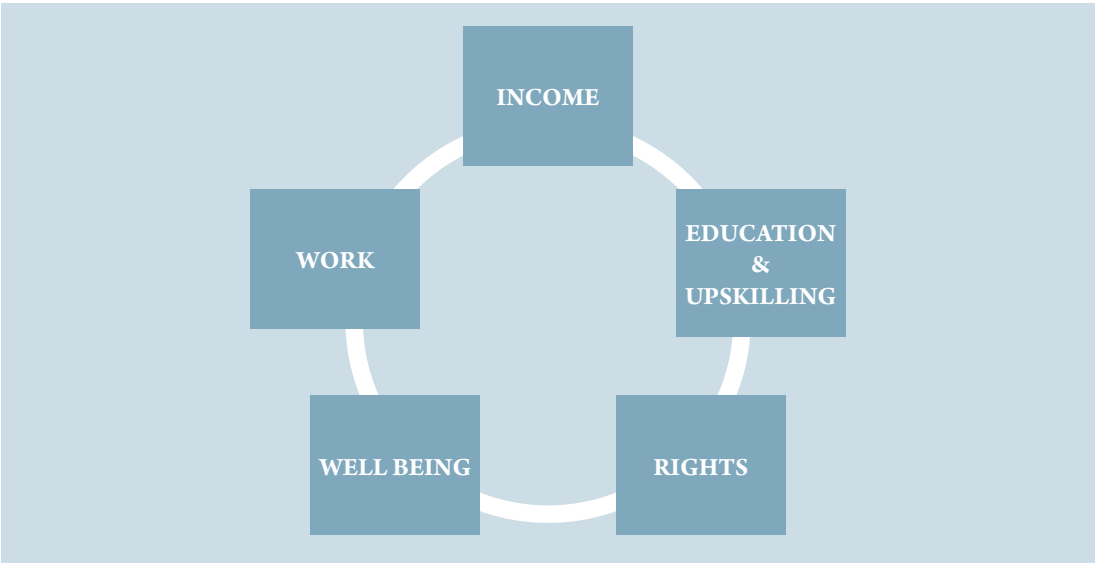
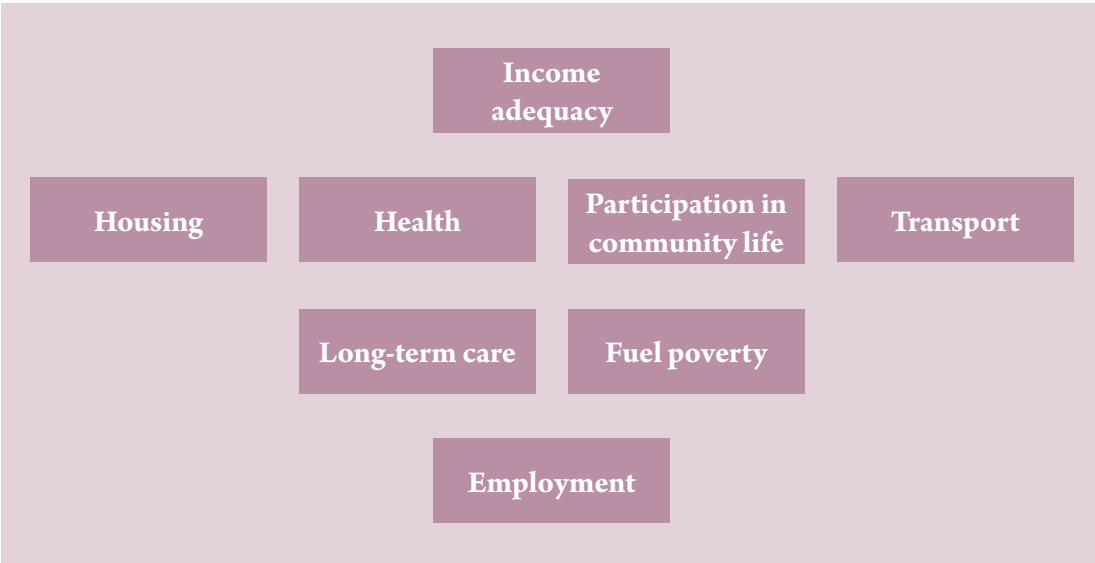


Figure 5.2 reflects the participants’ view that all priorities operate as a constant flow of issues for people of working age. Sometimes this works as a virtuous circle of outcomes and at other times it converges to produce a vicious circle of disadvantage for the individual in question. Participants noted that experiences and conditions early in life can limit people’s potential when they reach working age. The example of educational disadvantage was used to make this point. It is less likely that children in some socio-economically deprived areas manage to complete third-level education, perhaps due to lack of community expectations and socialisation. This leads to fewer and lower status work opportunities in the longer term.

5.5.3 Older People

Some groups did opt to rank priorities, though even in those cases, some issues were given equal ranking when participants found it impossible to choose between two, three or even four areas of immediate concern. The grouped priorities identified during the older people’s deliberation revealed the following ranking (Figure 5.3).

Figure 5.3 Ranking of Grouped Priority Issues for Older People



Participants clearly ranked income adequacy as a central priority for older people, with housing, health, participation and transport following closely behind. All agreed that employment was less important for older people. However, the group did concur that the prioritisation of issues can change over time. For example, tackling ageism and employment rights may be important long-term strategies, but long-term care had been a key priority over the past year because of *Fair Deal* legislation.¹⁰ Poor standards of care and the predominance of the medical model also make this a priority area. In short, while there may be many priority areas for any one life cycle stage, in the real world of political lobbying, a concerted effort to pour all resources into a particularly urgent area is sometimes necessary. So, while this group did agree a ranking, the scale is fluid in the sense that a priority issue could occupy a different rank in another time period.

5.5.4 Children

At the deliberation for children's groups, participants decided that while certain issues could be ranked, this was only possible when context was taken into account. Participants chose to demonstrate how layers of inequality or disadvantage can exist for children (See Figure 5.4).

Figure 5.4 Ranking of Grouped Priorities for Children's Stage of the Life Cycle



The group identified constitutional change and education as important structural issues that had long-term effects on children. Within this structural framework lie children's day-to-day quality of life and experience of services. Participants added some provisos to this ranking. Had there been more members of the CVP present at the deliberation (only two CVP member organisations attended), income may have emerged as a bigger priority for children. It was also said that the priorities listed by participants in a study like this reflected the perspective of children's rights activists, rather than children themselves.

¹⁰ The Nursing Home Support Scheme, referred to the Fair Deal, is a system of co-payment for long-term care introduced by the Irish government in 2006. Under the plan, the cost of care is in part met by a posthumous payment by older people needing long-term care. This payment is based on the value of their principal private asset, in most cases the family home. Full details of the plan are available at http://www.dohc.ie/issues/fair_deal/

5.6 Strategising of Civil Society Organisations

Once priorities had been agreed upon, each life cycle stage group was asked to list the strategies that their organisation would use to ensure that priorities are met. The question was posed differently for cross-cutting groups, who were asked to identify one important policy under threat from government cutbacks, and to list strategies that they would use to retain that policy. This approach was used because it would have been impossible to rank the large number of issues generated using a general prioritisation question in the time available. The results from this question include a clear set of policies, and also a list of strategies for cross-cutting groups. The results for cross-cutting groups converged with those generated by life cycle stages. The common strategies generated by all groups are summarised below.

Common Strategies of Cross-Cutting Groups

- Communications and awareness raising
- Policy development
- Alliances
- Political system
- Grass-roots mobilisation

Table 5.3 Common Strategies used by Life Cycle Stages

Group	Communications and awareness raising	Policy development	Alliances	Political system	Grass-roots mobilisation
Cross Cutting Group 1	Media	Research to provide evidence		Social partnership Lobbying	Mobilise members
Cross cutting Group 2	Media Communications	Policy development/ Making the case	Coalition building	Use established channels	Mobilising popular support
Older People	Communication strategy Media	Research	Alliances	Lobbying civil servants Lobbying politicians Raise at international level (EU or UN)	Mobilise people
People with Disabilities	Communication	Develop policy Experiment	Collaboration inside and outside the pillar	Insider/outsider strategy	'P' and 'p' political engagement Empowerment
Children	Media/public interest	Policy submissions	Coalitions/ joint working	Social partnership Election manifestoes Joint Oireachtas committees Political pressure	Working with members
People of Working Age	Promote in public domain and amongst key influencers	Analysis	Collaboration inside and outside the pillar	Use mechanisms Publicity and lobbying	Mobilising constituents

All stages recognised some role for the media or the generation of public support in making the case for a particular policy. Likewise, forging alliances both inside and outside the social partnership process was a commonly identified practice. Non-partnership or other political and policy-making mechanisms were at times considered more beneficial than the formal partnership route. Finally, mobilisation of the general public or grass-roots members was also mentioned in some format at every policy deliberation. Most participants felt that it was impossible to rank strategies unless they were clearly linked to a particular policy or issue. While cross-cutting groups also made this observation, they were able to rank strategies because the question they were asked related to retention of an individual policy. Participants reported that they often used all strategies

simultaneously, albeit to different degrees, depending on the precise issue. 'We would definitely use all of them, but you would have to look at the case' (Cross-cutting group 2, Feb 2010). Some participants reported the need to be alert to what strategy is useful at a particular time, and that this depends on available resources. A brief description of each common strategy and some of the participants key insights on that strategy are listed below, in no particular order.

**'Politics with a big P (national level government) and politics with a small p (local level) are equally important'.
(Participant in Disability Stage session)**

5.6.1 Communications and awareness-raising

Use of the media for communications and awareness-raising by Civil Society Organisations was one strategy around which groups differed widely. For those who use the media as a vessel for communicating an issue to the general public, regular media attention was seen as an integral part of their work. Others saw the media as a contentious strategy.

Many referred to the need for caution in using the media when delicate negotiations within social partnership are taking place. Other participants did not mention the media, preferring instead to refer to the gaining of public support or political will behind an issue. Some distinguished between media and communications. For instance, a Civil Society Organisation might write to the Taoiseach about a particular issue (communications) without ever taking it to the media. Such CSOs distinguished between media attention for the purpose of gaining attention for the issue, and media attention clearly linked to a broader campaign with a clear policy strategy.

**'You have to get realistic – media can go either way'
(Participant in Cross-cutting group 2)**

5.6.2 Policy development

When developing policy, making the case for a particular policy was identified by some as a 'basic building block' for all strategies. Making the case infers establishing the legitimacy of a particular cause or policy programme. For cross-cutting groups, making the case that a particular policy or programme should be retained or developed was identified as the most important strategy. For others, making the case was identified as a key contribution of Civil Society Organisations given their particular insight into the issues facing vulnerable groups.

The relationship between making the case for policy development and influencing public debate is multi-faceted. The need for research to strengthen a case being made in the media, or to politicians, was identified as significant by all participants. In some cases research implied quoting relevant statistics. For instance, participants in the older people's group deliberation referred to the linking of pensions to the average industrial wage as useful because government seem convinced by the validity of indices. Many argued that it was important to find evidence before a plea was made in the media. Participants referred to a 'data desert' where lack of consistent and reliable information about vulnerable groups could lead to an over-reliance on anecdote to make a case. The same participants reported that some political leaders are more comfortable with anecdotal evidence as it strikes a chord with voters.

**'Research is important as well. You need to be able to back up the argument before you go lobbying. It is good to have a horror story going in though'.
(Participant in Older People's Stage session)**

Participants expressed a desire to use more evidence and policy-based arguments, but oftentimes a strong case made in the media might actually be more effective.

5.6.3 Coalitions¹¹ of Civil Society Organisations

Building coalitions of CSOs was identified as an important strategy by all but two groups. For those that do use coalitions, they tend to do so around a particular concern they share with another organisation(s). Alliance building implies building a coalition within the CVP. At a number of the group deliberations, participants identified various campaigns with different foci (e.g. the End Child Poverty campaign, the End Fuel Poverty campaign and a campaign for a referendum on children's rights within the constitution) (Minihan, 2010).

Some CSOs view social partnership as an opportunity to form coalitions with other pillar members. Others see collaboration outside social partnership as more important. Some refer to the increasing need for allies when the institutions of social partnership are relatively inactive (2008 onwards). Some participants went so far as to identify such new alliances as a 'post-partnership' strategy. Whether coalitions are inside or outside social partnership depends on other influencing factors such as broad public support for an issue. For example, in 2010, there was widespread support for an agenda for children's rights in light of the Ryan report.

5.6.4 Political system (including social partnership)

All participants referred in some way to social partnership and the mechanisms associated with it as one of the strategies they use. Various mechanisms include bi-lateral meetings with government departments, gaining the support of other social partners (e.g. trade unions) on a particular issue, or pushing an issue via the institutions of partnership such as the National Economic and Social Council. Many Civil Society Organisations referred to access to civil servants as a key advantage of CVP membership. Some stated that they would begin by referring an issue to the relevant civil servant. If this did not achieve results they would start a media campaign to gain public support or to stimulate interest amongst politicians. Some reported that membership of the CVP gave a dual status as both insider and outsider in the political system.

