DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE THROUGH

INTERMEDIARY BODIES:

A CASE STUDY OF

THIRD SECTOR INTERFACES IN SCOTLAND

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Abstract

This research focuses on third sector interfaces (TSIs) as a site through which to examine the relationship between the third sector and the state in Scotland. The TSI model was instituted by the Scottish Government in 2011 in each of Scotland's 32 local authorities with a remit to build sector capacity, support volunteerism, encourage social enterprise, and represent the sector in community planning. Through its participation in state-initiated local governance networks, like Community Planning Partnerships, the sector has a prominence that was unthinkable just twenty years ago.

This research study explores the impact of a TSI's participation in state-initiated local governance networks, focusing on the TSI's independence from the state and its representation of the sector. Using a qualitative interpretivist approach, 44 semi-structured interviews were conducted (13 with national stakeholders, 19 with local stakeholders, and 12 with TSI staff) and 16 local governance meetings observed. A large urban TSI was selected for the case study.

Four key themes emerged from an iterative thematic analysis. One, that local governance sits within a space, literal and figurative, where representative and participatory democracy meet. Through its participation, the TSI is brought closer to the state implicating it in statutory decision making. Two, the TSI model is an example of a "civil servant construct" channelling the sector's participation in local governance networks through structures that mirror state priorities, compromising the independence of the TSI and complicating its representation role. Three, the TSI's closeness to the state creates distrust within the third sector which in turn weakens its legitimacy in representing the sector. Four, local governance spaces embody a culture of "managed talk" compromising the TSI's ability to be activist and shaping its participation through a state logic.

The study suggests that there is an impact on both the TSI's independence from the state and the ways in which it represents the third sector. The current state approach to engaging the third sector risks "manufacturing civil society" (Brandsen, et al., 2014) where the sector becomes a reflection of the state rather than an expression of civil society. Recommendations from the study include the need for democratic governance spaces to be shaped collaboratively by the state and civil society, the state to reconsider its instrumental approach to the third sector, the third sector to assert its independence, and intermediary bodies to act as *facilitators* rather than *representatives*.

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Author's declaration

I declare that, except where explicit reference is made to the contribution of others, that this dissertation is the result of my own work and has not been submitted for any other degree at the University of Glasgow or any other institution.

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Abbreviations

CPP   Community Planning Partnership

COSLA   Convention of Scottish Local Authorities

CVS   Council for Voluntary Services

IJB   Integration Joint Board

MSP   Member of Scottish Parliament

NPG   New Public Governance

NPM   New Public Management

PSP   Public Social Partnership

SCVO   Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations

SNP   Scottish National Party

TSI   Third Sector Interface

VAS   Voluntary Action Scotland

1 Introduction

This research explores the relationship between the third sector and the state in Scotland. In broad terms, the third sector refers to charities, non-profits, community organisations and social enterprises. The study focuses on third sector interfaces (TSIs) as a site through which to examine the third sector-state relationship. TSIs are organisations that support and represent the third sector in each of Scotland's 32 local authorities, and are an example of an intermediary body. The TSI model was instituted by the Scottish Government in 2011 with a four-fold remit to: build capacity, support volunteerism, encourage social enterprise, and represent the third sector in local Community Planning Partnerships (CPPs) (Scottish Government, 2016). CPPs are an example of a state-initiated governance network that brings together state and non-state actors to work collaboratively on local issues. Governance through networks is a defining characteristic of new public governance, the public administration regime that emerged at the beginning of this century and continues to the present day (Davies, 2011; Osborne, 2010).

Research on the relationship between the third sector and the state has focused on whether the sector's active role as a delivery vehicle for the state has compromised its independence (Billis and Harris, 1996; Brandsen et al., 2014; de Corte and Verschuere, 2014; Egdell and Dutton, 2017; Kelly, 2007; Lewis, 2005; Milbourne and Murray, 2017; Osborne, 2000; Papadopoulos, 2013; Pestoff, 2009; Smith and Smyth, 2010). Of lessor focus, but of increasing significance, is the question of whether the sector's independence is compromised by its active role as a partner in governance networks (Craig et al., 2004; Lewis, 2005; Kelly, 2007; Rochester, 2012, 2013), such as Scotland's CPPs. Research on representation has focused on the participation of citizens and communities in governance networks (Brandsen et al., 2014; de Corte and Verschuere, 2014; Gaventa, 2004; Taylor, 2004a, 2011), with limited empirical work on the implications for intermediary bodies. My research explores the sector's involvement in governance networks through the TSIs and considers the impact on issues of third sector independence and representation.

This thesis is positioned within the broad frame of reflexive modernity which posits that the relationship between citizens and the state has changed fundamentally, with expectations of involvement in decision-making (Beck et al., 1994). The shift in this relationship has led to the rise of democratic governance, involving civil society in areas that were previously the exclusive domain of the state. It is now increasingly common for, and accepted that, participatory democracy will complement representative democracy.

Reflecting this shift, there have been changes in public administration regimes, referred to as the move from '*government* to *governance*' (Rhodes, 1996, p.658). Across the UK, new public governance is now the dominant form of administration, utilising networks of state and non-state actors to work collaboratively to address society's 'wicked issues'[1]. These networks at the local level are described as local governance networks. Specifically, these are *state-initiated* governance networks; they are established by the state and invite non-state actors in. Governance networks can also be initiated beyond and without the state.

The purpose of this introductory chapter is to provide an overview of the theoretical and political context, identify the key concepts employed, outline the gaps in the research, identify my personal connection to the field, and present the research questions. In section 1.1 I provide the context within which this research is situated, drawing on reflexive modernity as a key theory to help describe fundamental changes in how society is ordered. Section 1.2 is an introduction to the relationship between the third sector and the state, and describes the third sector in Scotland. Section 1.3 provides an overview of community planning in Scotland. Section 1.4 explores the concept of representation and the issues that are associated with intermediary bodies that speak on behalf of the third sector in governance networks. Section 1.5 explores the concept of independence in relation to the third sector's relationship with the state. Section 1.6 identifies my personal connection to the research, highlights the research gap, and presents the research question, aims, and objectives. The final section, 1.7, details the structure of the PhD, providing a brief overview of each chapter and highlighting its contribution.

1.1 Reflexive modernity

My starting point is the theory of reflexive modernity which contextualises the social and political environment in which the research is located. Reflexive modernity posits that we are in a new stage of modernity in which we, as reflexive citizens have a different relationship to the traditional institutions of society. Reflexive modernity has given rise to fundamental societal changes. The theory of reflexive modernity is associated with three post-traditional sociologists: Anthony Giddens, Ulrich Beck and Scott Lash. The reflexive modernity thesis presented an alternative to the modernity versus post-modernity debate which they describe as "wearisome" and producing little (Beck et al., 1994, vi). While they have differences in interpretation, their common thesis is that we are in a new stage of

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[1] In the context of public administration, Flinders describes 'wicked issues' as "persistent and intractable, mainly social, problems which reach across departmental boundaries" (2008, p.23).

modernity, one in which society has moved away from focusing on redistribution to managing risk. Traditional institutions are less significant, the role of the state is no longer central, and the influence of multinationals is extensive. Accompanying this shift is a move away from collective solidarity to individualism, as well as a decline in party identification and interest in traditional politics.

The move away from traditional politics does not, however, mean a decline in political interest or activism. Rather, individuals and organisations are engaged in politics in different often more direct ways. Giddens (1994) uses the concept of 'life politics' to describe the new way in which people live in this period of modernity: "Life politics, and the disputes and struggles connected with it, are about how we should live in a world where everything that used to be natural (or traditional) now has in some sense to be chosen, or decided about" (p.70). Beck (Beck et al., 1994) uses the concept of 'sub-politics' to describe a new form of politics which means "shaping society from below" (p.23). He states, "In the wake of sub-politicization, there are growing opportunities to have a voice and a share in the arrangement of society for groups hitherto uninvolved in the substantive technification and industrialisation process" (Beck et al., 1994. p.23).

Accompanying reflexive modernity is increased democratisation. There is a stronger role for individuals to directly influence society; institutions have changed, are more open and are seeking broader engagement in governance. In this evolution of modernity there is a different notion of the role of the state and its relationship with society. This changing conception positions the third sector and civil society into a closer relationship with the state. The democratisation of risk and relationships opens up a space in which different players (including the third sector) can shape the agenda, but brings with it the potential for individualising risk and shifting the focus away from identifying systemic causes. The following section provides a brief overview of the third sector and its relationship with the state.

1.2 The third sector and the state

The term "the third sector" was coined in 1973 and posits an alternative to the duality of the traditional two-sector model of the market (first sector) and the state (second) (Etzioni, 1973, p.315). There is extensive debate about the role of the third sector in society (Alcock and Kendall, 2011; Brandsen, van de Donk and Putters, 2007; Carmel and Harlock, 2008; Salamon and Anheier, 1997) and what constitutes the third sector, with a

particular focus on organisations that occupy the blurred space between the sector and the state (Billis, 2010). The idea of a third sector is, indeed, contested (6 and Leat, 1997; Alcock, 2010; Macmillan, 2012). For the purpose of this thesis I draw on Taylor's (1992, p.171) comprehensive description, which, while dated, largely still captures both the ethos and the characteristics of the sector in the present day:

> Self-governing associations of people who have joined together to take action for public benefit. They are not created by statute, or established for financial gain. They are founded on voluntary effort, but may employ paid staff and may have income from statutory sources. Some, by no means all, are charities. They address a wide range of issues through direct service, advocacy, self-help and mutual aid and campaigning.

This is the definition I employ with a modification that reflects the development of social enterprises; accordingly, associations may be established for financial gain where the profits are reinvested in the enterprise.

In the UK, the election of New Labour in 1997 heralded a flourishing of the sector, driven by former Prime Minister Tony Blair's Third Way approach (Blair, 1998), although significant public service provision was already taking place within the third sector (Alcock, 2012). Scholars have argued that the intense focus on the sector during this period and investment in support, both financial and in the machinery of government, actually resulted in the idea of a third sector as a decontested territory (Alcock and Kendall, 2011). Others go further, arguing that the mechanisms put in place to enable a Third Way reshaped the third sector into market driven providers of services that utilised the sector for purely instrumental purposes (Carmel and Harlock, 2008), though this perspective has been critiqued as too reductionist (Alcock and Kendall, 2011). In addition to bolstering the third sector as a provider of public services, the Third Way approach aimed to harness the potential of the third sector in fostering civic renewal. These two purposes were, however, oppositional as one aimed to bring the third sector closer to the state, the other to highlight the sector's independence and unique position in relation to communities (Paxton and Pearce, 2005).

In the Scottish context, the early years of devolution saw a similar trajectory in the state-third sector relationship to that in England, with the creation of a distinct government department, investment in the sector, and the signing of a Compact (Alcock, 2012). Scotland's first two devolution governments were coalitions between Labour and the Liberal Democrats, and reflected a New Labour hue, particularly in relation to partnership

working. Public services, however, largely remained in state hands; it is argued that this difference is attributable to fundamentally different attitudes in Scotland towards state provision of services (Alcock, 2012; Maxwell, 2007). Shifts in the relationship with the third sector began with the election of the SNP in 2007 and the influential *Commission into the Future of Public Services* (Christie Commission, 2011). The development of the TSI model is an example of the Scottish National Party's (SNP) approach to strengthening the role of the third sector.

1.2.1 The third sector in Scotland

Scotland's national membership-based intermediary body, the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO) describes the sector as ranging from "small local grassroots community groups, arts and sports clubs, pre-school day care and village halls, to culture and arts venues, all major housing, health and social care providers" (SCVO, 2018, p.3). SCVO produces comprehensive annual statistics about the sector, and all the information provided in this section is taken from their most recent *State of the Sector Report 2018* (SCVO, 2018). They define third sector organisations as "values-driven organisations working to achieve social or environmental goals. They are non-profit driven, non-statutory, autonomous and are run by individuals who do not get paid for running the organisation" (p.20). Faith organisations, universities, private school and quangos are not considered third sector organisations and are excluded from their statistics.