Outside social partnership a large number of political avenues are used by CVP members. These include getting issues into party manifestoes prior to elections, pre-budget submissions, answering calls for submissions from government, making presentations to Joint Oireachtas committees and raising an issue at EU or international level. Groups generally report that it is only when established political channels have been exhausted that grass-roots mobilisation is employed as a strategy.

'The success of the C and V sector is as both an inside activator and an outsider agitator.... some people can only yell from the outside, they don't see that being on the inside you can still change things.'

(Participant in Disability Stage session)

5.6.5 Grass-roots mobilisation

Mobilising grass roots by organising petitions and demonstrations was identified by all groups as a potential strategy. CSOs with strong volunteer roots and/or a large membership drawn from the general public see their membership as a useful asset for campaigning. Other organisations argue

11 The term 'coalition' is used here to distinguish between alliances within the pillar on specific issues and umbrella organisations such as the Children's Rights Alliances. Participants used 'alliances' in the group deliberations.

that political engagement takes place at all levels: local, national and international. They emphasised that it was important to engage with the formal political system which they referred to as politics with a big 'P' and also to engage at the local level – political with a small 'p'. There is huge variance in how organisations report using political structures. Some had coherent and systematic strategies working at all three levels. More sophisticated strategies include local level media and advocacy training for volunteers/members, national level campaigns and forming special interest groups of sympathetic MEPs at the European level. Others rarely use grass-roots mobilisation as they see it as a strategy useful only in very specific circumstances and for particular groups. Groups with a more diverse membership such as People of Working Age are described as being less likely to elicit empathy: 'The public domain is lost and they are harder to mobilise' (Participant in Cross-cutting group 2, February 2010). That said, most groups argued that they 'wouldn't rule anything out... it is all part of your arsenal.' (Participant in Cross-cutting group 1, February 2010). In general, mobilisation was ranked fairly low on the list of available armoury, though all groups made some reference to the successful use of this strategy by older people's groups in retaining the medical card in advance of Budget 2009. Organisations were more likely to turn to mobilisation since the recession had virtually suspended social partnership

'We will still have to represent our members to government but it won't be through social partnership. We'll be back to the grass roots, guerrilla warfare maybe'
(Interview CVP 10, 2009)

5.7 Impact of Life Cycle on Strategies Adopted

At group deliberations for individual life cycle stages, participants were asked to comment on how the life cycle impacts on the strategies they use. Some organisations commented that the life cycle was integral to their overall strategy (in one case providing a structure for their annual report). Others said the life cycle had very little or no impact on their work. Table 5.4 outlines how the life cycle impacts on strategies in three key areas: social partnership processes, CVP interaction and processes beyond both these fora.

5.7.1 Impact of the life cycle framework on social partnership process

Participants recognised that the life cycle had impacted on social partnership processes. For some, these impacts were observable in the operation of institutions such as the National Economic and Social Council and the National Economic and Social Forum. The life cycle links *Towards 2016* to international conventions for some vulnerable groups. The life cycle, therefore, enhances the capacity of organisations to track progress in national, European and international commitments. For others, the shift in favour of a person-centred approach was significant as it makes visible previously ignored institutional barriers and structural inequalities. For instance, the life cycle allows disability groups to track advances in disability proofing and disability mainstreaming. For those who find the life cycle less useful, the absence of an equality dimension to the age-specific focus of the life cycle makes it more difficult to represent the interests of some groups using social partnership fora. Organisations representing people of working age, report that this category (age 18-64 inclusive) potentially includes too many vulnerable groups to be useful.

Table 5.4 Impact of Life Cycle on Strategies

Life cycle stage	Social partnership processes	Pillar processes	Processes outside pillar and social partnership
Children	<p><i>Towards 2016</i> (can use social partnership fora)</p> <p>Use position as social partners to gain access</p> <p>Clarity on what we are tracking</p> <p>UN convention recognised in T2016</p>	Specific recognition for children (e.g. time in meeting with officials)	<p>Social partnership commitments form the basis for the Children's Rights Alliance Report Card</p> <p>Reference to life cycle in documents and submissions</p>
Older People	<p>NESF: plenary on social inclusion</p> <p>Social partnership arena</p> <p>NESF: topic specific responses</p> <p>NESC</p> <p>T2016 performance indicators</p>	<p>Linkage groups within pillar</p> <p>Link with disability</p> <p>Pillar position papers</p>	<p>Annual EU reports</p> <p>International shadow reports</p> <p>Law reform commission</p> <p>Equality legislation</p>
People of Working Age	T2016 ignores equality agenda	Allows less powerful groups within the pillar to take ownership of issues	<p>Not useful for strategies for people of working age as constituency too diverse</p> <p>More useful for other age groups</p> <p>Developmental Welfare State more useful</p> <p>Life cycle overly focused on individual ignores equality agenda</p>
People with Disabilities	<p>Person-centred</p> <p>Disability proofing</p> <p>Disability specific and disability mainstreaming across life cycle</p> <p>Focus on inter-agency barriers</p>	Carers support work of volunteering disability organisations	<p>Identify common issues</p> <p>Annual plan</p>

There are a number of ways in which the life cycle has impacted on participants operating as a pillar. For some, the official recognition of their area as a life cycle stage means more designated time to meet with senior civil servants to discuss specific policies affecting their constituents. Likewise, the life cycle can be used as a means of linking different aspects of policy development. This can be communicated to civil servants via linkage groups within the pillar and through the submission

of pillar position papers.¹² Some participants recognise that the life cycle has benefited some organisations within the pillar by giving greater legitimacy to the needs of their constituents. The recognition of life cycle stages can make it easier for pillar members to support the work of fellow members on certain issues (e.g. disability and older people). In such cases, the life cycle can have a cohesive effect on how the pillar operates.

Participants varied in their opinion on how the life cycle impacts on processes outside social partnership (CVP). Some groups who found the life cycle useful made reference to life cycle issues in their work as an independent Civil Society Organisation. These organisations tend to refer to the life cycle in national policy submissions, EU and UN reports, reports to other bodies such as the Equality Authority and/or the annual reports of their own organisations. These organisations also use the life cycle to identify common issues with other Civil Society Organisations. Some report the life cycle as a useful framework in challenging existing policy direction. Organisations that find the life cycle less useful draw attention to what it does not achieve in terms of equality, for diverse populations such as people of working age. Such organisations often focus on the fact that the Developmental Welfare State is a broader and potentially more successful model.

5.8 Impact of Life Cycle on Inter-Generational Relationships

Participants were asked what potential impact the life cycle has on inter-generational relationships. Some suggested that the life cycle framework had the potential to enhance inter-generational relationships by providing a more macro-strategic approach. The life cycle could also promote greater understanding of issues between stages by bringing together Civil Society Organisations that may not otherwise work together. This potential could be useful at times of crisis, when co-operation is important. Participants reported that the life cycle helped enhance understanding of differences and commonalities across the life cycle on the part of government officials. The life cycle also helps to emphasise that points of transition are very important for people with disabilities. It affects how organisations engage with government departments. The establishment of the Offices of the Minister for Older People and of the Minister for Children were offered as examples of how the life cycle had benefited the system. Participants felt that the life cycle enhances inter-generational relationships by making people more aware of what happens in other age groups - for example it may encourage younger people to get an education in order to have a job to provide for a pension. The life cycle provides a way of pursuing policy-makers and of making them aware of how disadvantage may begin in childhood and accumulate throughout an individual's life course.

The life cycle has the potential to undermine inter-generational relationships by making it difficult to prioritise issues and give a clear message; it may promote competition for resources. It was suggested that the life cycle model may mean there is lack of ownership of certain issues such as mental health.

It was argued that the life cycle is a 'mentality' and that it will take decades for it to function effectively. Participants noted that there are no new institutions for people of working age as a result

12 Linkage groups are sub-groups of members of the CVP. They operate in two ways. A linkage group may be formed in order to allow CVP members interested in a specific area to organise meetings with officials/ministers on specific issues (e.g. education linkage group meets with the Department of Education and Skills). A linkage group may also be formed in order to feed a CVP position into a specific consultation mechanism such as the Quarterly Health Consultation. Thanks to a participant in this project for clarifying the usage of linkage groups.

of the introduction of the life cycle framework. For the life cycle to work it needs to be built into systems and to make sense to government officials and civil servants in terms of their work. Finally it was suggested that there was a need to guard against age-related inter-generational tension being introduced due to the life cycle.

5.9 Summary

This chapter begins by briefly describing findings from initial interviews with social partnership representatives from all 17 member organisations of the CVP. The interviews identified a number of strengths and limitations of the life cycle framework. In terms of the impact of the recession, the interviews reveal that almost all organisations and their members were affected by cutbacks; the level of activity in their interaction with government is severely reduced. However, some felt that while the recession is potentially divisive, pillar members had reacted cohesively to this situation.

The primary data source was co-generated data gathered at group deliberations for each life cycle stage. During these deliberations, organisations were asked to list, group and rank priorities. All stages, including those addressing cross-cutting issues, identified the following common strategies: communications and awareness-raising, forming alliances, using the political system (including social partnership), and grass-roots mobilisation. All participants stated that they would potentially use all strategies depending on the policy issue involved; however, they are quite sophisticated and selective in their choices. Civil Society Organisations were asked for their views on the life cycle. A key finding was that lack of political commitment and structural administrative and budgetary reform hampered the realisation of a life cycle approach. Participants were asked about the impact of the life cycle on the strategies they used. Some groups responded that the life cycle had a strong impact on their work, using it in submissions, tracking implementation of commitments, for disability proofing and age proofing, and in gaining audiences with senior officials. Those groups that had access to highly developed institutional resources (such as an articulated national strategy) relating to their life cycle stage, reported greatest impact on strategies. In general, the Developmental Welfare State was mentioned by participants as a model more capable of reflecting the diversity of vulnerable groups represented by pillar member organisations. Finally, participants were asked for their views on the impact of the life cycle on inter-generational relationships in society generally. The data suggest that the life cycle framework needs to be expanded and strengthened to realise the objectives of the Developmental Welfare State. These issues will be discussed in Chapter 6.

*“It (the CVP) promotes the need to be more mindful of vulnerable groups, pushing for more inclusive development – without the pillar, I don’t think that language would be there at all”
(Quote from interview with CVP11).*



6. The Life Cycle and the Developmental Welfare State

6.1 Introduction

This chapter draws on a number of data sources in order to explore the relationship between the life cycle and the Developmental Welfare State (DWS). Interviews with representatives of all seventeen member organisations of the CVP revealed mixed views on how the institutional structures developed to implement a life cycle approach are working. The analysis in this chapter draws out CVP members' perceptions of the role of the pillar in carving out a niche for life cycle groups. Findings reported by participants are cross-referenced with a documentary analysis of the working practices of institutions concerned with the life cycle. What, if any, new institutions have been introduced to implement the life cycle approach? What changes have these institutions produced in how policy is delivered? Having summarised these institutional approaches, the chapter returns to the data gathered at group deliberations to assess how the life cycle might be mapped onto the Developmental Welfare State model. Findings from the group deliberations showed priority issues for each life cycle stage. Further analysis showed that outstanding priorities mirror the categories of *income supports*, *services* and *activist measures* at the core of the DWS. In this chapter we use these findings to re-visit the DWS, asking: What evidence is there that life cycle policy-making integrates income supports, services and activist measures?

We link the life cycle to the Developmental Welfare State in this chapter for two reasons. Firstly, we are mindful that 'what can be called "public policy" and thus has to be implemented, is the product of what has happened in the earlier stages of the policy process' (Hill and Hupe, 2009: 6). The Developmental Welfare State provided the conceptual groundwork for the life cycle model. The DWS is central to how CVP organisations were thinking about social policy planning at the time the data were gathered. This chapter argues that established political institutions provide foundations for any fundamental reform. Secondly, participants in the study expressed a keen interest in and knowledge of the DWS as a 'new vision' for the development of social policy in Ireland. In their capacity as intermediate institutions (Chapter 3), CVP member organisations provide a link between their constituents and welfare state reform. Following our ethos of participatory engagement, we sought to investigate the relationship between the life cycle and the DWS in detail. The chapter draws conclusions about the DWS in terms of its status within the broader political system.

6.2 Life Cycle Stages: Institutional Contexts and Decision-Making Strategies

The life cycle and the Developmental Welfare State are initiatives of social partnership. The Developmental Welfare State, itself a creation of the National Economic and Social Council (NESC, 2005), outlines the life cycle in some detail (see Chapter 3). A series of commitments for each life cycle stage became government policy in the social partnership agreement, *Towards 2016*. The ambitious plans of both the DWS and *Towards 2016* in producing substantive improvements for vulnerable groups would seem to require an equally ambitious programme of administrative reform (NESC, 2005: 211). A core element of the Developmental Welfare State is that government commitments be monitored. Each stage of the life cycle articulated in *Towards 2016* is allocated a governance framework. These frameworks chart which institutions, government departments, agencies and strategies are in place in order to implement a life cycle approach to policy-making. Participants in this research project were critical of institutional structures pertaining to the life cycle (see Chapter 5). As a research team, we sought to investigate further some of the institutional limitations expressed by participants. We undertook a documentary analysis of relevant policy documents and websites, to trace where and how institutional structures operate. The departments and agencies listed are based on research conducted in the 2008-11 period and the (2006) *Towards 2016* agreement.

6.2.1 Identifying institutional arrangements for life cycle stages

The aim of this analysis was to understand the scope of institutional arrangements for each life cycle stage. State institutions are not, with a small number of exceptions, organised around specific life cycle stages. Rather, most government departments and agencies are involved in some way in meeting the needs of vulnerable groups (through education, health, or social protection). Researchers began by searching for all institutional structures potentially relevant to the implementation of policy for people with disabilities, as a test case. (The numerous institutions and agencies implicated in meeting the needs of this life cycle group, are outlined in Appendix five). The analysis began with *Towards 2016*, noting references to the National Disability Strategy and relevant disability legislation. Next, a trawl of relevant websites, such as that of the National Disability Authority, made known the institutional mechanisms, international conventions and thematic areas under development for people with disabilities. The search then progressed through each of the six sectoral plans (Health and Children; Social and Family Affairs; Environment; Heritage and Local Government; Transport; Communications; Marine and Natural Resources; Enterprise; Trade and Employment), noting institutional arrangements.

The National Disability Strategy is implemented via six sectoral plans in departments of:

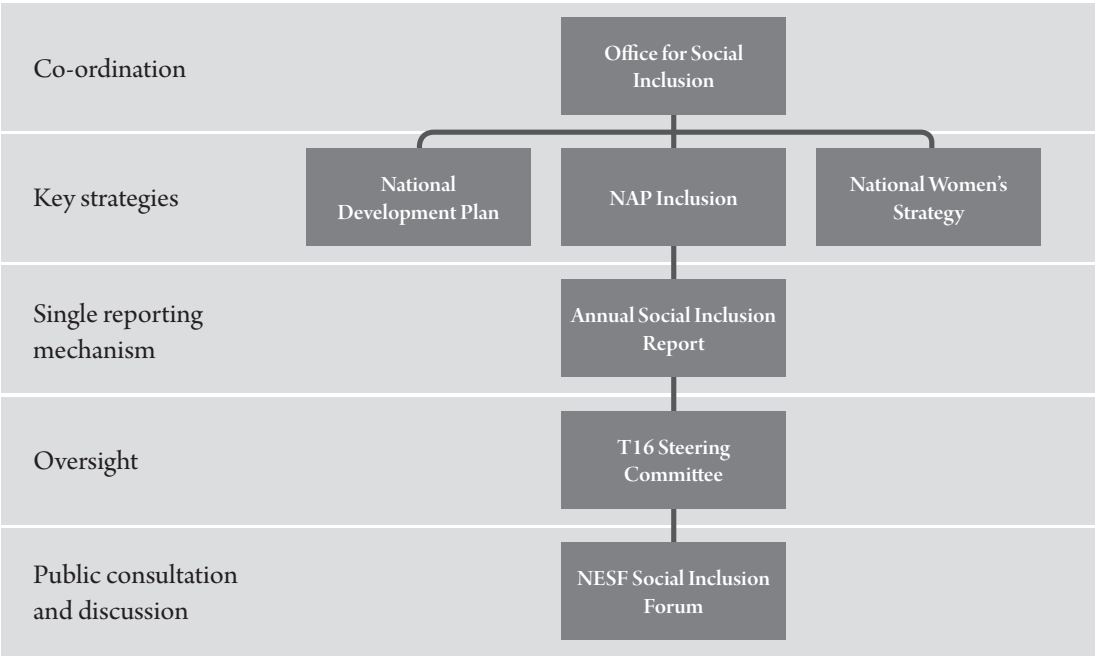
- Health and Children
- Social and Family Affairs
- Environment, Heritage and Local Government
- Transport
- Communications
- Marine and Natural Resources

The research team then attempted to group each of these arrangements together according to the three central and overlapping strands of the Developmental Welfare State: ‘income support’, ‘services’ and ‘activist measures’. The analysis demonstrated a multitude of institutional arrangements (see Table A.4.3 in appendices). A similar exercise was undertaken for the children’s stage (see A.5.1 in appendices). Our analysis revealed that attempting to summarise a full range of institutional arrangements for each life cycle stage, beyond those listed in *Towards 2016*, was complicated. The search did, however, show that the governance framework identified in *Towards 2016* is one reliable source for tracking institutional arrangements for discrete vulnerable groups. In the final examination we opted for a more succinct approach; developing organograms for each life cycle stage based on the governance arrangements identified in *Towards 2016*.

6.2.2 Governance frameworks

The remainder of this section presents an organogram for each life cycle stage. The organogram shows how each respective institutional framework operates within social partnership, specifically in plans laid out in the *Towards 2016* agreement. Each diagram is accompanied by a brief summary of the perceptions of participants’ experience of working with the strategies and monitoring mechanisms in place. The governance framework for the life cycle framework itself is graphically depicted in Figure 6.1.

Figure 6.1 Monitoring the Development of a Life Cycle Approach



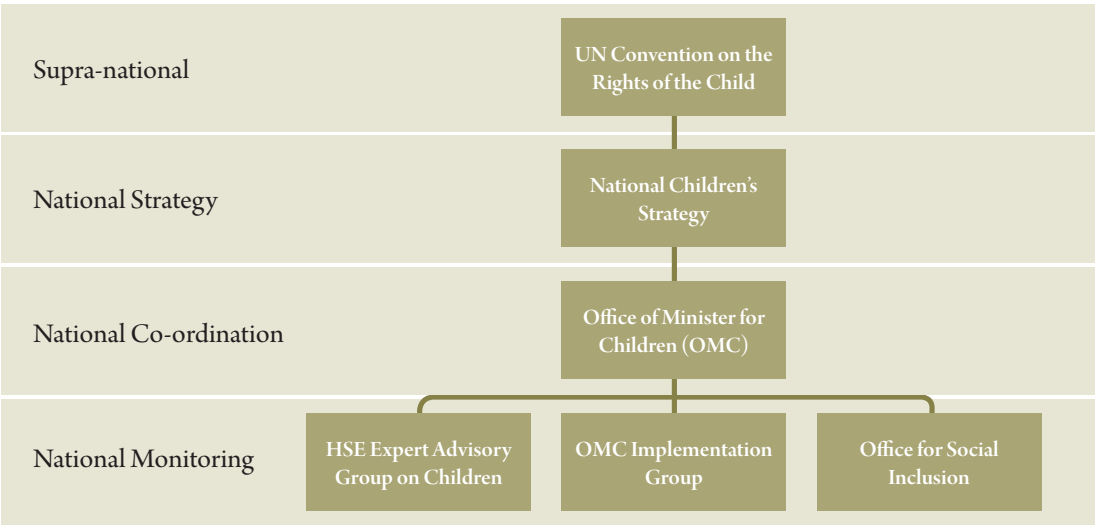
Source: Department of Taoiseach, 2006: 75

Figure 6.1 links the life cycle to other institutions of social inclusion (decision-making bodies), and to various national strategies. The governance framework for the life cycle is limited to the anti-poverty strategy and social partnership committees. The broader political system, in particular institutions of parliament such as Oireachtas committees, has no oversight role. Further investigation revealed that the link to the political system is relatively weak when one examines governance frameworks for each life cycle stage.

6.2.3 Children’s stage

The children’s stage has a comparatively strong institutional base from which to operate. A National Children’s Strategy, the Commission on the Family (2001), the Youth Justice Review and the establishment of the Office of the Minister for Children to support the implementation of the Children’s Act (2001) have been major developments in recent years (Dolan, 2007). There is a clear relationship between international (UN) commitments on the rights of children¹³ and the development of policy at national level (see Figure 6.2). In particular, the development of a discourse where children’s rights are identified as human rights is noteworthy. One participant recognised the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs as a useful institutional resource when getting issues included in *Towards 2016*. Participants also note that having the National Children’s Strategy available made it easier to produce a cohesive vision for children in *Towards 2016*. Despite the relatively well developed infrastructure, and the existence of a clear number of commitments for children in *Towards 2016*, some participants are sceptical about whether the benefits of involvement in social partnership justify the investment.

Figure 6.2 Governance Framework: Children

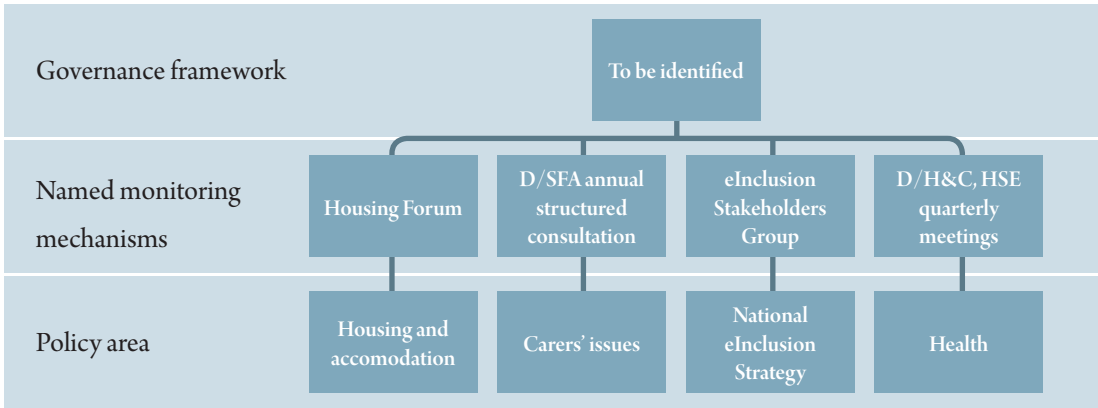


13 Internationally recognised and codified commitments include the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1990), International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1981), and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (1979) (Gaventa and McGee, 2010: 16).

6.2.4 People of working age

People of working age are represented by a number of lobbies including women, the unemployed, lone parents and carers. Ireland has a robust institutional structure for protecting workers’ rights through trade unions, the Labour Relations Commission (LRC), the Labour Court (LC), the Equality Authority, and the Employment Equality Tribunal.

Figure 6.3 Governance Framework: Working Age

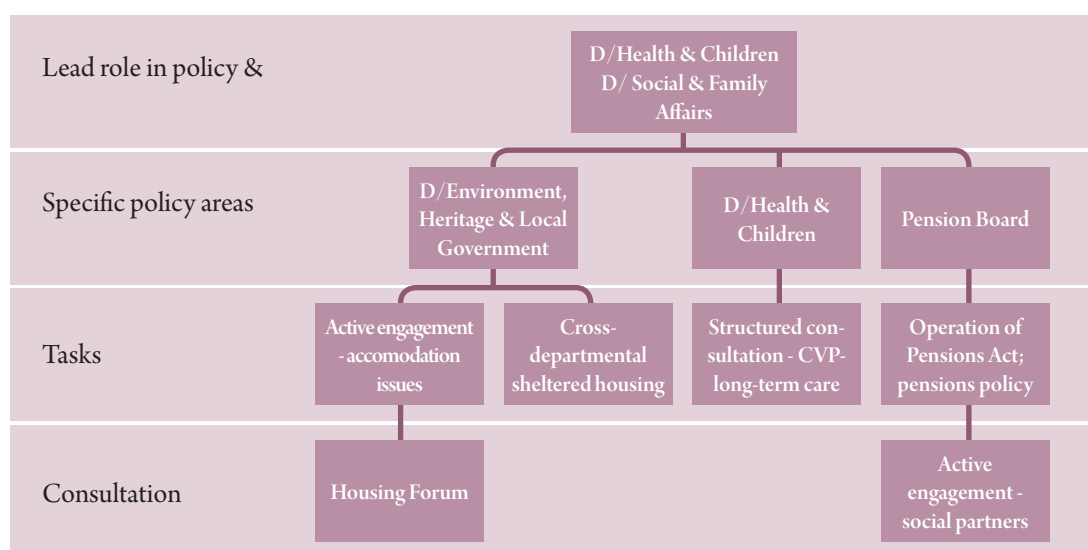


The institutional framework devised for people of working age in *Towards 2016* is diffuse, and less clearly tied to a set of commitments than other stages. This perhaps reflects a challenge identified by organisations representing people of working age, namely that much of their organisations’ agenda is dealt with by other pillars of social partnership (employers and unions). Participants representing people of working age reported that the life cycle is too individualistic, as it tends to obscure the fact that many people experience inequality because of their membership of groups (for example being a woman, or having a particular socio-economic status). Organisations representing people of working age recognise that tracking progress for the individual throughout their life cycle may not be particularly useful for those who experience inequalities as a result of collective identity. This issue is explained in more detail later in the chapter. This stage also felt marginalised and disenfranchised from the core wage determination pillar for working people, namely that of trades unions and employer associations.

6.2.5 Older people's stage

Older people's organisations joined the CVP in 2003/4. There was little institutional infrastructure for older people prior to the negotiation of *Towards 2016*. To date, there is no national strategy for older people, though a new platform of pressure groups, via the Ageing Well Network, has drafted a plan and submitted it to relevant officials. Up until Election 2011 there was an Office of the Minister for Older People, though it was less well resourced than the Office of the Minister for Children. Older people do not have a legislative base to underpin their demands. This less coherent set of structures is reflected in the governance framework which identifies no key role for the Office of the Minister for Older People. Older people are still the responsibility of multiple departments, leading to fragmented policy design and limited implementation cohesion. The lack of a well developed institutional structure is recognised as problematic by participants in this stage.