Scotland's sector has an estimated 40,000 voluntary organisations, 19,965 of which are charities regulated by the Office of Scottish Charity Regulator. There are an estimated 20,000 community groups and 5,600 social enterprises of which 4,200 are also registered charities. In 2017 the annual income of charities was £5.8 billion and the spend was £5.5 billion; in 2014 charities held assets of £16 billion. The third sector in Scotland contributes more to the economy than the £3.3 billion whisky industry. In 2017, charities employed 106,700 employees, representing 3.4% of Scottish workers. The sector is predominantly female (71%) and almost one third work part-time. There are currently an estimated 1.4 million volunteers across the sector. Charities with income over £1 million account for only 3.7% of the sector but represent 81% of the annual income. Small charities make up more than half of the sector but account for only 1.6% of the income overall. SCVO characterises income as earned or voluntary; earned income accounts for 66% of the sector funds, 34% is voluntary. Between 2016-2017 the sector's income grew by 2.5%, representing £140 million.

The next section outlines community planning in Scotland.

1.3 Community planning in Scotland

While the origins of community planning can be traced to the UK Labour Party, its evolution in Scotland highlights a distinctive approach to that taken in England. The involvement of third sector in community planning has grown in Scotland in contrast to that in England where there has been an increasing focus on marketisation (Milbourne and Murray, 2017). This section provides an overview of community planning in Scotland, exploring the involvement of the third sector in community planning and the development of the TSI model by the Scottish Government.

1.3.1 The origins of community planning

Community planning as an approach was first introduced by the UK Labour Party, while in opposition, at the *Renewing Democracy Rebuilding Communities Conference* in 1995 (Campbell, 2015). The thrust of the party's platform was the modernising of local government with greater power and decision making invested at the local level. Marking a fundamental shift from the Conservative approach, communities became policy actors rather than passive consumers (Osborne, 2000). The initial 15 pilots in Labour constituencies across England and Scotland set the stage for a seismic shift in local government planning, cemented by the Labour Party's UK electoral success in 1997. This shift is reflective of the reflexive modernity thesis, providing a vehicle for engaging non-state actors into local governance, enabling communities to be active rather than passive participants in the society.

Scotland's experiment with community planning differed from the approach taken in England. While the pilots in England used existing local authority strategies as a starting point and then circulated them to stakeholders for input, in Scotland the local authorities developed partnerships from the outset (Rogers et al., 2000). Building on the initial pilots, five Pathfinder Projects were trialled in local authorities across Scotland between 1998-1999. In these early days Scotland was credited with taking the lead on CP in the UK (Rogers et al., 2000). The *Local Government in Scotland Act 2003* was the central piece of legislation enshrining community planning into local governance practices. The *Act* clearly set out the council's leadership role in initiating and maintaining a community planning process to plan and implement public services; it also identified a number of public sector partners as having a duty to participate. The subsequent guidance (Scottish

Executive, 2004) was generally non-prescriptive about how community planning was to be undertaken; for example, the role of community is highlighted as requiring engagement not just consultation. Community planning aims that still hold today are (Scottish Executive, 2004, p.1):

> Making sure people and communities are genuinely engaged in the decisions made on public services which affect them; allied to

> A commitment from organisations to work together, not apart, in providing better public services.

These aims are guided by two key principles:

> Community Planning as the key over-arching partnership framework helping to co-ordinate other initiatives and partnerships and where necessary acting to rationalise and simplify a cluttered landscape.

> The ability of Community Planning to improve the connection between national priorities and those at regional, local and neighbourhood levels.

The belief in community planning is illustrated by a Member of Scottish Parliament's (MSP) pronouncement that community planning is the, "holy grail of community participation because it's the best way to deliver public services" (Cowell, 2004, p.505).

Community planning has been supported across the political divide. The first two devolution governments (1999-2003 and 2003-2007), were Labour and Liberal Democrat coalitions. Since 2007, there have been three SNP governments (a minority in 2007-2011; majority in 2011-2016; and a minority from 2016 to the present day). Since coming to power in 2007, the SNP has prioritised community planning. In 2007 a *Concordat* between local and national government aimed to create a new relationship between the two levels of government, based on trust and mutual respect (Scottish Government, 2007). Community planning was central to this relationship, and the Single Outcome Agreement (SOA) was introduced as the means through which local planning was to be coordinated through the Scottish Government.

The next major milestone in the journey of community planning was the *Commission on the Future of Public Services* in 2011 identifying four pillars of public service reform, namely prevention, partnership, people and performance (Christie Commission, 2011). The Christie Commission report was a profoundly important and influential document,

crystallising the public service reform agenda. The Commission sent a clear message that public services were not sustainable and that change was needed. While the context was one of austerity, a democratic agenda fuelled the call for the more active engagement of citizens and communities. CPPs were seen as the key vehicle for delivering on the ambitions of the Christie Commission (Audit Scotland, 2016a). The Commission called for a revamped statement on the relationship between local and Scottish Government, along with a clear plan about how CPPs would achieve local service integration with the engagement of communities. The Christie Commission shifted the focus from the public *sector* to public *service*, highlighting the important role of the third sector in supporting the reform agenda (Scottish Government, 2016).

This precipitated the *Review of Community Planning and Single Outcome Agreements - Statement of Ambition* released by the Scottish Government and COSLA in March 2012 (Scottish Government, 2012). The review highlighted the central the role of CPPs in addressing the recommendations from the Christie Commission to improve outcomes; reduce inequalities; and focus on prevention, community engagement, and public service reform (Audit Scotland, 2016a). The review called for a renewal of the community planning infrastructure, more effective integration and collaboration, and the development and sustaining of effective local level arrangements (Scottish Government, 2012). CPPs were central to public service reform; the opening line of the *Statement of Ambition* stated, "Effective community planning arrangements will be at the core of public service reform" (Scottish Government, 2012, p.1). The *Statement* specifically required CPPs to involve non-state actors including the third sector.

A subsequent follow up letter to the CPPs referenced two statutory measures to increase accountability and compliance in partnership working – one on public sector partners, the other on the CPP; these measures essentially stated that working through community planning and the SOA was mandatory (Davidson and Mair, 2012). The letter also identified the creation of a National Community Planning Group and highlighted a new "scrutiny regime" as "a key element to building the capacity and effectiveness of CPPs" (Davidson and Mair, 2012, p.4). Subsequent guidance in December 2012 linked the work of the CPPs directly to six broad national priority areas (Scottish Government, 2012a). The enactment of statutory duties and other measures were a top-down approach which raised questions about the culture of trust and mutual respect that the *Concordat* had championed.

The most recent legislation, the *Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015,* further strengthens the role and responsibility of CPPs, making them a legal requirement and introducing a statutory purpose of improving outcomes and tackling inequalities. SOAs have been replaced by Local Outcome Improvement Plans (LOIPS) and Locality Plans for areas experiencing deprivation. The *Act* extends statutory duties of participation strengthening the role of communities; CPPs are required to actively identify and include community bodies. In particular the bill gives communities the right to file *participation requests,* identifying their interest in working alongside statutory stakeholders; CPPs are required to respond to and report on their decisions. In addition to the community planning provisions, the *Act* extends community right to buy land in urban areas, gives communities the right to request the transfer of public assets, and requires public authorities to engage in participatory budgeting with citizens. The TSIs are not specifically referenced in the *Community Empowerment Act (2015)*, rather the *Act* uses the broad term "community bodies" (Community Empowerment Act, c.4). TSIs, however, cannot have statutory duties placed on them as they are not statutory bodies, rather they are independent entities.

Since its original implementation there have been four Audit Scotland reviews of community planning (2006, 2013, 2014, 2016a). In general, these reports have been highly critical, identifying little evidence of success, poor engagement with communities, slow progress in tackling inequalities, and frustration that partnership working has not been more integrated. Recommendations focus on the need for a small number of strategic priorities, the streamlining of Scottish Government requirements, clearer functioning within the CPP partners, sustained community engagement, and better performance management. The headline statement on Audit Scotland's website relating to the 2016 report read "Progress on community planning has not yet achieved the major change needed to fulfil its potential to reduce inequalities and put communities at the heart of delivering public services" (Audit Scotland, 2016b).

The Scottish Government continues to develop its agenda of democratic governance beyond community planning; it recently established a Citizens' Assembly on the future of Scotland (Scottish Government, 2019a). In 2018 the Government, along with the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA), an organisation representing local authorities in Scotland, launched the *Local Governance Review* (LGR).[2] The LGR is an

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[2] I participated in the *Scottish Graduate School of Social Science Internship Programme* from October to December 2018. I worked on the LGR where my responsibilities included compiling, analysing and reporting on the responses from the consultation process. During this time, I suspended my PhD studies.

exercise designed to devolve power to the local level, to "ensure Scotland's diverse communities and different places have greater control and influence over decisions that affect them most" (Scottish Government, 2019b). The purpose of the review is to look at power-sharing and responsibilities across levels of government and with communities. The report on the initial community-based consultation, branded *Democracy Matters*, suggests that people do want more control over the decisions that affect them (Scottish Government, 2019). This work is ongoing.

1.3.2 The third sector and community planning

In the early days of community planning, the third sector was a marginal player. In the initial Pathfinder Projects, none of the pilot projects had third sector representation, leading the evaluators to recommend that future CPPs needed to involve the sector from the outset (Rogers et al., 2000). In the key documents referred to in the previous section, references to the sector are general and non-prescriptive. For example, the Statutory Guidance to the *Local Government in Scotland Act* makes a general reference to "consulting and co-operating with community and voluntary organisations, whether delivering services or representing a specific area or interest..." (Scottish Executive, 2004, p.8). Follow up guidance from the Community Planning Task Force and the initial Audit Scotland Review simply flagged the voluntary sector as an important partner, along with the private sector.

In 2007 the SNP formed a minority government; this change in administration heralded a new approach to working with the third sector. In 2008 the Scottish Government created the Third Sector Task Group with high level representatives from across Scotland and a remit to improve sector coordination. Community planning was clearly a driving force behind the task group; a stated goal was that the "task group will improve and enhance the engagement" of the third sector in CPPs (SCVO, 2008). In 2009 a *Joint Statement on the Relationship at Local Level Between Government and the Third Sector* was released, fashioned on the 2007 *Concordat* and signed by the Scottish Government, the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE), COSLA and the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO) (Scottish Government, 2009). While the *Statement* focuses primarily on the technicalities of contracting, it identifies the sector's critical role in partnerships and specifically identifies the role of TSIs in CPPs (Scottish Government, 2009). The *Concordat* is reflective of the Scottish Government's commitment to localism and the third sector's integral role in it; this approach has been coined 'the emerging Scottish model' of policy making (Mitchell, 2015, p.3).

While little reference to the third sector is made in the official documentation of community planning, the Scottish Government has made increasing attempts to bolster its role. Following the 2012 Statement of Ambition third sector partners received a letter from the Cabinet Secretary for Finance, John Swinney, highlighting the significant role of the third sector in community planning and committing to strengthen its engagement in the process (Swinney, 2012). The Scottish Government clearly wanted the sector to play a greater role in community planning than had been evidenced; the TSIs created a vehicle for the sector's participation. The increased role for the third sector is in stark contrast to developments in England which was, at this time, moving away from the third sector as a partner (Milbourne and Murray, 2017).