Figure 6.4 Governance Framework: Older People

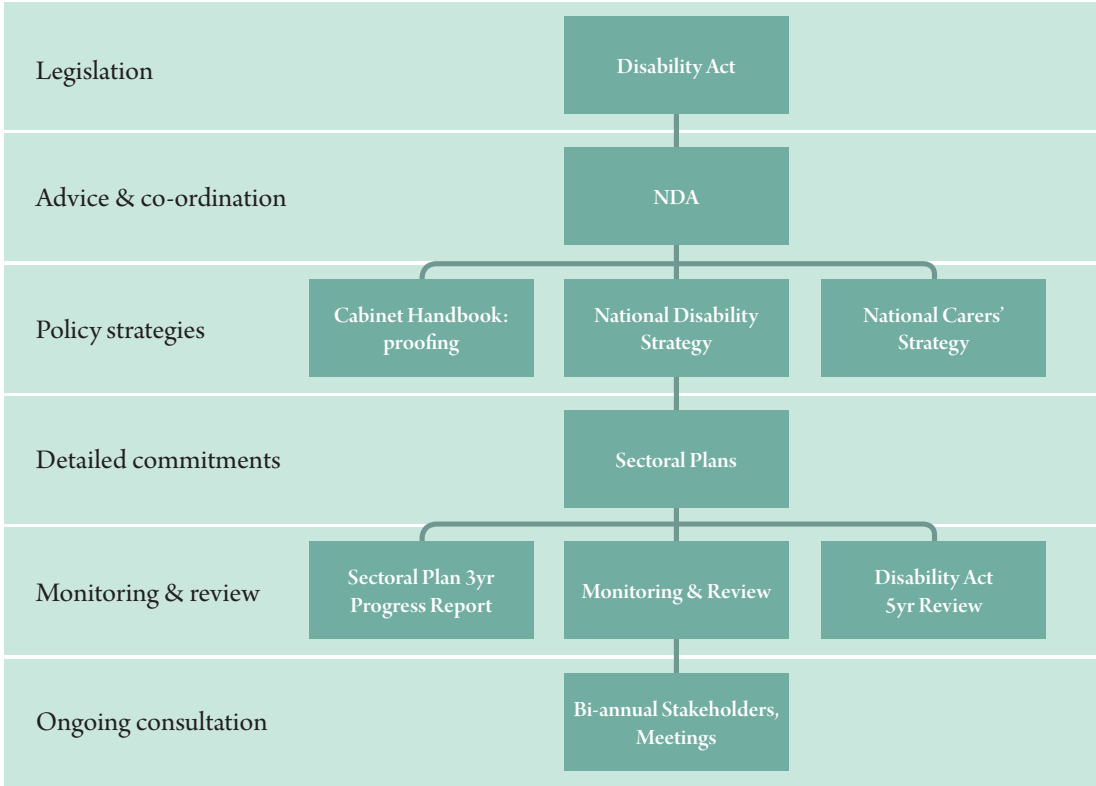


Not surprisingly, organisations in this stage report that social partnership is just one mechanism for achieving their policy aims, noting that inclusion of policies in an agreement does not guarantee implementation. A number of other strategies, including budget submissions, lobbying politicians and mobilising members were found to be equally, if not more, important. These organisations see themselves as 'relatively small players' (Interview CVP 10, 2009) in social partnership, but as having a particular strength in mobilising their grass-roots and impacting on the political process. It is difficult to know whether this capability is particular to older people's pressure groups, or is a virtue of being less influential at social partnership level. Part of the reason suggested for being small players is due to lack of resources, compared to some of the larger member organisations of the CVP.

6.2.6 People with disabilities

Our earlier exercise in mapping institutional structures for this stage revealed the most coherent governance framework of all the life cycle stages.

Figure 6.5 Governance Framework: People with Disabilities



The Disability Act (2005) outlines a clear hierarchy of responsibility for institutions charged with implementing policies in favour of people with disabilities. The National Disability Authority is charged with providing advice and co-ordination. The National Disability Strategy outlines detailed commitments for government departments in six sectoral plans. These plans are subjected to monitoring and review, as implementing departments are answerable to a panel of stakeholders on a bi-annual basis.

The organisations relating to this life cycle stage have a reasonably high degree of involvement in influential committees such as the NESC. For these organisations, using institutional structures to full advantage is at the hub of their operation. They worked hard to get the National Disability Strategy (NDS) into *Towards 2016* and now use the NDS as a basis to advance specific goals in a focussed manner. Consequently, social partnership is only one of several mechanisms for furthering their aims. Lobbying and briefing of politicians, a focus on committees of the Oireachtas, meeting key spokespersons, ministers and officials, and seeking commitments in election manifestoes are also important leverage tools. This stage sees the DWS focus on income, access to services and person-centredness as compatible with their vision for the NDS. These organisations stressed their concern at their realisation of the vulnerability of the Disability Strategy in the face of the recession.

6.3 Discussion

A number of possible conclusions could be drawn from this comparison of the governance frameworks for each life cycle stage. The organograms reveal no consistent approach to developing a governance framework for each life cycle stage. Even the governance framework for the life cycle itself appears to be based on the co-ordination of specific, yet not entirely related, sets of priorities. Co-ordinated by the Office for Social Inclusion, and linked to national anti-poverty plans and social inclusion mechanisms, the framework does not demonstrate any explicit links to institutional frameworks for particular life cycle stages. While the *Towards 2016* steering committee is identified as having an oversight role, there is no mention of the National Disability Strategy or the National Children's Strategy in the development of the life cycle framework. The life cycle governance framework does include reference to the National Women's Strategy, though the perceptions of participants in this research, was the lack of a gender dimension in the life cycle.

'...it (*the life-cycle*) is about a sort of individual approach. What that often ignores is that people experience inequality as part of a group. Women experience inequality as women and the same with Travellers and other groups. There was always the difficulty I think of how to combine a stronger equality approach within the life cycle approach' (Interview CVP 16, 2009).

Most significantly, institutions of social partnership are explicitly recognised as having central roles in implementing a life cycle approach (Department of Taoiseach 2006: 74). A particular role is identified for the National Economic and Social Forum 'on evaluating the effectiveness of existing policies and service delivery, and their integration at different stages of the life cycle. This analysis will in turn contribute to the review of progress under the agreement' (Department of Taoiseach 2006: 74).¹⁴ The key question for the potential of the life cycle to develop as an alternative to the *ad hoc* nature of previous social policy development in Ireland is the extent to which governance framework provides for integrated policy implementation. But a comparison of governance frameworks across life cycle stages reveals few commonalities or overlapping strategic institutional innovations. This is significant as the overlapping of key services, income supports and activist measures, is integral to the Developmental Welfare State. In order to come to some kind of useful comparative overview of what does or doesn't work when introducing a new framework such as the life cycle, the research team has identified the necessary elements of a working institutional framework.

6.4 An Integrated Life Cycle Framework

Our comparison of governance frameworks across life cycle stages has revealed a number of key elements that, working together, would facilitate functioning of the life cycle. All of these elements are necessary, and none is sufficient to achieve implementation. They include a legislative basis which protects the rights of individuals, a national strategy, support from key political actors and accountable policy-makers.

14 The institutions of social partnership are identified in the *Towards 2016* as the National Economic and Social Council, the National Economic and Social Forum and the National Centre for Partnership and Performance (Department of Taoiseach 2006: 74-5). While the National Economic and Social Council pre-dates social partnership (1973), its work is synonymous with social partnership. Also, membership of the National Economic and Social Council includes nominees from each pillar of social partnership, senior government officials and government nominees from academic institutions.

6.4.1 Legislative base

In order to amount to a coherent framework for governance and implementation, a life cycle approach might include a legislative basis to protect the rights of the individual belonging to that life cycle stage. In some cases, existing international norms or agreements on the rights of individuals (such as the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child) can provide a strong basis for developing a national legislative base. The organograms for the children's and disability life cycle stages are examples of this. They demonstrate a clear and accountable identification of who is responsible for implementation. The existence of a clear legal framework, accompanied by an agreed and legitimate national strategy, and a ministerial office with clear responsibility for the life cycle stage concerned, results in a coherent governance framework. This is the case for the children's and disability frameworks. In contrast, those for older people and people of working age have no clear ownership. As a result the stage either lacks clarity of implementation (in the case of people of working age) or is reduced to a number of key priority areas such as housing, pensions or long-term care (in the case of older people).

6.4.2 National strategy

Another key element of successful governance frameworks is the agreement of a national strategy. The National Disability Strategy defines roles for certain government departments through six sectoral plans. For those stages that have agreed a national strategy, it features in the governance framework. In both cases, the National Children's Strategy and the National Disability Strategy are linked to national or international legal frameworks. From the governance framework for the older people's stage, it appears that having no national strategy leaves a life cycle stage open to having its needs reduced to disparate issues such as health, housing or pensions. Conversely, the agreement of a national strategy on foot of a public debate between government and key stakeholders provides a legitimate basis on which citizenship rights and claims can be made either by or on behalf of a vulnerable group. The focus on national strategies as the priority areas for people with disabilities is reflective of the long years of negotiation and differentiation that have been invested by that life cycle stage. They have worked through a process of identifying need, and agreeing priority areas, and have a set of goals clear enough to work into a set of agreements with government (see social model of disability, Chapter 3 of this report). Leadership by Civil Society Organisations in this sector has provided a solid foundation for the national strategies, legislation and agreements for monitoring and review of progress.

Figure 6.6 Necessary Elements of an Integrated Life Cycle Framework

- Legal framework
- National strategy
- Accountable policy-makers
- Political champions

The agreement of a national strategy aids in identifying primary stakeholders. For instance, the governance framework for disability includes a clear monitoring role for Civil Society Organisations. A monitoring committee reviews progress on the six sectoral plans and the National Disability

Strategy through the specially formed bi-annual stakeholder meetings which underpin those commitments. Participants in this study note that one or more of these elements is not enough to achieve change. Rather, all elements are necessary to produce significant policy change for a constituent group.

'It's (*the life cycle*) put a focus on how segmented government departments are. They still are and will be for a long time to come, but at least there's cracks in the armour'
(Interview CVP 12, 2009)

6.4.3 Support of key political actors and accountable policy-makers

The level of investment by political leaders and influential bureaucrats is not explicitly factored into the governance frameworks of *Towards 2016*. However, the role of individual politicians in championing the status of particular groups is reported in the data: '... nothing goes into agreements without political approval – we know that ...' (CVP 9, 2009). Civil Society Organisations consider individual politicians to potentially exert considerable leverage in determining outcomes in terms of policy change, particularly if accompanied by similar champions in civil service roles. This applies to discrete issues, but is also relevant for the whole of social partnership. Some Civil Society Organisations report a lessening in support for social partnership as a change in Taoiseach moved the locus of power from the Taoiseach's department to the Department of Finance from mid-2007. While this research has not investigated this phenomenon in detail, similar trends have been found internationally (United Nations, 2008). The role of political leadership in policy development for vulnerable groups deserves investigation in future research.

6.5 The Life Cycle in the Developmental Welfare State

Participants in this study repeatedly referred to the Developmental Welfare State as more useful than the life cycle. A typical response to a question about the usefulness of the life cycle was: 'I see the stuff around the DWS as ... at least having some political or policy value' (Interview CVP 9, 2009). For some participants, the life cycle is a mechanism open to minimal interpretation, while the DWS represents a more substantial vision of how social policy should be re-oriented. In particular, participants highlighted the design of the DWS, namely the planned intersection of 'services', 'income supports' and 'activist measures': 'its essential character derives from the approaches taken within each sphere and the integration of the three in ways that are developmental for individuals, families, communities and the economy' (NESC, 2005: xviii). The model is illustrated in Chapter 2 (Figure 2.3). Mindful of Hill's (2009) contention that context is essential to understanding policy implementation, this section provides some institutional context to the design of the DWS.

6.5.1 The institutional context of the Developmental Welfare State

Designers of the DWS were aware of the significant challenge of effecting welfare state reform. The DWS report identified four challenges, all of which relate to key relationships: between national government and social partnership, across government departments, between state and third party providers, and amongst public sector decision-makers (NESC, 2005: 211-13). The DWS has been criticised for lacking clarity, precise definition of terms, and 'an implementation blue print' (Murphy and Millar, 2007: 78-9). However, it is recognised as a welcome development for social policy which has lagged behind economic policy in terms of innovation and reform. Despite these criticisms, the document itself does outline a number of 'strategic and operational requirements for moving forward' (NESC, 2005: xxi). These include 'governance and leadership, rights and standards, integration at the local level, operational requirements and supporting people across the life cycle' (NESC, 2005: xxii) and are summarised in Table 6.1.

Table 6.1 Strategic and Operational Requirements to Implement DWS

Requirement	Articulated in DWS as:
Governance and leadership	<p>'Joined-up' government to ensure effective co-ordination across the public sector.</p> <p>Exercise of governance to integrate the contributions of non-public bodies.</p> <p>Challenge of leadership.</p>
Rights and standards	<p>Vindicating or specifying socio-economic rights is not in the power of courts or of governments acting on their own but requires wide societal engagement in creating the policies and institutions that establish their content and meaning.</p> <p>Important to concentrate on specifying, attaining and monitoring the standards that should govern various areas of provision (health, education, social welfare, housing, employment, services, etc.).</p>
Integration at local level	Agency of local actors can and should be enhanced through bolder innovations featuring new types of relationships between central and local bodies.
Operational requirements	<p>High-level political decisions and social partnership procedures must be supportive of necessary changes at local level.</p> <p>Significant improvements in the management of public expenditure are required.</p> <p>Public administration must develop its capabilities to activate, orchestrate and modulate networks of interdependent actors.</p>
Supporting people across the life cycle	<p>The life cycle provides a good framework for choosing among competing priorities and mobilising the social actors to implement the DWS.</p> <p>Priority must be given to the poorest children in the state.</p> <p>Merging of existing payments into 'participation income' for people of working age.</p> <p>Regular, authoritative and comprehensive review of evolving needs and of efficiency, effectiveness and responsiveness of social protection extended to people in retirement.</p>

Source: National Economic and Social Council (2005: xxi-xxii)

A number of these requirements echo comments made by participants in the course of this research. This is not surprising when one considers that the life cycle is identified in the DWS as 'a good framework for choosing among competing priorities and mobilising the social actors to implement the DWS' (Table 6.1 above). This study of the life cycle shows that one set of social actors (the CVP) identify several requirements for reform. These are now discussed under the following headings: public sector reform, wider societal engagement in reform, political decisions and social partnership procedures. The fourth category, collective identity versus risk individualisation, is included as it demonstrates the role of Civil Society Organisations in mediating between state and citizen under 'wider societal engagement.'

6.6 Discussion

6.6.1 Public sector reform

When asked to list strengths and limitations of the life cycle, member organisations of the CVP cited lack of political commitment and the absence of public administration reform as major barriers to implementing the life cycle and realising the Developmental Welfare State. One participant remarked: 'I've seen nothing in terms of government planning, government policy, government services which gives me any indication that they even understand what the life cycle approach is about' (Interview CVP 9, 2009). Lack of commitment to change amongst officials was recognised by participants as noteworthy in making the task of realising the life cycle approach challenging.

6.6.2 Wider societal engagement in reform

If the requirements to implement the DWS are observable by their absence in the experience of Civil Society Organisations working with the life cycle, this is significant. It suggests that the difficulties Civil Society Organisations encounter are related to wider problems with welfare state reform. Specifically, the findings suggest that the problems member organisations of the CVP encounter in their work with the life cycle may be characteristic of Irish political culture, namely; clientelist relations between legislators and citizens, and a historically weak and fragmented left (Coakley in Coakley and Gallagher 2008). With the main political parties occupying similar centre-right positions, it seems plausible that the socio-economic rights underpinning the DWS are unlikely to emerge from existing cleavages (see column 2 Table 6.1, previous page). As Table 6.1 demonstrated, the authors of the DWS were aware of political concerns. At the time the DWS was devised (early 2000s), no-one could have envisaged the changes that would take place in Irish economy and society from 2008 onwards. The central premise of the DWS, that Ireland should develop its welfare state so that economic and social progress is harmonised rather than competitive, still stands. It appears that establishing a welfare state on an individualised model (such as that used to develop economically) may be problematic.

6.6.3 Collective identity versus risk individualisation

Collective identity is significant given the evidential rise in a discourse of risk individualisation in Ireland and other OECD countries (Chapter 2). The key issue for the reform of Ireland's welfare state concerns the degree to which corporatist decision-making mechanisms are being used to individualise risk. Again, the absence of a strong social citizenship based on universal inalienable rights to income and welfare means that even a fully implemented life cycle approach may not yield the intended results. Some participant organisations had spent many years arguing for collective identity, solidarity, equality and social justice for all. Those participants argued that the life cycle was too individualised. They expressed fears about placing the individual at the centre of the policy-making system. Some argued that significant changes had been made in terms of the introduction of equality legislation over the past 30 years that were now at risk if social policy was individualised. In short, it was unclear what the implications of a life cycle approach were for these more long established campaigns.

Our finding that collective identities are important for vulnerable groups adds to existing research on the CVP, which tended to focus on member organisations rather than the groups they represent (Chapter 2). For vulnerable groups, the idea of a collective identity is important. As one participant put it:

'... an awful lot of groups experience inequality because of their collective identity, be it the community you're from, be it because you're a Traveller....you might have very different needs -some of that equality focus gets lost in the focus around the individual' (Interview CVP 11,

2009). This participant felt that there needed to be a focus on equality in the life cycle approach if the DWS were to be realized. Everyone working with vulnerable people needs to understand 'that the journey the individual can make over their life time is impacted on by their group identity' (Interview CVP11, 2009). This awareness of group and individual identity comes from the experience of working as a pillar representing a diverse range of vulnerable people.

'It (the CVP) promotes the need to be more mindful of vulnerable groups, pushing for more inclusive development – without the pillar, I don't think that language would be there at all' (CVP 11, 2009)

6.6.4 Political decisions and social partnership procedures

The Developmental Welfare State was designed as a social response to economic success, and is modelled on social spending and investment matching economic growth (NESC, 2005). The DWS model works on the premise that the institutions of social partnership (various pillars, particularly the CVP and the NESC) will work together to promote and extend the integration of services, income supports and activist measures. Since Autumn 2008, social partnership has been severely diminished as an institution of decision-making. Social partnership commitments have been rendered irrelevant as the state has sought to claw back funding in order to shore up escalating public debt. For vulnerable groups, this has been characterised by a series of cuts to social welfare payments, decreased support for community projects, and major cuts to funding of member organisations of the CVP. The majority of participants in this study report that social partnership is now less prominent.

'I really do think social partnership in its current format is dead, it's on life support anyway' (Interview CVP 9, 2009).

Significantly, this study suggests that the life cycle approach and the DWS, has not developed beyond the institutions of social partnership. A limitation in the design of the DWS was its implicit reliance on the continued success of a voluntarist rather than a mandated or regulated social partnership regime. The problem with social partnership, according to one of its staunch advocates, David Begg, General Secretary of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU), was that its foundations were built on very soft sand (Begg, 2008: 53). It is perhaps less surprising, therefore, that stumbling blocks ensue in terms of the 'strategic and operational requirements for moving forward' with the DWS (NESC, 2005: xxi) when a major economic crisis emerges.

6.7 The Fragmented Developmental Welfare State

Civil Society Organisations attempting to progress the DWS, through the CVP, find the influence of the political system pervasive in reforming the welfare state. This finding resonates with a central motivation of the designers of the Developmental Welfare State, to address a 'growing "process fatigue" in attempting to apply a social partnership approach to the solution of existing social deficits' (NESC, 2005: 197). The declining role of social partnership has made political lobbying, electoral politics and the power of policy-makers more prominent. The DWS identified no significant role for politics in its functioning. The model works on the implicit assumption that reform of the welfare state will occur within a partnership framework. 'The DWS is the expression and institutionalisation of genuine and respectful interdependence between the several pillars and multiple actors, among whom collaboration is indispensable if the required levels of social protection are to be forthcoming' (NESC, 2005: 229). While roles are identified for the public sector and Civil Society Organisations, no mediating role is identified for politicians or the electoral system. Evidence from participants in this study suggests that integration of its three core strands has not occurred. The picture is of a fragmented Developmental Welfare State, held together in part by social partnership, but more heavily influenced by political power-brokers outside the institutional framework of social partnership. Using the evidence from this research, the strands of the DWS can be re-calibrated to reflect the implicit role for partnership in its design, as depicted in Figure 6.7.

Figure 6.7 The Fragmented Developmental Welfare State

*Figure 6.7. Under services, activist measures and income supports, the common priorities for life cycle groups as reported at the policy sessions are listed. The additional green sphere includes strategies available to and used by participants through social partnership.

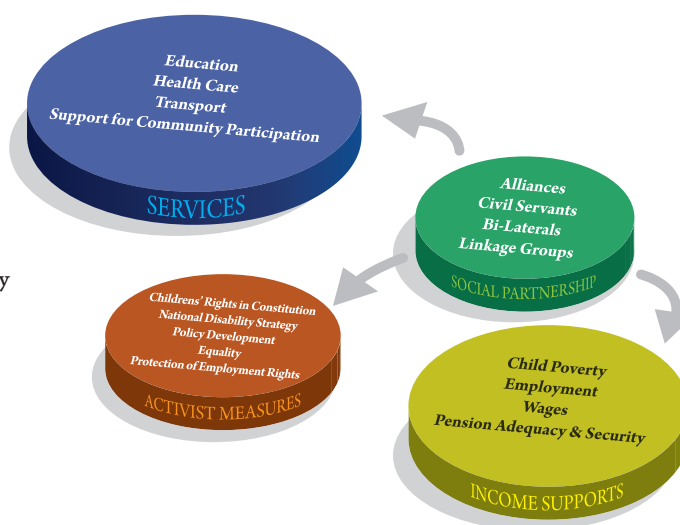


Figure 6.7 represents findings from the data. The data gathered at group deliberations and reported in detail in Chapter 5 were mapped onto the three core strands of the Developmental Welfare State: *services*, *income supports* and *activist measures* (Figure 2.3). This exercise involved mapping findings priorities to core elements of the DWS. This exercise revealed that there are outstanding issues across all three strands of the DWS for all life cycle stages. 'Services', 'income supports' and 'activist measures' do not overlap as the DWS planned. Instead, services are still deficient, income supports inadequate and the rights of vulnerable groups remain unprotected. Inequality persists in various forms: child poverty, pension inadequacy, inequality in access to education and health, and social welfare. The research set out to identify what strategies Civil Service Organisations use to address these persistent inequalities. We found that member organisations of the CVP use the institutions of social partnership to hold government to account on promises made. Perhaps more significantly, we also found that CVP members use political mechanisms outside social partnership to equal effect. The direct influence

of politicians and broader trends within the body politic regularly overwhelm the institutions of social partnership. The fact that the DWS was designed to be realised via the NESCS, NESF and other institutions of social partnership leaves it in the fragmented state depicted in Figure 6.7.

Closer analysis of interview data suggests that the declining activity of social partnership has led most though not *all* organisations of the CVP to report increased use of alternative political institutions to pursue their aims. The experience of one participant organisation suggests a significant shift away from social partnership:

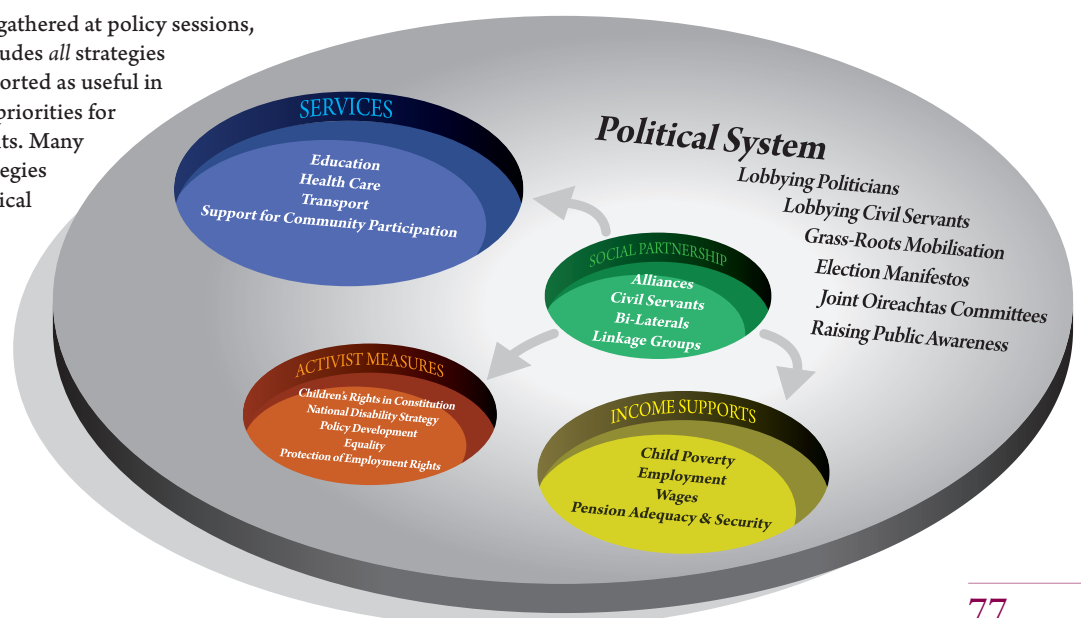
'We've kind of moved away from social partnership in the last two years. We're moving towards working with the political system and lobbying the government departments and obviously the political parties and trying to do stuff with the media' (Interview CVP 9, 2009).