1.3.3 The TSI model

The history of the TSI model dates back to late 2007. In March 2008 a letter was sent from the Third Sector Division of the Public Sector Reform Directorate which emphasised the need for more efficient third sector representation (Pearson, 2009). At this point, 120 organisations were being funded by the Scottish Government to support the third sector, volunteering, and social enterprise primarily through councils for voluntary services (CVSs), volunteer centres, and Scottish enterprise networks (Scottish Government, 2016). The Scottish Government expressed its desire for there to be one contract holder for each of the 32 local authority areas and set a timeline for this to be in place by March 2011. The three-year period from 2008 to 2011 was a transition period during which existing organisations needed to prepare to deliver a new model; existing funding would end in March 2011. Each local authority area was to have "an interface" between government and the sector; while the specifics about structure were left to each community, the remit included four areas: volunteering development, social enterprise development, supporting and developing a strong third sector, and building the relationship with community planning (Pearson, 2010). The original aim of the interface was described in an evaluation of the model undertaken in 2016 as (Scottish Government, 2016, p.4):

> To provide a single point of access for support and advice for the Third Sector within the local area and to create strong, coherent and cohesive representation of the Third Sector to better align it with the Community Planning Partnership and the Single Outcome Agreement. This model was also to provide a single point of access to the Third Sector for the public sector.

The interface was required to align its service boundaries to that of the local authority area, and the proposal for each TSI required sign off from the local CPP. While organisations had to deliver on the four functions, they were not restricted by this remit.

The TSI model was designed within the civil service with no consultation with the sector. While this directive reduced the number of organisations at the local level, a new national organisation, Voluntary Action Scotland (VAS) was formed as the umbrella group for the newly formed TSIs. Scotland's third sector organisations were to be represented by VAS at the local level, and the long-standing SCVO at the national level. These developments at both the local and national levels created much unrest and instability in the sector and led to a very significant remodelling of the architecture of Scotland's intermediary bodies. Many organisations closed and merged; organisations had to take on new areas of responsibility; and in some cases, organisations had to redraw their service boundaries to be coterminous with those of the local authority. While the TSI model was fully implemented based on the civil service's design, it did not happen without a fight. During the period from 2008 to 2011 there was political activism within communities, some of which led to questions being raised by Members of the Scottish Parliament (MSPs) at Holyrood[3]. By the end of the restructuring process, there were in the region of 57[4] organisations remaining from the original 120[5]; between them they held 32 contracts with the Scottish Government (Scottish Government, 2016), one for each local authority area. The development and impact of the TSI model is explored in detail in chapter seven.

In 2016 the Scottish Government commissioned and published an evaluation of the TSI network model and of the TSI umbrella group, VAS (Scottish Government, 2016). The report cited changes in the policy and operational environment as the context for the review. The stated aims of the review were to evaluate the role, function and effectiveness of the TSI model and VAS, and to consider the future of third sector support (Scottish

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[3] As an example, at the meeting of the Parliament 9 September, 2010, Hansard reflects an exchange between Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Sustainable Growth, John Swinney and Rhonda Grant, Labour MSP for Highlands and Islands:
http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/report.aspx?r=5809&i=52124&c=1123678&s=Third%2520sector%2520interfaces [accessed 24 July 2019].
[4] It is difficult to state definitively how many organisations remained. There are 10 TSIs that have partnership arrangements. The number of 57 has been calculated from researching each TSI website to ascertain which have partnership arrangements and the details of these arrangements. This information is not always clear, and in some instances new organisations appear to have been created to manage the partnership.
[5] The number of 120 is the stated number of organisations referenced in the Scottish Government's 2016 report, however, a civil servant (N6) who was close to the process during 2008-2011 stated the number was in the region of 190, excluding social enterprise networks. She stated that there were 32 volunteer centres and 160 CVSs. She stated the number was hard to pin down because there was not a lot of ongoing contact with the organisations.

Government, 2016). The TSI network and VAS were actively involved in the evaluation. The report was far-reaching and made 18 recommendations related to future directions, operational issues, resourcing and external influencing. Two particularly strong themes were the importance of strengthening the third sector relationship with community planning, and the need for VAS to improve its effectiveness. In December 2017, the Scottish Government announced it was terminating funding to VAS, and consequently, there is no longer an umbrella body for the TSI network.

In September 2018, the Scottish Government published the *Third Sector Interface Outcome Framework* (Scottish Government, 2018a)*.* The framework was co-produced with a working group of ten TSIs and the process facilitated by an independent national third sector organisation. The 2016 review is cited as the context for the framework. While the four original areas are all identified as important, the document recognises that the TSI role will vary depending on the local context. The document provides an outcome-based model and identifies the roles funded by the Third Sector Unit[6] to be a central source of knowledge, provide voice, build capacity, and connect. While the original TSI role was in community planning processes, the model has been broadened to include health and social care and "other strategic forums" (Scottish Government, 2018a, p.7). This is an important addition; the *Public Bodies (Joint Working) (Scotland) Act 2014* provided the framework for the integration of health and social care services across Scotland, leading to the establishment of Integration Joint Boards (IJBs). In addition to sitting on CPPs, TSIs are now also represented on the IJBs.

The creation of TSIs was in part to facilitate a clear route for third sector representation in community planning (and subsequently for IJBs), and as a result there is now formal third sector representation in all CPPs and IJBs across Scotland. The third sector participates in high level decision making in local planning, alongside local government and key statutory organisations; it has a prominence that was unthinkable just twenty years ago. Despite its elevation, there are numerous questions about the role of the third sector in this model. Is the third sector a full partner, or a junior partner? How does it represent the views of such a diverse sector? Does it represent organisations or community interests, or both? There are also questions about the ability of the third sector to maintain its independence, with

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[6] The Third Sector Unit is now located in the Equalities, Human Rights & Third Sector Division of the Scottish Government.

some suggesting that the sector may be more effective working from outside rather than inside the system (Davies, 2007).

Reviews commissioned by the national TSI body Voluntary Action Scotland (VAS) reported that while TSIs were involved at the highest levels in community planning, concerns were expressed by some that they were not treated as equal partners, their views were not fully respected, and at times statutory decisions were made with little or no input from the sector (Voluntary Action Scotland, 2013; 2015). The evaluation undertaken by the Scottish Government painted a mixed picture of the third sector's role in community planning; while many examples were provided of TSIs working effectively in CPPs, other examples were provided that indicated some CPPs had not created a conducive environment for third sector involvement (Scottish Government, 2016). These findings raise questions about the place of the TSIs at high-level community planning tables. Beyond the effectiveness of the TSI involvement in community planning, there are questions about what the TSI participation means for the third sector. Two questions that arise in particular are how the TSI represents the broader third sector and how its participation impacts on the TSI's independence from the state. The issues of representation and independence are explored in the next two sections.

1.4 Representation

The Scottish Government's review of the TSI network began by defining the TSI role in building a relationship with community planning as (Scottish Government, 2016, p.1):

> acting as a conduit and connecting the Third Sector with the implementation of the Single Outcome Agreements and Community Planning Process.

The report problematised the notion of representation, stating that while the TSI was often described as "representing" the third sector, its role was in fact to "facilitate representation" (Scottish Government, 2016, p.38). This subtlety of language is not defined and is likely lost in the practical reality and assumptions made when individuals sit at a planning table wearing the third sector hat. There is also no evidence that when the TSI model was originally developed that the complex issues of representation had been thought through.

One of the issues identified by the state is the difficulty of engaging with multiple third sector partners and a preference for having a representative for the sector (Taylor, 2004a).

The state's preference for a single voice, however, creates challenges for the sector. The enormity of the responsibility and the impossibility of channelling the diversity of the sector's views through one individual is well documented (Escobar, 2015; Gaventa, 2004; Harris et al., 2009; Taylor 2004a, 2011). The sector grapples with the responsibility it carries when participating in governance networks. A challenge is also presented by the question of who exactly the TSIs represent: is it just the third sector or do they also speak on behalf of communities? The language of "representing the community" is generally avoided by TSIs, though some do work in communities, particularly those with strong community development roots. The difficulty in defining where the third sector ends and where the community begins is fraught, particularly given that many third sector organisations have grown out of community. This confusion contributes to the risk that the state and its partners view the third sector, and the TSI in particular, as a shortcut to communities.

In 2014 twenty TSI leaders participated in a forum hosted as part of COSLA's *Commission on Strengthening Local Democracy;* weaknesses in processes of representation were identified as a barrier to democracy (Escobar, 2014). A subsequent deliberative dialogue was held, involving nine TSI leaders, to create a vision for community planning from a third sector perspective. The issues of representation and influence were highlighted through this process; the TSIs identified weaknesses in systems of representation as undermining their ability to be influential in community planning (Escobar, 2015).

Subsequent to this event the TSI in East Lothian, called STRiVE, undertook an initiative with local third sector organisations to explore the connections between participation and representation, and to build more effective processes. I worked alongside Dr. Escobar to help facilitate this process. A number of models were suggested by third sector organisations; as a result of this engagement and deliberation process, the model of representation was changed and third sector representatives are now elected at the organisation's annual conference to sit as delegates on the CPP and the IJB. Although the TSI does still have some role in representing the sector, this role is primarily fulfilled from within the sector. This is a good example of "facilitating representation" and highlights the democratic potential of the TSI playing the role of a facilitator and enabler, rather than of a representative (Cullingworth and Escobar, 2019). While some TSIs are exploring more participatory forms of representation, the majority sit directly in governance networks on behalf of the sector.

The responsibility of intermediary bodies in representing, or facilitating the representation of, the sector is immense. Harris et al. (2009) contend that the idea of the third sector "speaking with one voice" does not belong in debates about representation. They argue that a diversity of mechanisms is needed to relay sector issues and perspectives, that the process of representation requires resources, and that representation is a fundamental aspect of the relationship between the third sector and the state and must be considered a high priority. The question of representation is a complex one, and is explored in depth in chapter eight. Intermediary bodies, such as the TSIs, are at the front lines of representing the third sector with the state and statutory bodies; their involvement in governance networks brings them closer to the state, raising questions about how they maintain their independence. This is explored in the next section.

1.5 Independence

The question of the third sector's independence from the state is one that is both fundamental and contested. The third sector is a key part of civil society, occupying an important space between the state and the market. Civil society, often through the third sector, plays a vital democratic role in holding the state and the market to account (Milbourne, 2013). The ability to be independent is essential to exercising this accountability. The rapid growth of the sector in the UK through the New Labour years precipitated debate about its independence, amidst concern that the increasing closeness of the third sector-state relationship was eroding the sector's autonomy (Blackmore, 2008; Kelly, 2007; Lewis, 2005; Macmillan, 2015; Rochester, 2013). Concerns included constraints on campaigning, lobbying and advocacy; mission drift resulting from contracts defined by state priorities; financial dependence on the state; regulation through legislation, audit, accounting and contractual requirements; and pressures to professionalise and adopt managerial approaches (Blackmore, 2008; Milbourne and Murray, 2017; Rochester, 2013).

While independence is a powerful ideological concept, it is critiqued as being an absolute; Blackmore (2008) argues that it is a relative concept. From this relativist standpoint, the third sector is described as being interdependent, rather than independent (Alcock, 2015; Blackmore, 2008). It would be naive to argue that the third sector is *not* interdependent. I fully recognise that the sector is interdependent, not only on the state, but on many stakeholders including its members/users, the general public, non-state funders including donors, the media, and the market. The third sector cannot exist in isolation; it has always operated within and has been shaped by its context. However, being interdependent does

not mean that the sector cannot *act* independently in how it fulfils its vision and mission. The concept of independence is rooted in a democratic principle; the ability of the third sector to exercise its independence is central to its civil society role (Edwards, 2014; Milbourne and Murray, 2017). While it is always in relationship with and affected by the state (and others), it needs to be able to act in an independent manner; it needs autonomy to be a vehicle for the expression of civil society, rather than as an extension of the state.

The exploration of independence as a concept for understanding the third sector's relationship with the state is further developed in chapter two.

1.6 Situating the research question

This section details my personal connection to the research, identifies the gap in the literature, and presents the research question, aims and objectives.

1.6.1 Personal connection to the research

My interest in the third sector's relationship with the state is rooted in my work and volunteer involvement in the sector over the past thirty years, primarily in Canada and latterly in Scotland. Over the course of my career I have held a range of positions from front line community worker to chief executive. In the decade prior to starting the PhD, I held chief executive roles, with key responsibility for the financial health of organisations; this health was underwritten primarily with funding from the state. My entry into the third sector in the late 1980s coincided with the contracting out of government services to third party contractors, reflecting the principles of new public management (NPM), the dominant public administration regime of the time (Osborne, 2010). NPM was premised on the market being the appropriate mechanism of regulation, thereby reshaping the state's role to that of steering rather than steering *and* rowing; under NPM, the state funded and administered programmes (a steering role), but retreated from delivering them (a rowing role) (Davies, 2011; Rhodes, 1996). I became increasingly concerned that this new regime was forcing third sector organisations to make compromises in delivering services on behalf of the state; this was evidenced in two significant ways: *mission drift* and *silence*. *Mission drift* occurred when organisations prioritised services required by the state over those that were the focus of their organisational mission (Cairns, 2009). *Silence* was the result of organisational self-censorship, reflecting a reluctance to speak out on policy or programming issues for fear of state retribution in the awarding or management of contracts (Milbourne, 2013; Rees and Mullins, 2017). I experienced these compromises

first-hand; for example, my organisation drifted from its mission in order to continue delivering a programme redesigned by the state. In this situation staying true to our specialist mission would have resulted in the termination of a key programme, the loss of 20 staff, and the closure of one of our locations. Faced with such a stark choice, these types of decisions were easy to defend; what chief executive would prioritise a commitment to an organisation's mission if it were to result in such devastating consequences? However, these types of sensible decisions gradually erode an organisation's autonomy.

When I moved to Scotland in 2010 a new model of local intermediaries was being launched, the third sector interface (TSI). This model, conceived and funded by the Scottish Government, established a TSI in each of the 32 local authorities. I followed its development with interest; as a practitioner in Canada I had always been involved in intermediary bodies that acted as a voice for the sector. I held intermediary bodies in high regard; as a sector we depended upon them. The intermediary bodies were the sector's advocates; they could speak out and take risks for the sector that were not possible for individual organisations. When I began developing my research interest, the TSIs provided a rich site for exploring the third sector's relationship with the state. In particular I wanted to explore the question of how the TSI negotiated its independence from the state when it was working so closely in local governance with the state and statutory partners. I also wanted to understand how the TSI represented the diversity of the third sector in these spaces. At the point that I began my PhD journey, the TSIs had been in operation for only four years and little research about them had been undertaken.

1.6.2 Gap in the literature

Intermediary bodies, such as the TSIs, have not attracted much academic attention. Research about the sector's independence from the state has centred on issues relating to the service delivery role of the sector, rather than as a partner in governance (for example, Brandsen et al., 2014; de Corte and Verschuere, 2014; Egdell and Dutton, 2016; Kelly, 2007; Lewis, 2005; Milbourne and Murray, 2017; Osborne, 2000; Papadopoulos, 2013; Pestoff, 2009; Smith and Smyth, 2010). Further, research about issues of representation in participatory governance has largely focused on the role of citizens (Davidson and Elstub, 2014; Escobar, 2017; McNulty and Wampler, 2015; Wampler, 2012). Given the significant role that has been created for intermediary bodies in occupying the space between the state and the community, this is a research gap that demands attention and

which this research aims to address. A more extensive review and analysis of the literature is provided in chapters two and three. In order to explore these issues, I have identified an overall research question, two research aims, and three research objectives:

1.6.3 Research question

How does the third sector's participation in state-initiated governance networks through third sector interfaces (TSIs) impact on issues of the third sector's independence and representation in Scotland?

1.6.4 Research aims

To explore whether and to what extent third sector engagement in community planning compromises the independence of the third sector

To explore how the third sector manages issues of representation in community planning

1.6.5 Research objectives

To explore how TSIs advocate for third sector interests in community planning

To explore how TSIs represent the needs of a diverse third sector

To explore if and to what extent TSIs can represent the interests of communities as well as the third sector

1.7 Overview of thesis structure

This thesis is made up of ten chapters. This introductory chapter has identified my personal connection to the topic and situated the research within the context of the third sector's relationship with the state. The two key concepts of this thesis, namely representation and independence, have been introduced and the research gap identified as the participation of intermediary bodies in state-initiated governance networks.

Chapter two draws on theories of governance in the fields of democratic theory and public administration. It considers the Third Way politics that are reflective of a new governance approach and the post-politics literature that critiques reflexive modernity. The chapter also focuses on the literature pertaining to the third sector and its relationship with the state, and provides an analytical historical review of the context in the UK and Scotland.

Chapter three brings together the literature on public administration, the third sector, and independence, exploring in particular the literature on intermediary bodies and issues related to third sector representation. This chapter also presents a conceptual framework: the concepts of space, power, and liminality are used as analytical tools through which I understand and analyse the data.

Chapter four outlines my methodological approach, informed by my position as an interpretivist researcher. A single case study was selected of a TSI in an urban local authority area, using the methods of interviews and observation. Data analysis was undertaken using a highly iterative and inductive thematic approach. I reflect on my role as a researcher, report on the ethics, and discuss how I make claims from the research.

Chapter five provides the context of the case study, focusing on the local authority area, the local TSI, and the three state-initiated local governance networks that were researched. The pseudonym, Wychwood, is used in order to maintain the anonymity of the local authority area and the TSI.

Chapters six through to nine present my data and findings from the research. Chapter six highlights the dynamics and tensions of a space, literal and figurative, where representative and democracy participatory democracy meet. This chapter explores the tensions that are inherent in bringing together two different democratic traditions. It suggests that through its participation in local governance, the TSI is brought closer to the state implicating the TSI in statutory decision making.

Chapter seven charts how the state has channelled the third sector's participation in local governance networks through structures that mirror state priorities, compromising the independence of the third sector interface and complicating its representation role. My findings suggest that creation of the third sector interface, described as a "civil servant construct", has contributed to a restructuring of the TSI's relationship with the state and with third sector organisations, as well as amongst TSIs across Scotland.

Chapter eight focuses on questions of representation and the legitimacy of the TSI. It explores the single voice model of third sector representation favoured by the state. My findings suggest that the creation of the TSI and its role at the interface between the third sector and the state in local governance networks has heightened distrust amongst local third sector organisations and undermined the TSI's legitimacy in representing the sector.

Chapter nine explores the discourse that takes place within local governance networks. It is argued that managed talk is a way of constraining and containing conflict, creating a space in which consensus is the goal, compromising the sector's ability to be activist and shaping its participation through a state logic. The findings lead to an argument that a different approach is needed in the creation of democratic governance spaces, a proposition that is explored in the final chapter.

Chapter ten reflects on the data and makes four recommendations. The first suggests that participative structures need to be developed collaboratively between civil society and the state. The second recommends that the state reconsider its instrumental approach to engaging the third sector. The third argues that the third sector needs to play an active role in protecting its independence. The fourth suggests that intermediary bodies play the role of *advocates* rather than *mediators*. This chapter also identifies areas for future research, considers the study's contribution to knowledge, and provides a reflection on the research process and study.

2 Democratic governance and the third sector

The aim of this chapter is to situate my research in the fields of democratic governance and public administration. This chapter also provides a historical review of the relationship between the third sector and the state and analyses the concept of third sector independence. The literature reviewed is both theoretical and empirical, positioning my research within the broad societal changes that have given rise to the third sector's involvement in local governance, and charting the experience of that involvement for the sector.

Section 2.1 focuses on governance and provides a theoretical framing for the research, reviewing four bodies of literature four that reflect the societal and political changes brought about by the present stage of modernity, as well as critiques about the reflexive modernity thesis. The overview of governance and its implications for politics and public administration set the stage for the section 2.2 in which I explore the relationship between the third sector and the state. This section begins by describing the third sector and traces the history of its relationship through four different time periods, with a focus on the sector's independence from the state. The literature draws on both the UK context and the experience in Scotland since devolution in 1999. After charting the history, an analysis is provided about the evolution of the sector's independence from the state, drawing on the *Baring Barometer of Independence.*[7]

2.1 A new governance

The section focuses on governance. The first body of literature reviewed in sub-section 2.1.1 relates to changes in our political systems, reflected by the rise of democratic governance as a form of governance to complement representative democracy. Sub-section 2.1.2 reviews literature in public administration, reflecting the shift from government to governance (Rhodes, 1996); sub-section 2.1.3 considers the resulting implications for both public administration and democracy of governance networks that bring together the state and non-state actors. The third body of literature, considered in sub-section 2.1.4, pertains to the nexus of political systems and forms of public administration that were enacted through the politics of New Labour known as the Third Way. The fourth, in sub-section 2.1.5, draws on the critique of post-politics that has been

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[7] The Baring Foundation published its first report on the state of the voluntary sector's independence in 2011, and produced annual reports thereafter from 2012-2015; the Foundation supported independence reports in 2016 and 2017 produced by Civil Exchange.

made against reflexive modernity. The 'post-politics' critique raises fundamental questions about the assumptions of rationality and consensus that form the bedrock of the reflexive modernity argument, arguing that consensus undermines democracy and obscures relationships of power. The broad societal changes and the post-politics critique described in this section shape the context of my research and provide an important theoretical lens.

2.1.1 Democratic governance

The growth of democratic governance is linked to fundamental shifts in society, as reflected in the theory of reflexive modernity. The role of the individual in society and the expectations of the individual about their place in society have changed; equally the state expects to have a different engagement with the individual. The rise in participatory forms of governance has been in evidence since the 1960s (Pestoff, 2009), although the active engagement of citizens with its roots in ancient Greece (Escobar, 2017) is certainly not new. The rise of civic participation has been a feature of reflexive modernity heralding broad shifts in the governance of society. This section focuses on the democratisation of governance from the perspective of people and civil society.

Participatory forms of governance are becoming more common across the world, driven by the belief that participation improves accountability at the local level, increases trust in institutions, improves democracy and decision-making, addresses power and inequality, and improves design and delivery of services (Speer, 2012). It is argued that participatory governance produces "better citizens, better decisions and better government" (Cornwall, 2004a, p.1). Escobar defines participatory democracy as "a form of democracy that enables extensive participation of citizens in ongoing decision-making, whether at the national or local level, or within communities or organisations" (Escobar, 2017, p.422). The drive to open up governance has also been precipitated by concerns of low participation in traditional forms of democracy, public cynicism in government and institutional decision-making processes (Davidson and Elstub, 2014; Gallent and Ciaffi, 2014; McNulty and Wampler, 2015), and the erosion of people's social capital undermining their capacity to participate (Putman's 'bowling alone' thesis, 2000). The growth of individual rights and an increased recognition of the need for strategies to ensure the inclusion of marginalised groups have also been drivers for increased governance (Barnes et al., 2007; Taylor, 2006; Wampler, 2012). The inclusion of citizens in processes of governance is envisioned as a way to restore the legitimacy of political institutions and processes and to deepen the quality of democracy (Durose et al., 2015; McNulty and

Wampler, 2015). It is argued that participatory government strengthens rather than rejects representative democracy.