At the heart of the fragmentation depicted in Figure 6.7 is the fact that Irish social partnership is essentially a voluntary arrangement. Arguably, social partnership can be credited with devising the DWS and embedding it in the *Towards 2016* social partnership agreement. However, the voluntary nature of social partnership in Ireland means that what is in the agreement is implemented via the actions of the social partners. The system is only as strong as the commitment of its members. When government is not active on partnership, and the CVP is curtailed by cutbacks and forced to campaign on basic issues such as retaining social welfare rates, the limitation of social partnership as an institution of decision-making becomes apparent.

Social partnership, as an approach to decision-making was also tested by the unexpected challenge of severe economic retrenchment from 2008 onwards. Social partnership, if left to voluntary market mechanisms, could in all probability, fall into disuse. The social partners revert back to direct lobbying of politicians and civil servants, street protests and using media to make the case for policy change. In the end, the relationship between state and citizen is re-negotiated by electoral means, not via the institutions of social partnership. This leads to a second inference from the data: that the fragmented Developmental Welfare State is embedded in the broader political system.

Figure 6.71 The Fragmented Developmental Welfare State is Embedded in the Existing Political System

*Based on data gathered at policy sessions, Figure 6.71 includes *all* strategies participants reported as useful in addressing key priorities for their constituents. Many groups use strategies and access political institutions outside social partnership (represented in the grey area of the figure).



Discussion

These findings resonate with observations made by Sweeney (2009: 27), author of the DWS report, that the electoral system and the system of public administration are more prominent than the DWS planned. Sweeney has indicated that social partnership is only one institutional actor in the DWS. Similarly, this research finds that the original DWS model was overly reliant on a voluntarist (rather than a rights-based) system of social partnership. The DWS planned for some co-ordination, but was less prepared for the extent to which the institutions of social partnership must compete with other mechanisms for change. The co-habitation of social partnership with other political institutions would need to be taken into account if the DWS is to be realised in the future. Only then will the core strands of the DWS be allowed to intersect in a way which produces better policy outcomes for vulnerable groups.

Politics connects elements of the Developmental Welfare State

Under-estimating the role of politics when introducing a new policy approach such as the DWS is problematic in a number of different ways. To elaborate, in Ireland there is no clear consensus on basic social rights such as access to income, retirement or child benefits. As suggested in Chapter 3, historically, vulnerability and social need have been seen as the responsibility of family, church or other private voluntary institutions. Irish political culture reflects similar associations whereby citizenship is founded on the freedom to engage in democratic processes, such as elections, rather than being linked to social issues such as welfare or minimum income guarantees. As a result, very little of the nation's wealth is channelled into the social welfare system (O'Sullivan, 2004). When it comes to decision-making in social partnership, this residual form of citizenship transforms into a structure of political engagement where Civil Society Organisations must justify payments for individual target groups on the basis of demonstrated need. This system creates a policy space that encourages competition between vulnerable groups for scarce resources. If a CSO can gain public support for their constituency, be it older people, lone parents, persons with disabilities, children, Travellers or women, they can maintain benefits. International research suggests that groups with the most effective and influential voice, rather than those with greatest need, can win political support (Schneider and Ingram, 2005). There is a risk that the policies most likely to be developed are those that benefit influential groups. Such a trend is anathema to the social integration and inclusion envisaged in the Developmental Welfare State (see Chapter 2). To avoid this regressive form of democracy the DWS would need to include the political system and strategies of political players in its design.

Civil Society Organisations connect policy initiatives to political system

One interpretation of our findings is that Civil Society Organisations provide vital linkages between political initiatives and the broader political system. This result arises from exploring how members of the CVP experience representing groups whose only true commonality is vulnerability. Focusing on life cycle stages served to clarify commonalities across groups, as is shown by the number of Civil Society Organisations who claim to represent 'cross-cutting' groups (Chapter 5). Participants observe that in spite of competition for resources or policy space, vulnerability is universal to their constituents. When participants were initially interviewed, a majority cited 'protecting the vulnerable' as the common purpose of member organisations of the CVP. Whether through anti-poverty campaigns, advocacy coalitions or awareness raising, all participants highlighted the persistence of need amongst vulnerable groups as a core element of their work. The experience of working with the life cycle approach and the DWS demonstrates that 'protecting the vulnerable' is as much a political task as a question of social welfare reform. CSOs play a vital role in connecting

social welfare reforms to the priorities of political parties and government agendas. Participants in this study have a wealth of experience of state-citizen social pacts, and know that any fundamental social change must first be debated at a societal level.

‘We now have a serious amount of capacity to influence policy at a high level.... You have seventeen organisations with people trained and experienced in how to.... influence policy’ (Interview CVP 3, 2009).

6.8 Summary

This chapter explored how the research findings from Chapter 5 inform the prevailing institutional welfare state model in Ireland. Data from interviews with member organisations of the CVP and data emerging from a documentary analysis of *Towards 2016* revealed how institutional arrangements affect strategies adopted by members of the Community and Voluntary Pillar. The chapter identified the governance frameworks for each life cycle stage. This analysis led to two key conclusions. Firstly, people with disabilities appear to have the most clearly articulated institutional structure, as six departments are required under the Disability Act to prepare sectoral plans, a structure which links particular departments to specific commitments. Secondly, the fact that the institutional arrangements, even for the relatively straightforward people with disabilities stage, proved difficult to map onto the DWS framework suggests that the development strategy for the DWS (Figure 2.3), has not been fully embedded into the social partnership arrangements of *Towards 2016*. Even stages with a relatively well developed institutional infrastructure report that services are not delivered in a person-centred way and that government and civil servants do not fully understand the implications of having a life cycle approach. The final section takes a closer look at the DWS, in particular assessing the extent to which the findings from this research can shed light on barriers to its completion.

The data showed how institutional fragmentation has limited the potential of the life cycle in effecting the Developmental Welfare State. The role of social partnership in cementing related strands of the DWS as a cohesive and integrated whole was found wanting. The implicit reliance on social partnership as the process by which the DWS can be realised is problematic given the voluntary nature of Irish social partnership. The data suggest that a political dynamic operates both inside and outside of social partnership. Engagement with this political dynamic was found to be necessary to meet the limitations of a fragmented DWS and to advance the interests of life cycle stages.



Introducing a life course perspective to policy planning now will promote solidarity between future generations.

7. Conclusions and Recommendations

7.1 Introduction

This study has revealed much about how citizens engage with social policy reform in the Irish context. In the spirit of engaged scholarship, the project sought to provide a timely and relevant piece of research. This final chapter begins by contextualising the research in terms of national and international economic change. The chapter goes on to outline the most significant research findings. We draw out implications of the research for future planning, and identify some opportunities for further research. The chapter finishes with key recommendations for policy-makers, politicians and non-governmental organisations.

7.1.1 Contextualising the research

This research set out to investigate the relationship between civic engagement and policy development. At the time that the research was conceived, social partnership was a central institution for social policy-making in Ireland. Since the research began in 2008, the landscape of Irish politics has changed significantly. The level of state and community engagement in social partnership altered from mid-2007, when a new Taoiseach (Prime Minister) took office. By mid-2008, the Irish Republic was experiencing a sudden and sharp period of economic retrenchment. Fuelled in part by a national property bubble, Ireland became a victim of the global economic crisis. These circumstances presented two distinct opportunities/challenges for this research project.

Firstly, the research provides a timely snapshot of a particularly telling period of transition for Irish corporatism. The research findings on social partnership reveal much about how the institutions of corporatism cope with economic and political volatility.

Secondly, the research took place against a backdrop of growing political activism by Irish citizens. Disillusionment with the ruling parties (Fianna Fáil/Green Party coalition) was evident in media, mass demonstrations, petitioning and other anti-government campaigns from 2008-2011. Citizens held government responsible for Ireland having to cede economic sovereignty in an EU-IMF loan in late 2010. Eventually, the question of how to tackle economic debt and public dissatisfaction fell to the democratic process. By February 2011 a general election had taken place. Election 2011 yielded the highest voter turnout and highest number of candidates in many years. At the time of writing, it remains to be seen whether this new coalition government will restore social partnership, reverse budget cuts or re-distribute the burden of public debt.

Whatever the outcome, the time is ripe for Ireland to learn from the experience of social partnership policy-making. As such, we are mindful of the potential of these research findings to inform government decision-making. Much can be learned from this study of how community engagement can lead to good governance. Ultimately, the message for Irish policy-makers and politicians is clear – empower individuals, inform politicians and formulate policies on the basis of need. The link

between citizen and policy becomes broken when institutions are not fit for purpose, when policy development is taken from civil society and given to bureaucrats, and when the influence of electoral politics is disregarded. Keeping the citizen-policy relationship central, this research makes three core conclusions.

7.2 Conclusions

7.2.1 Member organisations of the Community and Voluntary Pillar use a range of strategies

The Civil Society Organisations that participated in this study were open and transparent about their strategies. The discourses and strategies used by CSOs are sophisticated and multi-faceted. Some organisations use equality, others gender, social justice or anti-poverty platforms in campaigning on behalf of their constituents. Other organisations use mainstreaming or life cycle frameworks. Civil Society Organisations align issues with suitable strategies in order to produce maximum impact. CVP organisations advocate on behalf of their grass-roots membership, but also engage in collective action through alliances with other member organisations of the pillar. The quality of democratic deliberation within the pillar is affected by the institutional structure of social partnership and by external events such as recession and change of political leadership (i.e. either of Taoiseach or government).

7.2.2 Social partnership is limited as an institution for policy change

While acknowledging that both the life cycle and the DWS were devised through a partnership process, the research finds social partnership to be a limiting factor when it comes to completion. The research identifies social partnership in Ireland as a system of permissive voluntarism. This type of corporatist arrangement is unlikely to lead to substantial policy gains for groups vulnerable to deprivation. Lack of political commitment and administrative reform hampers the implementation of the life cycle approach. Thus far, a partnership approach has not succeeded in integrating 'income,' 'services' and 'activist measures.' Services are not delivered in a person-centred way. The research finds no evidence of re-alignment of government departments to reflect a life cycle approach.

7.2.3 Political institutions sustain policy development

The Developmental Welfare State, as a model for social welfare reform, is not fully embedded in the political institutions of the state. The onset of recession from 2008 has shown that parliamentary bodies, public legitimacy and electoral incentives sustain policy development. Significant reform such as the DWS needs to be supported in a range of political institutions, beyond the institutions of social partnership.

7.3 Implications of the Findings and Suggestions for Further Research

7.3.1 The range of strategies used by CVP members is an asset for good governance

The level of contentious debate present within the CVP could represent a significant asset. The diversity of approaches used by CVP members is a product of years of engagement in social partnership. Much capacity has been built up in these organisations during that period. This finding reflects international evidence that 'contentious politics' is necessary for citizen action to lead to policy change. This is especially the case where the change in question will support previously disadvantaged groups (Gaventa and McGee, 2010: 11). The dual role of CSOs as social partners

and political campaigners potentially enhances their capacity to represent the interests of vulnerable people. Community engagement is important in social policy planning, regardless of whether social partnership or other decision-making mechanisms are used. It was beyond the scope of this research to investigate the strategies used by other social partners. Future research might consider using a similar study design to investigate how the union, environmental or employer pillars of corporatism mobilise on behalf of their constituents.

7.3.2 The potential of political institutions to compensate for the limitations of social partnership

It is internationally recognised that the task of building state systems to challenge social inequality is difficult. Civic engagement is increasingly recognised as having an important role. Who gets to participate and how depends on institutional arrangements. This research identifies the limits of social partnership as an institution of reform. Nevertheless, the research has identified the state as a key actor in the re-distribution of resources. Civil Society Organisations play an important role as 'intermediate institutions' that link the state and the citizen. The activity of CSOs is a barometer for the needs of citizens generally. Future research into the role of institutions in producing policy change should include as broad as possible a range of political institutions in the research design.

7.3.3 Policy change occurs within a political system

International evidence suggests that policy change happens within the political system. In the case of Ireland's DWS, this research found that when policy reform is not embedded in the broader political system, fragmentation can occur. Policy change does not happen in some esoteric space called 'civil society.' Neither can the state provide the conditions to challenge its own practices. Policy change occurs when there is change within the state itself, in society as a whole, and where state and society interface (Fowler, 2008; Gaventa and McGee, 2010: 10). In a democratic system, for ambitious reform plans to be successful, they must build on existing values in the population. New policy approaches should be designed to work with rather than against the pre-existing framework. It was beyond the scope of this research to fully investigate the potential of a life cycle approach to complement anti-poverty, gender, race or other rights-based agendas. However, the following example of gender equality across the life course is used to illustrate the potential of this approach in making the case for policy reform.

7.4 A Life Cycle Vignette: Gender Equality Across the Life Course

Gender equality across the life course

- UN commitments (the girl child)
- Equal access to education
- Equal rights in marriage
- Maternity benefits which facilitate continued participation in the labour force extremely important given move towards individualisation of risk.
- Rights and obligations of fathers
- Individualisation of tax and social welfare so that marriage not an indicator of access to benefits or resources.

If an integrated life cycle approach was taken in all policy-making, equality for women would be a concern throughout the life course. A clear benchmark for gender equality policy, such as UN Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, would be used as a frame of reference for national policy-makers. Starting with the girl child, policy-makers would ensure that policies build in social protection for women for specific vulnerabilities at each life cycle stage. For girl children, gender equality in education is an important building block for future independence. For women, the child-bearing years are a particularly vulnerable time, so equal employment rights, full maternity leave, and rights and obligations of fathers all contribute to whether a woman can maintain her independence. Access to equal employment rights has important repercussions for women's income in later life. Women who engage in informal care or work in the home for long periods of time are not well positioned to benefit from an old age pension.