Since the 1990s there has been a 'deliberative democracy" turn in democratic governance. This shift focuses on the deliberation of ideas; Dryzek states, "This turn put communication and reflection at the centre of democracy" (2010, p.4). Deliberative democracy posits that people can work together, deliberate and reason to make collective decisions. Escobar identifies deliberative democracy as reflective of a discursive pluralism that while it "often strives for consensus, it acknowledges the inevitability of conflict and the desirability of difference" (2017, p.427). Escobar (2017, p.418) states that the three models of democracy - representative, participatory and deliberative - are overlapping; they emerge in relation and in response to preceding models. While focusing on the role of citizens, rather than associations, Escobar's table below is helpful in understanding the distinctions and commonalities between the systems of democracy.

Table 2:1 - Three (overlapping) models of democracy

	Representative democracy	Participatory democracy	Deliberative democracy
Notion of democratic participation	Voting in elections to choose between competing elites	Taking part in collective action and decision-making in civic and/or official spheres	Engaging in deliberation about public issues and policies
Notion of pluralism	Aggregative / competitive	Engaged / critical	Discursive / consensual
How are publics made?	By aggregating individual preferences through electoral contests and interest groups	Through processes of collective association, collaboration, struggle and civic education	Through public deliberation that transforms individual preferences into public reasons
What kind of citizen are citizens invited to be?	Occasional voter; member of interest group	Ongoing participant in civic and official processes	Considered deliberator
Examples of institutional mechanisms	Elections	Participatory Budgeting	Mini-publics

Source: Escobar, 2017, p.418.

Permission to reproduce this figure has been granted by Dr. Oliver Escobar.

Democratic governance brings with it challenges, including fundamental questions about how participatory governance can coexist with representative democracy. For individuals and civil society groups, the challenges include the risk of co-optation (Edwards, 2014), questions about their democratic credentials, and the difficulties of representation (Cooke and Kothari, 2001). One of the overriding concerns is about power. Hirst (1996) questions how decisions taken through deliberative processes are taken up in managerial systems; he argues that it is not sufficient to change decision-making processes and contends that structural changes in institutions are required. Cooke (2004) argues that 'rules of thumb' are required for participation; his work focuses on the development field and in this context one of his rules is "don't work for the World Bank" (p.43), suggesting that there are some institutions with which democratic decision-making is not possible. Fung and Wright (2003) argue for a system of countervailing power in participatory governance, an idea that I will explore further in the discussion chapter. The field of deliberative governance has been the focus of vociferous debate, largely related to a critique about power. Mouffe (1999) argues that deliberative governance obscures power, treating all partners around a table as equal actors, and that this apparent post-politics consensus undermines the ability for true contestation in these spaces. Other critiques are provided by Barnes et al. (2007) and Shapiro (1999) who argue that power can never be shared equally. Kadlec and Freidman (2007) argue that the process through which deliberative processes are designed and who is in control are essential in addressing power inequities and biases, and that well-designed processes can result in meaningful change.

Democratic theory focuses on the participation of civil society organisations and individuals in new spaces of governance. Inextricably linked is governance theory reflecting the fundamental shifts in systems of public administration. The following section explores this further.

2.1.2 Governance theory: from government to governance

Governance theory describes the fundamental shift from government to governance in society (Rhodes, 1996; Taylor, 2010). This shift is evident in many aspects of society, changing not only the role of government but also that of the nation state. In broad terms the shift to governance reflects a focus on the "broader activities and processes of governing" rather than on structures (Heywood, 2004, p.72); governing is about the multifarious ways in which society is organised. Government becomes just one of the institutions involved in governing (Heywood, 2004).

The three public administration regimes employed by the state in the governance of society have been characterised as hierarchy, markets and networks (Davies, 2011; Hartley, 2005; Osborne, 2010). These regimes are "layered realities" rather than distinct approaches (Pestoff, 2018, p.29). Hierarchy has been the dominant approach used from the late nineteenth century through to the late 1970s; this approach reflected a strong unitary state and had its roots in political science and public policy (Osborne, 2010). In this form of public administration civil servants had a key role in both policy development and implementation (Osborne, 2010). The influence of neo-liberalism and a shift to the new public management (NPM) approach from the early 1980s reflected a shifting belief in markets, rooted in rational choice theory and management studies; this shift resulted in a disaggregated, fragmented state (Hartley, 2005; Osborne, 2010; Rhodes, 1996). Under NPM there was a distancing between policy-making and policy implementation (Osborne, 2010) that saw the curtailing of civil servant discretionary powers; Rhodes (1996) describes this as a "sharp distinction between politics and administration" (p.661). NPM, with its focus on efficiency and value for money, heralded the rise of managerialism in public administration, valuing the skills and knowledge of managers and management techniques (Clarke et al., 2000).

The current use of networks that began to emerge from the early 2000s reflects the vision of a pluralist state where decisions are negotiated through trust (Davies, 2011, Osborne, 2010); this paradigm is described by Osborne (2010) as new public governance (NPG), a framing that has been widely adopted in the literature (Pestoff, 2018, 2012; Phillips and Smith, 2011). The development of networks arose in part as a way of managing a complicated and fragmented system and of facilitating strong inter-organisational coordination (Klijn and Koppenjan, 2012). The employment of networks provided the answer to some of the specific challenges created by NPM, but also reflected the broader societal move towards participatory governance enabling the involvement of non-state actors in continuous processes of governing rather than the single act of electing a representative to govern on one's behalf (Peters, 2010). Austerity was a further contributing factor towards more participatory forms of governance. Osborne (2010, p.1) posits that new public governance recognises policy-making as being made up of multiple processes (this he describes as a pluralist state) and policy implementation as involving many interdependent actors (plural state).

Central to the use of governance as an approach is the utilisation of networks of relevant stakeholders in problem identification and solution development, marking a fundamental

shift in the role of the state. Dezeure and De Rynck (2012, p.249) characterise the distinction between government and governance as follows:

> In broad terms government refers to the machinery of the state exercising coordination and steering through hierarchy, bureaucracy, laws, rules and regulation; while governance marks the movement of the state towards governing of society through networks based on interdependence, negotiation and trust of both public, private and third sector actors.

Rhodes (1996), a political scientist who is considered one of the seminal thinkers in the field, defined governance as comprising "self-organising, inter-organisational networks characterised by interdependence, continuing and game like interactions rooted in trust, and significant autonomy from the state" (p.660). Rhodes (1996) states that "networks are an alternative to, not a hybrid of, markets and hierarchies and they span the boundaries of the public, private and voluntary sectors" (p.659), whereas Osborne (2006) offers a more nuanced analysis that recognises the legacy and influence of previous forms of administration. In the early evolution of the theory, Rhodes (1996) proclaimed that networks were "set fair to become the prime example of governing without Government" (p.667). In light of the actually existing reality of governance networks, Rhodes moderated his normative position acknowledging that not enough recognition had been given to hard power (Davies, 2011). Despite this distancing from his original assertions, Rhodes' definition of networks continues to be influential in the literature.

Davies (2011, p.3) defines a governance network as an "institutionalised formal and informal resource exchange between government and non-government actors." As Taylor (2011) emphasises, such collaborations and partnerships do not ensure quality in participation; rather, positional power and the unwritten rules of the game prevail (Scott, 2001). Fundamental questions about democracy have been raised by the governance turn, questions that are considered in the next section.

2.1.3 Governance networks and democracy

The involvement of non-governmental perspectives in policy decisions is not a recent phenomenon. Since the time of universal suffrage in the 1920s the British state has invited its citizens to contribute their perspectives into the process of policy making (Davies, 2011), though in peripheral ways. The more active use of networks has been more evident since the 1960s, and prioritised in government policy from the late 1980s (Davies, 2007). Networks are being used around the world both within states and across supra-national

boundaries (for example, the World Trade Organisation and the International Monetary Fund); there are even examples of its tentative use in authoritarian countries such as China (Davies, 2011). The UK is considered an exemplar in the use of governance networks (Phillips and Smith, 2011).

Deakin and Taylor (2002, cited in Davies[8], 2011, p.2) critique networks as offering this romanticised vision:

> In the most optimistic accounts, governing through networks is deemed capable of fostering a new deliberative pluralism with the potential for an equitable, trust-based consensus about the means and ends of social life. The network potentially unlocks a 'third space' between state and market, extending the public sphere, empowering communities and cultivating inclusive policy making.

Within the literature there is much debate about the legitimacy of governance networks in a representative democracy. I categorise these debates into three broad claims: governance networks are incompatible with democracy, governance networks enhance democracy, and governance networks are a risk to civil society.

2.1.3.1 Governance networks are incompatible with democracy

This body of literature argues that governance networks undermine representative democracy resulting in a democratic deficit (Klijn and Skelcher, 2007; Papadopoulos, 2013; Sørensen, 2002). Representative democracy is based on a system that separates the political system from broader society (Klijn and Skelcher, 2007), with clear lines of accountability and legitimacy. Elected officials, voted into office by the people, represent the interests of those people; officials are kept accountable through clearly codified systems that are widely understood (Papadopoulos, 2013). Governance through networks brings "unauthorised actors" (Beck, 1999, p.4) into the political realm, resulting in a loss of transparency and tenuous accountability, and weakening the influence of elected officials (Papadopoulos, 2013). Systems of representation and accountability are neither codified nor open to scrutiny (Rhodes, 1996; Swyngedouw, 2005). Governance networks operate beyond systems of formal representation and accountability; they are characterised by closed decision-making and the increased use of specialists (Klijn and Skelcher, 2007) and

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[8] This reference was taken from a paper by Deakin, N. and Taylor, M. entitled *Citizenship, civil society and governance*, presented to the Third Sector from a European Perspective Conference, ISTR European Network Meeting, Trento Italy, December 2002. The primary source is not available online.

as a "sophisticated form of elite governance" (Elander and Blanc, 2001, p.102). Elander and Blanc (2001, p.103) ask:

> What happens to basic democratic values when policy-making develops from a system based upon representative popular government into a situation increasingly characterised by multi-organizational, fragmented policy making?

2.1.3.2 Governance networks enhance democracy

Another body of literature promotes the potential of governance networks to strengthen democracy through the inclusion of diverse voices, particularly those of citizens (Durose et al., 2015; Sterling, 2005). Rather than creating a democratic deficit, governance networks seek to address the democratic deficit of representative democracy. Fung and Wright (2003) argue that representative democracy is biased towards the elite. Rhodes (1996) states that citizens can take control of government creating a "post-modern public administration" (p.666). Klijn (2010, p.308) suggests that the concern about governance networks undermining democracy "essentially implies that we no longer recognise politics as a centre of power". Proponents argue that debates about the legitimacy of governance networks are steeped in our state centric framework and that a polycentric approach is needed. For example, Durose et al. argue (2015) that "polycentric theory asks how diverse and complex governing arrangements can be used to deepen and extend democracy" (p.141); Sørenson and Torfing (2007) make a case for horizontal forms of accountability. Governance networks are seen as a vehicle through which representative democracy can be transformed. Dryzek (2010) argues that deliberative forms of democracy can resolve some of the criticism levelled at governance networks. He characterises language as the coordinating mechanism of networks and suggests the "distribution of communicative capacity can be relatively egalitarian" given that networks are not "formally constituted as hierarchies" (Dryzek, 2010, p.125).

2.1.3.3 Governance networks are a risk to civil society

Another body of literature warns of the risks of governance networks to civil society and critiques the normative nature of governance networks. Davies (2011) critiques the 'transformation thesis' which celebrates networks as the mechanism through which power and institutions are dispersed and disrupted. He argues that far from freeing us from "ossified hierarchies of the twentieth century" (Davies, 2011, p.2), governance networks maintain traditional relationships and institutions of power. He is particularly critical of the notion of trust as the glue that holds networks together, and asks if it is actually the

orthodoxy of trust that maintains the relationships and obscures power relations (Davies, 2011). Swyngedouw argues that the relationship between the state and civil society is redrawn; he states, "new governance arrangements… redefine and reposition the meaning of (political) citizenship" (2005, p.1991). He cautions that participation includes risk; through participation individuals have to take responsibility for shared decision-making, a concern echoed by Newman (2005). This has been referred to as the 'tyranny of participation' (Cooke and Kothari, 2001). While governance networks promote the idea of shared decision-making, critics argue that the state is still firmly in control (Davies, 2011; Newman, 2005; Swyngedouw, 2005). It is important to state that there are overlaps in the debates about governance networks; the categorisation above suggests three distinct ways of thinking about the arguments, where in fact the reality is blurred. As noted, I return to the subject of governance networks later in this chapter.

In the next section, I review literature about Third Way politics with a particular focus on the third sector. The Third Way epitomises the reflexive modernity thesis in the UK and is associated with the New Labour party of 1997-2010. One of the key proponents of the reflexive modernity thesis, Giddens, is inextricably linked with New Labour; he is considered the architect of the party's Third Way politics (Bryant and Jary, 2001) and is often described as Tony Blair's academic guru (Davidson and Elstub, 2014).

2.1.4 Third Way politics

Third Way politics are an expression of the reflexive modernity thesis and directly shaped the state's relationship with the third sector. Giddens (1998) suggests that the Third Way is the path towards the renewal of social democracy, reflecting a new type of politics that claims that socialism is dead and that there is no alternative to capitalism. Giddens (1998) states, "No one any longer has any alternatives to capitalism – the arguments that remain concern how far, and in what ways, capitalism should be governed and regulated" (p.44). Giddens (1998) argues that society has changed profoundly, in part due to rapid scientific and technological advances that have changed economic fundamentals. Old patterns of economic class identification have diminished with the decline of industrialisation (Giddens, 1998). The rise of globalisation is another significant societal change, along with the political changes associated with the end of the Cold War. Traditional expectations which defined long-term geography, locality, family and work structures have broken down, replaced by dispersed families, relocations and short-term work patterns. The traditional cleavages of left and right politics are no longer sufficient to respond to

complex societal challenges. Accompanying this change is the rise of individualism, and the need, because of the demise of traditional structures to make individual choices. He defines our society is one that is 'post-materialist' (Giddens, 1998, p.19).

In this new modernity there is a "need to cut loose from the past" (Giddens, 1998, p.17), and to move beyond the axes of left and right. The traditional institutions and politics of the past no longer shape nor constrain society; Giddens (1998) states that while these create, "Various dilemmas of political support … new possibilities of consensus-building, exist here" (p.23). The Third Way approach was conceived as a way to help citizens navigate the major revolutions of our time; globalisation, transformations in our personal lives, and our relationship to nature (Giddens, 1998). While Third Way politics continue to uphold the need for equality, the focus is about redistribution of opportunity. The motto is "no rights without responsibilities" (Giddens, 1998, p.65).

The role of the citizen in this new modernity is a more engaged and empowered citizen. The citizen is envisioned as an active agent and has the ability to affect life around them. This new politics is one in which the citizen is not subservient to authority but rather is one in which the citizen expects the opportunity to participate. There is also a key role for civil society, both in engaging citizens but also in working in partnership with the state. Giddens (1998) states, "There are no permanent boundaries between government and civil society" (p.80). This is a theme echoed by Rhodes (1996) who states, "Focusing on governance can blur, even dissolve, the distinction between state and civil society" (p.666).

New Labour fundamentally reshaped the relationship between the third sector and state, engaging the third sector both in delivering services and civil society development. Both arenas involved the third sector in active partnership working; while working in partnership was by no means new, the scale and significance positioned the third sector onto the centre stage of the government's agenda. The third sector was viewed as a trusted but benign agent. Fyfe (2005) characterises New Labour's view of the third sector as the "organised vanguard of society" (p.539). Giddens (1994) makes the case that in a society where the politics are beyond left and right, a dialogic democracy can emerge. While he recognises that issues will still be contested, he argues for the centrality of trust; he states, "Trust is a means of ordering social relations across time and space" (Giddens, 1994, p.88). Giddens (1994) proclaims the potential for consensus; consensus rather conflict is at the heart of a dialogic space. It is this consensus that creates the bedrock for governance networks.

To this point, I have described three bodies of literature associated with reflexive modernity. The first two sections explored the "governance turn"; the first charting the rise of democratic governance that has brought citizens and civil society directly into governance spaces with state actors and the second charting the shift in public administration to networks as a form of governance. The third section detailed the specific expression of Third Way politics and the engagement of the third sector into governance. In this concluding section, I draw on the post-politics critique which reflects fundamental disagreements with a number of elements of the reflexive modernity thesis and calls for an agonistic pluralism to recognise the essential place of conflict in politics.

2.1.5 Post-politics

The post-politics thesis is a critique of the de-politicisation of society that is immanent in the reflexive modernity argument. The post-political condition (Mouffe, 2005a), also referred to as post-democratic (Crouch, 2004) and post-traditional (Davies, 2011), reflects a society in which contestation has been replaced by consensus. It is argued that in this post-Cold War world, the vestiges of conflict between left and right have been replaced by a consensus of the centrality of the market; the space for political contestation has been foreclosed (Rancière, 2000), hollowed out (Swyngedouw, 2014). By moving beyond the politics of left and right, rational decisions can be made through dialogue and deliberation. Its critics argue that the post-political framework obscures power, characterising the political sphere as one in which needs are negotiated rather than contested, and produced through relations of trust rather than of conflict.

The critique of consensus is central to post-politics. Writing about the process of depoliticisation, Rancière states (2010. p.71):

> Today, this process goes by the name of consensus … conflicts are turned into problems to be resolved by learned expertise and the negotiated adjustment of interests. Consensus means closing spaces of dissensus by plugging intervals and patching up any possible gaps between appearance and reality, law and fact.

A similar line of argument is taken up by Davies (2011) who critiques the network society as one in which we are freed from material and structural conflict to experience "an all-embracing trust-based consensus grounded in the new capitalism" (p.49). He argues that network governance replicates rather than challenges existing hierarchies, and more problematically that "the proliferation of governance networks symbolised not

democratisation but the attempt to purchase wider effective control of the political process"
(Davies, 2011, p.60). Mouffe argues that the promotion of consensus as attainable and
ideal undermines rather than deepens our democracy. She makes the case, drawing on
Schmitt, that "every consensus is based on acts of exclusion" (Mouffe, 2005b, p.14). In
order to rebuild a healthy democracy, Mouffe (2005b) makes the case for agonistic
pluralism. This is explored in the next section.

2.1.5.1 Agonistic pluralism

Mouffe's (2005a) core argument is that contestation has been removed from the political
sphere; she critiques this as "liberalism's central deficiency in the political field" (Mouffe,
p.10). Conflict is a fundamental and ineradicable part of society and needs to be built into
the political system. She states, "the political belongs to our ontological condition"
(2005a, p.16). In her analysis she builds on Schmitt's (1976) conception of the relational
nature of political identities, that in order for there to be a 'we' there must be a 'they'
(Mouffe, 2005a, p.15). Identity is established through the creation of difference and where
there is difference there is the potential for antagonism (Mouffe, 2005a).

Mouffe (2005a) builds a case for creating an agonistic pluralism, an approach that
embraces and supports conflict rather than foreclosing it, including an "antagonistic
dimension which is constitutive of the political" (p.16). In an agonistic approach people
treat each other as adversaries, but not enemies; it is recognised that people have different
interests and power positions. Agonism does not preclude the potential for consensus,
rather it promotes the essential place of dissensus. Mouffe (2005a) argues that antagonism
and pluralism can and must coexist in a democracy.

Mouffe (2018) attributes the rise in populism to the post-politics consensus that has
secured neo-liberalism as the only economic alternative. She argues that Thatcherism was
maintained under New Labour, and that the 2008 financial crash sowed the seeds for
populist parties to claim to represent those that felt abandoned by the system (Mouffe,
2018). The frontier that has always existed between political positions has been redrawn
between people and the system, against the political elites rather than between political
parties. The post-politics consensus has removed real political options for people, fuelling
the rise in populism.

Hegemony and power are central to understanding the creation of a particular social order;
a social order is a reflection of power relations (Mouffe, 2005a). She states, "Power is

constitutive of the social because the social could not exist without the power relations through which it is given shape" (Mouffe, 2005a, p.18). In the hegemonic struggle which is constitutive of the political process, contestation and dissensus need to flourish. It is Mouffe's (2005a) contention that the thesis of reflexive modernity forecloses contestation. She is critical of Third Way politics and its negation of conflict and power (2005a, p.63):

> The case of New Labour makes clear that the refusal to acknowledge that a society is always hegemonically constituted through a certain structure of power relations leads to accepting the existing hegemony and remaining trapped within its configuration of forces.

Her critique is echoed by Bunyan (2015, p.362) who argues that network governance theory is premised on two interconnected assumptions: one, that democracy is deliberative; and two, that social and political change are consensus based. In the context of regeneration, Bunyan (2015) calls for an agonistic model and suggests that third sector actors "develop the legitimacy and power to engage politically within the context of a contested public sphere" (p.363).

In summary, the first section of this chapter has identified reflexive modernity as an overarching framework through which to understand the growth of democratisation and the increased role of citizens and civil society in governance, with a focus on Third Way politics. In the second section of the chapter, I focus on the third sector, detailing the history of the sector's relationship with the state exploring in particular the degree of independence in that relationship. This history is an important building block to understanding the impact of increased democratisation of governance which has brought the third sector closer to the state.

2.2 The third sector

This section focuses on the third sector, positioning it as a part of civil society. The definitional challenges of and theoretical approaches towards the sector are highlighted, and the sector's relationship with the UK state traced with a particular focus on the experience in Scotland. The history is framed from the position of the sector's independence from the state, considering how and to what degree its independence has changed over time.

2.2.1 Defining the third sector

It has long been argued that a strong civil society is key to a healthy democracy (Deakin, 2001; Edwards, 2014, 2009; Lorch 2016; Pestoff, 2012; Putnam, 2000; Tocqueville, 1835/1998), playing a key role as a counter-balance to the power of the state (Heywood, 2004). Rousseau (1762) is considered an early proponent of civil society, arguing in the *Social Contract* that the participation of all citizens is vital for the effective functioning of the state. There are divergent opinions about the role of civil society, characterised as: "the contradiction between acting as consensual glue to avoid civil disorder and acting independently to promote critical or dissenting voices" (Milbourne and Murray, 2017, p.4). Edwards (2014) suggests three ways of characterising civil society: as associational life, as the good society, and as the public sphere.[9] Historically, it is within the space of "associational life" that the third sector has emerged, responding to the needs of individuals and communities. The third sector is rooted in and central to civil society (Hodgson, 2004; Kenny et al., 2015). Indeed, Tocqueville (1835) in his travels around America regarded the third sector as a school of democracy in the 1800s. The framing of the third sector as an expression of civil society is important for broadening the analysis of the sector, particularly in the area of governance.

Definitions of the third sector are highly contested, particularly in relation to those organisations that occupy the blurred margins between the sector and the state, and between the sector and the market (Billis, 2010). One of the most enduring and influential definitions describes the third sector as encompassing bodies that are (1) organised, (2) independent from government, (3) non-profit distributing, (4) self-governing, and (5) voluntary (Salamon and Anheier, 1997, p.33-34). While this definition has been critiqued for having an American bias (Borzaga, 1998, cited in Evers and Laville,[10] 2004, p.13), for being parsimonious (Kelly, 2007), and for being a list of criteria rather than a definition (Alcock, 2012), and it has been widely adopted in the literature. In the UK the often-cited description of the third sector as a "loose and baggy monster" has been used to capture the complexity of the sector's legal and regulatory characteristics (Kendall and Knapp, 1994). As noted in the introductory chapter (section 1.2), I draw on Taylor's definition with a

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[9] It is important to acknowledge that while the notion of civil society is normative, civil society activity is not necessarily progressive, as evidenced by organisations such as the Ku Klux Klan.
[10] This reference was taken from a paper entitled 'The economics of the third sector in Europe: The Italian experience'. The primary source is not available online.

caveat that social enterprises may be established for the dual purpose of financial gain and social good where profits are reinvested.