Policy-makers need to establish what institutional changes are necessary to produce these changes. The most pragmatic approach would be to build a life course approach into existing equality legislation and policy-making. While this vignette represents an ideal type, the steps to completing the DWS can be broken down into six primary recommendations emerging from this research.

7.5 Recommendations

The above findings and implications relate to six priority recommendations, explained in the full report, and summarised as follows:

1. **Diverse skills of Civil Society Organisations should be used as a resource for policy-making**

One legacy of social partnership is a co-ordinated and influential CVP. The skills of these 17 organisations should be harnessed to build capacity in the many Civil Society Organisations working outside social partnership structures.

2. **Make the necessary institutional changes to realise the DWS**

A clear national strategy for implementing a life cycle approach should be developed. This strategy would include targets, frameworks and a well resourced ministerial office for each life cycle stage. Evidence of best practice - showcased throughout this report concerning strategic planning and integrated governance - offers a template on which to base future structural evaluations. For example, the disability sector strategy and governance framework could be used as a template for other life cycle stages.

3. **Community engagement should be used as a key resource in policy development**

Reform of the welfare state must shift from being a concern of technocrats and policy analysts to become a concern of the broader public. Plans need to be ambitious in order for reform to be relevant, meaningful and inclusive. The media, universities and private corporations should all contribute to a national debate on major policy reform. Government should consider innovations in democratic governance such as participatory budgeting, policy labs and citizens' juries in developing policy proposals. Such institutions should build on, rather than replace, existing work.

4. **Policy must be made with politicians**

Plans for reform of the welfare state must outline clear roles for parliamentary committees, election campaigning and direct lobbying of politicians at national and local level.

5. **Use a life course approach in social policy planning**

In the coming decades, demographic ageing and the individualisation of risk could lead to inter-generational conflict in competing for resources. An inter-generational/life course perspective to political participation and policy planning should be developed to minimise the potential for conflict between life cycle stages. Awareness of critical transition points across the life course should allow policies to be designed so that group and life cycle identities are equally significant. For example, the National Positive Ageing Strategy would be gender proofed and the National Women's Strategy would be cognisant of the vulnerability of older women. A case in point is the lack of pension provision and adequacy for today's generation of older women.

6. **Use international benchmarks in planning for vulnerable groups**

Policy-makers should be mindful when using policy leadership from international organisations such as the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the United Nations (UN). For instance, the economic concerns of OECD recommendations may undermine the rights approach used in international covenants on human rights for women, children and people with disabilities. Policy-makers should use UN rights frameworks as minimum standards in developing policy at national level. Government and policy-makers should draw on expertise available in the NGO and university sectors in developing policies to international standards.

8. Appendices

Appendix 1: Copy of letter and research rationale

Appendix 2: Table A2.1 Participation in sessions

Appendix 3: Guidelines for facilitators

Appendix 4: Institutions, agencies and framework for people with disabilities

Appendix 5: Table A5.1 Institutions, agencies and framework for children's stage

Appendix 1: Copy of letter and research rationale

October 20, 2009

Dear XXXX,

RE: Life cycle Research

Thank you for taking part in the Life cycle Research Project. The project is being led by the Irish Centre for Social Gerontology with support from colleagues in the Child and Family Research Centre and the Centre for Disability, Law and Policy at NUI Galway. The purpose of the study is to explore the value of the life cycle approach as articulated within the social partnership process, in enhancing the well-being of vulnerable groups over the life course. We are seeking participation of member organisations of the community and voluntary pillar as follows:

- ♦ *An initial meeting to demonstrate the research methods (Nov 20th)*
This session will demonstrate the methods used, introduce the project team and give you a fuller explanation of the focus of the research.
- ♦ *Dedicated sessions for a particular life cycle stage (Jan 2010)*
Sessions will be organised around the life cycle stages and each organisation will be invited to take part in any session which they feel is relevant to them.
- ♦ *A final meeting to de-brief and review results (TBC)*
This final session is designed for participants to review the experience of taking part and reflect on conclusions drawn from the research.

I would like to invite you to the first of these meetings at the **Catherine MacAuley Centre, Baggot Street, Dublin on Friday November 20, 2009 from 2pm – 5pm**. The purpose of the meeting is to demonstrate the methods used and to give an overview of the focus of the research. All member organisations of the community and voluntary pillar have been invited to this meeting. Please find enclosed an agenda for the afternoon and a brief note outlining the ethics and rationale for the research. You will also find an updated participant information sheet together with a consent form for your signature. I would be grateful if you could sign the consent form and bring it along with you on the day.

Our funding requires that the research findings be published in report form by November 2010. Your participation will make a valuable contribution to the study and your views will be reflected in the report. To confirm attendance on November 20th, please contact ICSG at the following: icsg@nuigalway.ie or 091 495461.

Yours sincerely,

Gemma Carney

Information Note

Rationale for the project

This research project is funded by the Irish Research Council for the Humanities and Social Sciences (www.irchss.ie). The purpose of the study is to explore the value of the life cycle approach as articulated within the social partnership process, in enhancing the well-being of vulnerable groups over the life course. The reason we have approached the member organisations of the Community and Voluntary Pillar is that our work at NUI Galway seeks to develop a body of academic research on the social, political and economic life of disadvantaged groups across the life cycle. By engaging with organisations working on the frontline, we hope to produce a timely and relevant piece of research that may be of benefit to you and your organisation. To this end, we are using research methods which allow for co-design and analysis with member organisations of the Community and Voluntary Pillar. Each stage of the research process will be driven by participants' insights and suggestions. We are aware that the context for engagement in social partnership is challenging in the current economic climate. As such, we are keen that this research should be a positive piece of work, which will enhance the work of member organisations.

Research ethics

The project has been approved by the ethics committee at NUI Galway. This means that the highest standards of practice in academic research are used in gathering data, storing information and publishing findings. We are mindful that in proposing this research we are seeking to analyse difficult and often sensitive work. Please be assured that we have developed a clear and consistent means of coding all information gathered so that no individual or organisation is in any way identifiable. Only two members of the team have access to the interview transcripts, Áine Ní Léime and Gemma Carney.

Research personnel

Dr. Gemma Carney, as Principal Investigator, is leading the research team. Dr. Tony Dundon provides expertise in research methodologies; Dr. Áine Ní Léime conducted the initial interviews and will be working on the analysis of the data. Professor Eamon O'Shea is responsible for the policy aspect of the study. Camille Loftus joined the project team as research assistant at the ICSG on October 1st 2009.

Our commitment to members of the community and voluntary pillar

We have made a commitment to undertake a piece of research with the following provisos:

- that every organisation is given every possible opportunity to contribute to the research
- that every organisation/participant has the right to withdraw from the research at any point in the process
- that no individual or organisation will be identifiable in the research findings
- that where participants give permission to use quotations from interviews they will not be attributable to them
- that we will listen to and respect any concerns you or your organisation may have throughout the course of the research.

Appendix 2: Table A2.1 Participation in sessions

Table A2.1 Participation in sessions					
Type of engagement/ deliberation	Number of participants	Date	Purpose/topics covered	Feedback	
Individual interviews with CEOs/social partnership officers	17 CVP members	July-September, 2009	Background information/strategies/issues/attitude to life cycle/recession	Presentation at meeting with all pillar members on 16 December, 2009. Feeds into report	
Pilot group deliberation 1	5 post-grad students + 4 research team members	October, 2009	Testing running of deliberations – selecting methods of co-generating knowledge, timing, etc.	Team meeting to prepare for deliberations	
Pilot group deliberation 2	5 Economics Department members + 4 research team members	November, 2009	Testing methods (identifying, ranking, matrices) and questions	Team meeting to finalise approach	
Group deliberation (whole pillar)	17 CVP members + 6 research team members	17 December, 2009	1. Presentation of feedback from interviews: views on life cycle, impact of recession 2. Demonstration of research methods, co-generation of data on views on life cycle	Brief report sent to participants on 15 January, 2010	
Deliberation for cross-cutting groups 1 and 2	9 CVP + 5 research team members Group 1: 4 CVP + 2 research team members Group 2: 5 CVP + 2 research team members	1 February, 2010	Co-generation of data on the following themes: Choosing important policy issue in forthcoming budget Identifying strategies used Grouping strategies Ranking strategies/matrix of strategies and policy Select policy achieved through social partnership Identify institutional resources used	Participants’ feedback on these deliberations taken into account in design of subsequent group deliberation Report on deliberation sent to participants for their comments on 31 March, 2010	
Policy deliberation: Older people’s stage	5 CVP + 4 research team members	2 February, 2010	Co-generation of data: Identification and grouping of priority issues for older people Ranking of grouped issues Strategies used Impact of life cycle on strategies used Does the life cycle enhance/undermine inter-generational relationships?	Report on deliberation sent to participants for their comments on 31 March, 2010	

Table A2.1 Participation in sessions - continued

Type of engagement/ deliberation	Number of participants	Date	Purpose/topics covered	Feedback
Policy deliberation: Children's stage	2 CVP + 4 research team members	15 February, 2010	As above for Children's stage	Report on deliberation sent to participants for comments on 31 March, 2010
Policy deliberation: Disability stage	3 CVP + 3 research team members	16 February, 2010	As above for Disability stage	Report on deliberation sent to participants for comments on 31 March, 2010
Policy deliberation: People of working age stage	2 CVP + 3 research team members	18 February, 2010	As above for People of working age stage	Report on deliberation sent to participants for comments on 31 March, 2010

Appendix 3: Guidelines for facilitators

Guidelines for facilitators

QUESTION: *What are the strengths and limitations of using a life cycle approach in advancing the objectives of C&V Pillar members in social partnership?*

Part 1: Brainstorming

1. Ask the members of the group to brainstorm/reflect on the question individually for a few minutes – this is important as it means that everyone gets their thoughts on paper before discussion starts, minds are changed, etc.
2. As ideas occur to participants, they should write them on a Post-It – **only one idea per card** – and write clearly so that others can see everyone else's ideas.
3. You should aim to have as many Post-Its as possible. (It is also important for the analysis as it gives us more data).
4. When participants have finishing writing ideas, the facilitator should take each sheet in turn, and run through the ideas on the Post-Its – check that everyone understands what each one means, and seek clarification if necessary. (Facilitators may prefer to put the sheet on a stand for this).
5. Draw participants into a discussion of the ideas recorded. Your aim is for the note-taker to be able to record the thoughts of the group about their own and others' ideas.
6. Take a photo of each of the flip charts at this stage.

Part 2: Card Sort

1. Starting with either strengths or limitations, ask the participants – do any of these belong together? The idea is to group the ideas into common categories, though some ideas will be 'stand-alone', distinct from the others. The facilitator should do the physical moving of Post-Its (it may be easier to put the sheet on a stand for this).
2. The facilitator should check with the participants why they are putting ideas together (this may generate useful research data), making sure that there is consensus among the group, and that the note-taker has an opportunity to record the reasons.
3. When participants have sorted the ideas into groups, ask them to suggest a title for each group. Check with participants that the titles of groups have a meaning genuinely shared by everyone. The facilitator should write this title on own colour-coded post-its.
4. Again, ask participants to give the reason for this group title, which can be recorded on the Post-It by the facilitator and communicated to the note taker. Give the note-taker enough time to record this before moving on.
5. At this stage each sheet should have a list of group titles running vertically down the left hand side, with the ideas that form part of the group arranged horizontally beside the name.
6. Take another photo of each of the flip charts at this stage.

Part 3: Direct Ranking

1. Take the 'group name' Post-Its from the previous sheet and arrange them neutrally (e.g. in a circle) on a new sheet. (Again, it may be preferable to put the sheet on a stand).
2. Ask participants to rank the group items from most to least important (i.e. in relation to the research question). It's easiest to ask them to identify the most important item first, then the least important, etc. Participants can rank items as equally important.
3. The facilitator should do the physical moving of Post-Its according to the group's request – and should check that this is a consensus view among the group.
4. Again try to get the reasons why people rank a certain Post-It by asking questions, e.g. So you all agree that Resources are most important? Why? What makes media training less important than you initially thought? Does everyone agree with that?' Again, give the note-taker time to record the decisions and reasons why issues are ranked in certain ways.
5. Check that the group is satisfied with the final ranking. Take another photo at this stage.
6. At the end of the session you should have a ranked list of strengths and limitations of the life cycle approach, with a number of reasons why issues are ranked in that order.