In additional to the definitional difficulties, the third sector suffers conceptually from being viewed as a subsidiary of and in relation to the primary sectors of the state and the market, rather than existing in its own right. The Wolfenden Committee of 1978, set up to review the role and function of the voluntary sector in the UK, offered the following description: "the voluntary sector complements, supplements, extends and influences the informal and statutory systems" (Wolfenden, 1978, p.26). The current use of the term "third" sector serves to underscore its lesser status though other descriptors are even more problematic, for example describing the sector as "voluntary", "non-profit" or "charitable". Macmillan (2012) questions whether the third sector is in fact distinct and argues that of more significance is the importance attached to there being a distinct sector. Brandsen and Pestoff (2006) argue that with the rise of the sector's involvement in public services, the third sector is losing its distinctiveness. It has even been argued that there is no such thing as the third sector; it is an idea that exists purely as the creation of committees such as Wolfenden and the Deakin Commission (6 and Leat, 1997; Lewis, 1999).

The third sector as a field of research is under-theorised and is critiqued for being steeped in empiricism, with little regard to how social injustice, economic inequality and political exclusion are reproduced (Corry, 2010; Taylor, 2010). A US bias and a non-normative approach has dominated the discipline (Taylor, 2010). The sector is plagued by approaches that seek to understand it in neo-classical economic terms, for example as resulting from market and government failures (Macmillan, 2013b), and public choice/performance failure (Halfpenny and Reid, 2002); supply side theories are also employed citing philanthropic entrepreneurship and organisational inertia (Halfpenny and Reid, 2002, p.539). Salamon (1987) introduced the theories of third party government and voluntary failure to address what Macmillan (2013, p.188) describes as the "zero-sum game" of existing theories that viewed the third sector as an alternative when the state could not and the market would not deliver goods and services. Salamon (1987) argues for recognition of the collaboration between the third sector and the state, which Macmillan refers to as interdependence (2013b, p.188), where government delivers through third parties. He identifies third sector resource dependency as being complemented by government's resource strength, resulting in a harmonious relationship where government underwrites the costs of programmes and the third sector delivers them. The state responds to voluntary sector weaknesses, or failure, which Salamon (1987, p.39) describes as

philanthropic insufficiency, particularism, paternalism, and amateurism. While Salamon's (1987) theories recognise the "symbiotic" (Macmillan, 2013b, p.189) relationship between the third sector and the state, they reflect instrumental thinking that divorces third sector organisations from the communities and ethos that gave rise to them. The significant growth in the sector's relationship with the state, particularly in the delivery of state services, has further confounded its theoretical framing.

There is also debate about the idea of there being *a* third sector given its diversity and the significant differences within it (Macmillan, 2015). The sector includes small grassroots organisations as well as corporate style national and international organisations with turnover in the millions of pounds. This has been described as the bifurcation of the sector with some arguing that there are in fact two different sectors (Knight, 1993). A similar distinction is made by Fyfe and Milligan (2003) about the sector in Glasgow which they describe the sector as being made up of 'grassroots' and 'corporatist' organisations. Miller (1999) makes the distinction between the formalised professional sector and the community sector, and also between purposes of service delivery and enhancing local democracy.

There has been a historical shift in some parts of the sector from securing funds to undertake their own work to bidding for work defined and contracted by government. The sector's increasingly close relationship with the state has raised fundamental questions about its independence, both amongst practitioners and academics. My personal experiences in the field, grappling with the sector's relationship with the state, led me to undertake this research. In the next section I explore the notion of independence.

2.2.2 Defining independence

In the context of democratic governance, there are inherent tensions associated with a closer relationship with the state. The concept of the third sector's independence is central to the analysis in this thesis; it is, however, a difficult concept to define. There is, in fact, debate in the literature about whether the sector's independence is still relevant given the sector's increasingly close engagement with the state; some suggest that there can only be *interdependence* between the sector and the state (Alcock, 2015; Blackmore, 2008). Pestoff (2009) argues that in democratic theory third sector organisations are viewed as being of particular significance because of their independence from the state; he describes the third sector as being "seen by pluralists as a buffer between the rulers and ruled"

(p.183), but also acknowledges that the world has changed and relationships are now more interdependent. The increasing interconnectedness between the sector and the state has tended to diminish the question of the sector's independence, rather than highlighting its urgency.

Despite the growing discourse about the interdependence between the state and the sector, governments have repeatedly valued and promoted third sector independence (Egdell and Dutton, 2017; Hodgson, 2004). Lord Beveridge (1948), the architect of the welfare state, proclaimed that "[The state] should in every field of its growing activity use where it can, without destroying their freedom and their spirit, the voluntary agencies for social advance, born of social conscience and of philanthropy. This is one of the marks of a free society" (p.318). In the early years of the re-established Scottish Parliament, a debate about the third sector took place in which a commitment to the sector's independence was a recurring theme. Minister of Social Justice, MSP, Jackie Baillie introduced the debate stating, "I will always protect the sector's right to be critical of Government. If the sector was not independent, it would lose one of its greatest strengths" (Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body, 2001, 2805). New Labour viewed one of the third sector's strengths as its independence from the models, structures and culture of traditional public sector bodies (Kelly, 2007). From a pragmatic perspective, a strong and independent relationship with the third sector facilitates the state's access into the communities that third sector organisations serve; taps into innovative and responsive service models that put the user at the centre; enables important third sector input into the policy process; and provides diverse, and usually more economical service delivery options (Kelly, 2007).

The ability of third sector organisations to maintain their independence when being underwritten by the state (or any other funder) is the subject of much research in the field (Brandsen et al., 2014; de Corte and Verschuere, 2014; Egdell and Dutton, 2016; Kelly, 2007; Lewis, 2005; Osborne, 2000; Milbourne, 2013; Milbourne and Murray, 2017; Papadopoulos, 2013; Pestoff, 2009; Rochester, 2013; Smith and Smyth, 2010; Teles, 2013). The independence question in relation to the sector's involvement in governance networks is less evident in the literature; while it is referenced as a concern, empirical evidence is lacking (exceptions include Davies, 2007; Sinclair, 2011; and Tsukamoto and Nishimura, 2006). Teles (2013) argues that governance approaches have failed to consider the importance of the autonomy of third sector organisations and that the necessary tools to assess the independence of non-state actors in co-governance systems have not been developed. Drawing on empirical case study research of a Community Planning

Partnership (CPP) in Scotland, Sinclair observes that the third sector organisation in question had benefited from significant state investment in order to build its capacity, raising the concern that it had "become almost the professional face of the sector and different from those on the ground outside the CPP" (Sinclair, 2011, p.86). In research conducted about state and third sector partnership working in Hull and Dundee, Davies (2007) suggests that "if government is part of the problem, an alternative agent of change is required" (p.792) and recommends that community activists consider "exit-action strategies" (p.793) so that they can resist from the outside. In their work on the emergence of sector-state partnership working in Japan, Tsukamoto and Nishimura (2006) conclude that the behaviour of the intermediary bodies involved "comes to resemble that of the government" (p.573). These examples raise fundamental questions about the role and independence of the third sector in these local governance networks.

Craig et al. (2004) argue that the growth of partnership working has created a fundamental dilemma for third sector organisations in how they "balance the opportunity to gain influence with the need to maintain their independence and autonomy" (p.221). Similarly, Rochester (2012) in his historical account of CVSs questions whether CVSs in their representative role can act independently of the local authorities that are often funding them, a concern echoed by Kelly (2007). Lewis (2005) also questions the equality of the relationship between the state and the sector, suggesting that the sector is utilised to meet the goals and ambitions of government. Davies (2011) raise a similar concern stating, "collaboration can succeed in transcending adversarial concepts of 'state' and 'activist' but risks reconstituting activism as 'social capital'; in other words, it risks recuperating 'voice' as a government 'resource'" (p.53). Much of the literature that exists raises concern about the role of the third sector's involvement in governance networks; given its significance, it is an area that requires further and empirical investigation.

In this thesis I draw on the *Baring Foundation's Barometer of Independence* (Baring Foundation, 2015, p.19) to provide a definition of and framework for engaging with the concept of independence. A *Panel on the Independence of the Voluntary Sector* was set up by the Baring Foundation in 2011 to investigate the growing concern that the sector's independence was being compromised by its increasingly close relationship with the state particularly in the delivery of contracts (Baring Foundation, 2011), particularly within the context of austerity. The process was convened by a panel of independent experts to undertake an annual assessment of the sector's independence over a five-year period. The panel concluded that the sector's independence was under a serious and growing threat,

with an increasingly instrumental approach being taken with the sector; these findings were reiterated in each of its annual reports in 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015 (Baring Foundation) and by Civil Exchange's reports (supported by the Baring Foundation) in 2016 and 2017 (Civil Exchange). It is important to note that these UK reports mostly focus on the situation in England.

In the first year, through a consultative process, the panel developed the *Barometer of Independence*. The barometer identifies three dimensions that are required for independence to be upheld: independence of *purpose, voice, and action*. The *Baring Barometer* defines independence of *purpose* as the ability to: "(1) set and review purpose and (2) maintain purpose, mission and values (2011, p.20). Independence of *voice* is defined as the ability to: "(1) protest, campaign and negotiate without fear of retribution and (2) be assertive about own independence, focusing on the cause represented (Baring Barometer, 2011, p.20). Independence of *action* is defined as the ability to: "(1) design and deliver activities that meet needs and (2) innovate, respond creatively to needs and take risks" (Baring Barometer, 2011, p.20).

While the barometer has been critiqued for being a "blunt organising framework" (Egdell and Dutton, 2017, p.26), it is useful in articulating what independence means for the sector, enabling a more nuanced analysis that moves beyond ideology. The framework provides a language that helps articulate why independence is critical. For example, when independence of purpose is compromised, organisations run the risk of moving away from their original mandates (mission drift) and of prioritising funder outcomes over client need. When independence of voice is threatened, organisations do not speak up about the needs of their community and the voices of the most marginalised are further silenced; when organisations fear retribution in negotiating their contracts, they may end up subsidising the cost of government services from their reserves with deleterious consequences on their organisational capacity. When independence of action is threatened, difficult-to-serve clients may be overlooked, innovation may be side-lined, and the quality of services may be compromised. These are some examples of the detrimental impact that loss of independence can and have caused (Baring, 2014, 2015).

While the third sector has always been 'in relationship with' the state, the extent and nature of this relationship been shaped by the state's approach to public administration. The advent of new public management in the 1980s saw the beginning of a shift in the third sector's role from supplementary to key provider in the mixed economy in public services

(Kelly, 2007). The next section outlines the history of the sector-state relations in the UK with a particular focus on the notion of independence.

2.2.3 History of relations between the third sector and the state

In this section I trace the relationship between the third sector and the state in four time periods: (1) 1600s to early 1900s – characterised as "parallel bars", (2) early 1900s to early 1980s – characterised as an "extension ladder", (3) early 1980s to early 2000s – the period of new public management, and (4) 1990s to current day – a period of new public governance. This framework has been developed by adapting a timeline created by Lewis (1999). I analyse the state-sector relations through the prism of independence, and also consider the form of public administration.