Appendix 4: Institutions, agencies and framework for people with disabilities

Table A4.3

	Services	Income	Cross-cutting
International Convention			UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities, Dec '06 (Ireland has signed but not ratified the Convention, and has not signed the Optional Protocol)
EU Regulation	Regulation [EC] No. 1107/2006 (to ensure that PWD have access without discrimination & assistance at airports & on board flights)		
Legislation	Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act, 2004 Employment Equality Act, 1998		Citizens' Information Act, 2007 Disability Act, 2005 Equal Status Act, 2000
Guidelines / Regulations	Review of medical assessment system for social welfare payments		
Government Department	Department of Communications, Marine & Natural Resources Department of Enterprise, Trade & Employment Department of Environment, Heritage & Local Government Department of Health & Children Department of Transport	Department of Social & Family Affairs	
State Agency/ Authority	Bus Éireann Commission for Aviation Regulation	Revenue Commissioners	Comhairle

Table A4.3 -continued

	Services	Income	Cross-cutting
State Agency/ Authority	Commission for Taxi Regulation Bus Átha Cliath Equality Authority Equality Tribunal FÁS Health Information & Quality Authority Health Service Executive Iarnrod Éireann Local Employment Service National Access Office (within the HEA) National Disability Authority National Parks and Wildlife Service National Roads Authority Office of Public Works Ombudsman Railway Procurement Agency Social Services Inspectorate (SSI)		
Organisational Unit	Social Inclusion Measures Group of County Development Boards Social Inclusion Units of Local Authorities		
Private Company	Veolia Transport		
Consultative Group	Consultative Forum on the Employment Strategy (for PWD) Housing Forum National Group under the aegis of the Housing Forum		Community & Voluntary Fora (at local authority level)

Table A4.3 -continued

	Services	Income	Cross-cutting
Strategy	<p>Comprehensive Employment Strategy for People with Disabilities (TBD)</p> <p>FÁS Vocational Training Strategy</p> <p>National Carers' Strategy</p> <p>National Health Information Strategy</p> <p>National Housing Strategy for People with Disabilities (TBD)</p>		National Disability Strategy
Plan	<p>Sectoral Plan: D/ Communications, Marine & Natural Resources</p> <p>Sectoral Plan: D/Enterprise, Trade & Employment</p> <p>Sectoral Plan: D/ Environment, Heritage & Local Government</p> <p>Sectoral Plan: D/Health & Children</p> <p>Sectoral Plan: D/Transport</p>	Sectoral Plan: D/Social & Family Affairs	<p>National Action Plan against Social Exclusion</p> <p>Programme for Government: Sustaining a Strong Economy, Building an Inclusive Society and Supporting Civil Life</p>
Framework (for delivery)	D/EHLG - Housing Policy Framework: Building Sustainable Communities (Dec '05)		Multi-Annual Investment Programme of close to €900m over the years 2006 to 2009
Guidelines/ Regulations	Code of Practice for Sheltered Workshops		
Policy Proofing			Cabinet Handbook to incorporate requirement that all substantive memoranda submitted to government take account of the impact on PWD
Target	3% minimum employment of PWD in public sector (Part 5 Disability Act)		

Table A4.3 -continued

	Services	Income	Cross-cutting
Programme	<p>Community Employment</p> <p>Development of programme of systematic labour market engagement with PWD (by 2013)</p> <p>Disability Access Route to Education (DARE)</p> <p>Disability Awareness Training Support Scheme</p> <p>Disabled Person's Grant Scheme</p> <p>Employee Retention Grant Scheme</p> <p>FÁS High Supports Process</p> <p>Job Interview Interpreter's Grant</p> <p>Personal Reader's Grant</p> <p>Supported Employment Programme</p> <p>Workplace Equipment/ Adaptation Grant (WE/AG)</p>	<p>Back to Work Allowance/ Enterprise Allowance</p> <p>Blind Pension</p> <p>Blind Welfare Allowance</p> <p>Carer's Allowance</p> <p>Carer's Benefit</p> <p>Disability Allowance</p> <p>Disablement Benefit (OI)</p> <p>Domiciliary Care Allowance</p> <p>Employer's PRSI Exemption Scheme</p> <p>Free Travel</p> <p>Fuel Allowance</p> <p>Fund for Students with a Disability (education access)</p> <p>Household Benefits (Free Schemes)</p> <p>Illness Benefit</p> <p>Incapacity Supplement (OI)</p> <p>Injury Benefit (OI)</p> <p>Invalidity Pension</p> <p>Mobility Allowance</p> <p>Revenue Job Assist</p>	
Programme		<p>Supplementary Welfare Allowance Supplements (Rent/Mortgage Interest, Dietary)</p> <p>Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme (VTOS)</p> <p>Wage Subsidy Scheme (WSS)</p>	

Table A4.3 -continued

	Services	Income	Cross-cutting
Reports/ Research/Data	NESC (2004) Report no.112. Housing in Ireland: Performance and Policy		<p>National Disability Survey</p> <p>Physical, Sensory and Intellectual Disability Databases</p> <p>A Strategy for Equality, Report of the Commission on the Status of People with Disabilities (1996)</p> <p>Disability and Work, The Picture We Learn From Official Statistics (Disability Research Series.</p> <p>Gannon B & Nolan B, ESRI (2005) Disability and Social Inclusion in Ireland, A Study for the Equality Authority and the National Disability Authority</p> <p>National Longitudinal Study of Children</p>

Appendix 5: Institutions, agencies and framework for children's stage

Table A5.1	
International Conventions	
1	Hague Convention on Protection of Children and Co-operation in Respect of Inter-country Adoption
2	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
EU Strategies	
3	Lisbon Agenda
4	Towards an EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child
Specific international targets mentioned	
5	WHO child immunisation target
6	Barcelona target on childcare
7	Lisbon target on early school leaving
Government Departments (as at time data gathered (2009-10))	
1	Department of Art, Sports & Tourism
2	Department of Education & Science
3	Department of Environment, Heritage & Local Government
4	Department of Health & Children
5	Department of Justice, Equality & Law Reform
6	Department of Social & Family Affairs
Executive Offices in Government Departments	
7	Child Protection Unit (hosted in NYCI)
8	Child Welfare and Protection Policy Unit (CWPPU) (under OMCYA)
9	Children's Services Development and International Unit (CSDIU) (under OMCYA)
10	Early Years Education Policy Unit (under D/E&S, co-located OMCYA)
11	Health Promotion Unit
12	Office for Social Inclusion
13	Office of the Minister for Children & Youth Affairs
State Agencies	
14	Adoption Authority of Ireland
15	Adoption Board
16	An Garda Síochána
17	Arts Council
18	Centre for Early Childhood Development & Education
19	Child Protection Social Work Services (under HSE)
20	Children's Act Advisory Board
21	Children's Court
22	Crisis Pregnancy Agency
23	Equality Authority
24	Family Support Agency
25	Health Information and Quality Authority
26	Health Research Board
27	Health Service Executive
28	High Support Units
29	Irish Social Services Inspectorate

State Agencies - continued	
30	Irish Sports Council
31	Irish Youth Justice Service (located in OMC)
32	Mental Health Commission
33	National Centre for Guidance in Education
34	National Centre for Technology in Education
35	National Council for Curriculum Assessment
36	National Disability Authority
37	National Educational Psychological Service
38	National Educational Welfare Board
39	Office of the Ombudsman for Children
40	Office of the Refugee Applications Commission
41	Probation Service (under D/JELR)
42	Residential Institutions Redress Board
43	Schools Inspectorate
44	Secondary Care Paediatric Services
45	Special Educational Support Service
46	Special Residential Services Board (coordinating mechanism under D/H&C)
47	Statutory Services
48	Youth Justice Service
<i>At local level:</i>	
49	City & County Childcare Committees
50	Local Sports Partnership (LSP)
51	Vocational Education Committees
52	Youth Information Centres
Advisory Institutions	
53	Children's Act Advisory Board
54	Expert Working Group: Review of Current Child Protection Guidelines is currently reviewing the existing child protection guidelines
55	National Advisory Committee on Drugs
56	National Childcare Co-ordinating Committee
57	National Children's Advisory Council
58	Youth & Adult Homeless Forums
Social Partnership Institutions/Groups	
59	National Economic and Social Council
60	National Economic and Social Forum
61	Technical Advisory Group for the Office of Social Inclusion
Youth Participation Forums	
62	Comhairle na nÓg (local youth councils)
63	Dáil na nÓg (national youth parliament)
64	OMCYA Children and Young People's Forum
65	Student Councils

Legislation	
1	Adoption Acts, 1952, 1964, 1974, 1976, 1988, 1991 and 1998
2	Child Care (Amendment) Act, 2007
3	Children's Act, 2001
4	Education Act, 1998
5	Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act
6	Maternity Protection (Amendment) Act, 2004
7	Maternity Protection Act, 1994
8	Mental Health Act, 2001
9	Youth Work Act, 2001
Strategies	
10	Health Strategy: Quality and Fairness – A Health System for You (
11	National Childcare Strategy
12	National Childcare Training Strategy
13	National Children's Strategy
14	National Data Strategy
15	National Spatial Strategy (NSS)
16	National Youth Justice Strategy
17	Traveller Education Strategy
18	Vision for Change
19	Youth Homelessness Strategy
Frameworks	
20	Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework
21	National Framework of Qualifications
22	Síolta (National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education)
Policies	
23	Health Promotion Policy
24	National Nutrition Policy
25	Ready, Steady, Play! A National Play Policy
26	Teenspace: National Recreation Policy for Young People
27	National Policy for Child Support
Plans	
28	Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS)
29	National Action Plan on Social Inclusion
30	National Development Plan
31	National Reform Programme (under EU Lisbon Agenda)
32	National Youth Work Development Plan
33	Workforce Development Plan for the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Sector
34	Agenda for Children's Services - national policy for all children's health and social services
Named targets	
35	Irish Sports Council
36	NAPS (income target)
Programmes / Initiatives / Projects / Funding schemes	
37	Broadband for Schools initiative
38	Buntús programme
39	Early Start Programme
40	Garda Juvenile Diversion Programme
41	Local Youth Club Grant Scheme

Programmes / Initiatives / Projects / Funding schemes - continued	
42	Mobhaile Project
43	National Childcare Investment Programme (NCIP) (& appropriate successor programmes)
44	National Childminding Initiative
45	National Youth Arts Programme
46	National Youth Health Programme
47	New School Support Programme
48	Parent and Toddler Group Initiative (under OMCYA)
49	Prevention and Early Intervention Programme for Children (under OMCYA)
50	Primary Curriculum Support Programme
51	Safer Routes to Schools scheme
52	School Building and Modernisation Programme
53	School Meals Programme
54	Special Projects to Assist Disadvantaged Youth
55	Springboard (under HSE)
56	Teen Parent Support Initiative
57	Teen Parents Support Project (under HSE)
58	The Young People's Facilities & Services Fund
59	Youth Advocacy Programmes (under HSE)
60	Youth Service Grant Scheme
61	Youthreach
Guidelines & Regulations	
62	Child Care (Pre School Services) Regulations 2006
63	Code of Good Practice Child Protection for the Youth Work Sector
64	Diversity & Equality Guidelines - childcare & early childhood education
65	National Childminding Guidelines
66	National Standards for Children's Residential Centres
67	National Standards for Foster Care
68	OMCYA Child Protection Policy
69	Quality Standards Framework Initiative for the youth work sector
70	Young Voices – How to involve children and young people in your work
Reports / Research / Data	
71	Government Discussion Paper: Proposals for Supporting Lone Parents
72	Concluding Observations by UNCRC on Ireland's Second Report
73	Developing School-Age Childcare (2005)
74	Development of a Framework for Action for the Inclusion of Children with Special Needs in Early Childhood Education Settings (D/E&S Research Series 2008-10)
75	Examining Pedagogy in Early Childhood (D/E&S Research Series 2008-10)
76	Health Behaviour in School-aged Children
77	Ireland's First Report to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (1996)
78	Ireland's Second Report to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (2005)
79	National Longitudinal Study of Children in Ireland (NLSCI)
80	National Set of Child Well-Being Indicators
81	NESC Research Paper no.6 (2007) 'Ireland's Child Income Supports: The Case for a New Form of Targeting'
82	Number of reports funded under OMCYA Children's Funded Research Programme
83	Report of the Expert Group on Children's Detention Schools
84	Report of the Working Group on Foster Care (2001) 'Foster Care: A Child-centred Partnership'
85	Report on the Youth Justice Review (2005)
86	State of the Nation's Children: Ireland 2008

Reports / Research / Data - continued

87	Survey on Income and Living Conditions (published by CSO)
88	Targeted Early Childhood Educational Provision within a Cluster of DEIS Settings (D/E&S Research Series 2008-10)
89	Task Force Report on Obesity

Monitoring mechanisms

1	General monitoring
2	European School Survey Project on Alcohol and other Drugs (ESPAD)
3	National Database (to be developed re trends of growth, overweight & obesity)
4	National Health and Lifestyle Surveys
5	Monitoring mechanisms in T16
6	Implementation Group chaired by OMC
7	Social Inclusion Report - single reporting mechanism to monitor and review progress at each stage of the life cycle in the context of T16, the NAP inclusion and social inclusion aspects of the NDP (2007-2013)
8	T16 Steering Group
9	Children's Committees in City and County Development Boards

Non-Governmental Organisations

1	Barnardos
2	Children's Rights Alliance
3	Comhair Naíonraí na Gaeltachta Teoranta
4	End Child Poverty Coalition
5	National Youth Council of Ireland
6	National Women's Council of Ireland
7	Society of St. Vincent de Paul

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