2.2.3.1 "Parallel bars" – 1600s to early 1900s

In 1601 the *Elizabethan Statute of Charitable Uses* was passed and voluntary associations began to form. Over the following 300 years, the state provided minimal support in society; people's needs were met through the family, the church and voluntary associations. Social need increased with the collapse of the feudal system and the growth of industrialisation. This period was characterised by the "philanthropic zeal" of the middle-classes responding to the needs of the increasing urbanised masses (Halfpenny and Reid, 2002, p.537). Often overlooked during this period was the growth of mutual associations, organised by the working class; these associations were an important part of the third sector. A key characteristic of this time was the integration of service delivery with campaigning for change; supporting people and fighting for reform went hand in hand (Kendall and Knapp, 1997).

Lewis (1999) describes this period as one in which the third sector took the lead on defining the relationship with the state. The relationship was symbiotic; the third sector was integral and complementary to the state. During this period there was strong independence of the sector from the state; while the spheres worked together, they had clear roles and responsibilities. The state responded only to the needs of the most destitute, the so-called "undeserving poor", through the provision of workhouses, while the third sector responded to the needs of the "deserving poor" (Kendall and Knapp, 1997). The third sector and the state operated in separate spheres, a relationship that was characterised by Sidney and Beatrice Webb by the analogy of "parallel bars" (Webb and Webb, 1912,

p.227). As this analogy suggests, the state and the third sector have an integral relationship to one another; they are part of the same structure, but operate independently.

2.2.3.2 "Extension ladder" – early 1900s to early 1980s

The new liberalism of the early 20th century created demands for state intervention, and increasingly the state played a role in helping all its citizens achieve their potential, not just the most marginalised (Lewis, 1999). This change precipitated a shift in sector-state relations which started in the beginning years of the 20th century, with the state gradually taking over most of the service provision from the third sector (but not the campaigning element that was so central to the early philanthropic movement). The expanded role also reflected the state's response to concerns about voluntary sector failure (Kendall and Knapp, 1997) and growing social welfare needs following the extensive casualties of World War I. By the end of the 1940s legislation was in place that put the state firmly in control of public services, relegating the third sector to a "junior partner in the welfare firm" (Taylor, 2004b, p.131).

The analogy of an "extension ladder" is offered to describe the nature of the sector-state relationship in this period (Lewis, 1999, p.260). The state was now the first line of defence, while the third sector supplemented and complemented services (Lewis, 1999). Despite the state's near takeover of third sector service provision, the sector remained buoyant. In the 1960s through to the 1970s, the third sector was at the forefront of social change, responding to issues arising from urban decay and racial tensions. The 1970s and 1980s saw the growth of explicitly political organisations such as the Child Poverty Action Group and Shelter (Milbourne and Murray, 2017). As criticism of public services mounted, and in the context of the civil rights movements, more innovative third sector responses developed including the growth of self-help groups, service-user organisations and advocacy groups. Community development work, seen as being beyond the capability of the state, was delegated to the third sector and often supported through local authority grants.

While the third sector became more reliant on public funds during this period, its independence does not appear to have been undermined. It was, however, clearly vulnerable; the state took over much of its delivery, an intervention it was unable to prevent. The third sector was brought closer to the state, as reflected by the analogy of the extension ladder, but the role it played and the services that it undertook were deemed to

be outside the purview of the state. It is perhaps this distinction that enabled it to maintain its independence from the state, despite increased financial reliance. The third sector also played a large advocacy role during this time, particularly from the 1960s-1980s, a role that appears to have been tolerated and sometimes welcomed in Labour local authorities and metropolitan councils (Milbourne and Murray, 2017). Again, perhaps because the sector was operating in a distinct realm, it was able to act independently from the state.

2.2.3.3 New public management – early 1980s to early 2000s

The third period of sector-state relations is identified with the rise of neo-liberalism and the influence of new public management (NPM), with the state taking on the role of manager rather than administrator, separating out finance from delivery, and conceptualising people as customers rather than citizens (Lewis, 1999). The political goal was the shrinking of state provision and the reduction of the cost to the public purse, a process that has been referred to as the hollowing out of the state (Skelcher, 2000). The shift in delivery also reflected reduced trust in the public sector and higher expectations of service (Lindsay, 1995). Thatcher's Conservative Government championed the sector as an alternative to a "bureaucratic welfare state that stifles choice and community initiative" (Fyfe, 2005, p.539) and significantly increased its contracting out of services to the third sector (as well as the private sector) while also curtailing community development grants. The third sector's unique selling points to the state were its cost-effectiveness, flexibility, involvement of service users, trustworthiness, innovation and specialisation (Kelly, 2007; Kendall and Knapp, 1997; Macmillan, 2017).

This period represents the most profound shift in the relationship between the sector and the state. More important than the growth of state funding to the sector was the change in the nature of the relationship; the contracting arrangements positioned the state as the purchaser and the third sector as a "service agent" and therefore subordinate to the state (Osborne and McLaughlin, 2004). The particular zeal of NPM introduced market mechanisms to a sector wholly unprepared for such a seismic change in how it related to the state and to its clients. This period was not a partnership of equals; Billis and Harris (1996) characterise this period as one in which the state defined the fiscal conditions of engagement which limited the freedom of the third sector, arguing that this type of instrumentalism led to a lack of independence. In order to meet the demands of a contracting relationship, the sector focused on professionalisation and accreditation regimes; this led to mission drift and an undermining of the volunteerism that had been so

central to the sector (Cairns, 2009; Smith and Smyth, 2010). A scrutiny review undertaken in 1990 found that the funding regimes were driven by cost savings and did not consider the impact on the sector (in terms of mission, volunteerism and delivery); this period also witnessed a shift from core funding to contracts (Lewis, 1999), a practice that remains to this day.

2.2.3.4 New public governance – 2000s to present

The election of New Labour in 1997 brought with it a new relationship with the third sector, but one still built upon the principles of NPM. Milbourne and Murray argue that the Third Way agenda further deepened the neo-liberal commitment using a "social democratic ideological veneer" (2017, p.5). This approach remains the foundation on which the sector and the state relate to this day, although there are important differences in the state-sector relationship between Scotland and England. New Labour's neo-communitarian Third Way approach aimed to be pro-market and pro-state, marking a departure from the pro-market, anti-state stance of the Conservatives, and a break from the traditional Labour Party's anti-market, pro-state ideology (Fyfe, 2005). The third sector was to be brought "from the shadowy enclave to centre stage" (p.538) to help deliver New Labour's vision, a process that in the words of Gordon Brown resulted in the "transformation of the third sector ready to rival market and state" (Fyfe, 2005, p.538). In addition to bolstering the third sector as a provider of public services, the Third Way approach aimed to harness the potential of the third sector to foster civic renewal. However, these two purposes were in conflict, with one aiming to bring the third sector closer to the state, the other to highlight the sector's independence and unique position in communities (Lewis, 2005; Paxton et al., 2005).

The deep engagement of the third sector was fuelled by a genuine belief in the sector's ability to deliver, but extended the restructuring of the sector that had been started through the early contracting out by the Conservatives, leading to "the entrapment" and "induced dependency" (Milbourne and Murray, 2017, p.7) of the sector. Central to the enhanced role of the third sector in public life was the governance of the sector-state relationship through the *Compact*, a document that identified the roles and responsibilities of both partners (Home Office, 1998); Scotland negotiated its own Compact in 1999 (Scottish Executive, 1999). The *Compact*, a highly contested tool, was developed in part to address the instrumentalism of the Conservative's approach to the sector and to restore the sector's

independence (Lewis, 2005), and to replace the 'contract culture' of NPM with the 'partnership culture' of new public governance (Lewis 2005, p123).

The *Compact* has been described as both, "the formal acknowledgement of the complementarity between government and the third sector" (Kelly, 2007, p.1012) positioning the third sector as a major player in public life as well as "a sign of nothing less than the incorporation of the third sector into the state" (Dahrendorf, 2001, cited in Fyfe, 2005, p.543). Fyfe (2005) argues that the reconfiguring of the governance of the third sector has resulted in the restructuring of the sector, a theme echoed by Milbourne and Cushman (2014) who highlight the *Compact's* prescription of managerialism and private sector practices.

Despite the *Compact's* specific encouragement of the sector's active and independent voice, the most chilling impact of the change in relationship has been the impact on advocacy, both externally and internally imposed. In England specifically, the introduction of gagging clauses has made it clear that many contracts explicitly silence the sector's voice (Baring 2013, 2014; Rochester, 2013). Some scholars argue that the process of "co-opting" the third sector into partnerships, both with the public and private sectors, was a strategy to "displace or control dissent" (Halfpenny and Reid, 2002, p.543) and of bringing the sector into the state's policy agenda, enabling the reshaping of civil society (Brandsen et al., 2014). Halfpenny and Reid (2002) argue that "accountability is … the mechanism for disciplining the voluntary sector, just as profit operates in the private sector and votes in the public sector" (p.543). Lewis (2005) argues that the partnership working envisioned by New Labour, while aiming for equality of participation, was based on the expectation that the sector would work within the parameters set by the government. She states, "Given the importance of the government's position as paymaster, an equal partnership is highly unlikely" (Lewis 2005, p.128).

The formation of the Conservative and Liberal Democratic coalition in 2010 shifted the discourse and policy approach away from the third sector to that of the 'Big Society', celebrating the philosophy of volunteerism and self-help over funding of community projects. Macmillan (2017) argues that the coalition took a neutral position to the role of third sector and public service provision, while Milbourne and Murray (2017) argue the third sector lost its preferred status. Within the third sector, the 'Big Society' was viewed as a "contradiction and a cover for cuts" (Macmillan, 2013a, p.6), promoting the value of volunteerism while pursuing a campaign of austerity. Macmillan (2013b) makes the case

that the advent of the 'Big Society' marked a "partial decoupling" (2013b, p.187) of the state and third sector relationship, signalling a future relationship based on a model of separate spheres rather than interdependence.

This analysis has drawn on literature that is primarily UK focused. The next section will explore the relationship between the third sector and the state in Scotland and consider if there is a different approach in the Scottish context.

2.2.4 The Scottish experience

Much of the literature on the third sector treats the UK as a unitary state, suggesting by implication that the English experience is common across all four nations (Alcock, 2012; Vincent and Harrow, 2005); Egdell and Dutton describe the literature as "England-centric" (2017, p.28). In contrast, the question of whether Scotland has a unique approach to policy making is a common theme in the social policy literature, particularly amongst Scottish academics (Danson and Whittam, 2011; Fyfe et al., 2006; Keating, 2010; Sinclair, 2008; Woolvin et al., 2015). In this section I explore the history of the third sector in Scotland and its relationship with the state, and contrast this with the English experience. Unsurprisingly devolution has played a central role in shaping the state-sector relationship and is key to understanding this relationship in particular and the policy context in general.

2.2.4.1 From the political fringes to the policy centre

The people of Scotland voted for devolution in 1997, the year that New Labour came into power in Westminster; Holyrood, Scotland's Parliament, held its first session in 1999. Before devolution the third sector was "on the political fringes" of Scottish society; Burt and Taylor (2002, p.85) attribute the sector's marginalisation to geographical distance from centres of power in London and Europe, a philosophical isolation from the right-wing Conservatism that dominated UK politics, and the lack of a coordinated sector voice. Herein lies a key difference between the sectors north and south of the border; by the late 1990s the third sector in England was already being brought into the mainstream by Conservative efforts to roll back the state and reduce public sector costs. However, Scotland held fundamentally different attitudes to the provision of public services, with a strong commitment to state provision (Alcock, 2012; Maxwell, 2007). Maxwell (2007) contends that this support was attributable to Scotland's economic decline, and the state's role as a major employer and investor in the economy. The public disillusionment with state services that had been expressed in England in the 1960s was largely absent in

Scotland (Maxwell, 2007). The belief in state provision of services significantly shaped the third sector in Scottish society, according it less status and a more marginal role in people's day to day lives.

Devolution fundamentally changed the state-sector relationship. Social policy and the relationships with the third sector and civil society groups were devolved creating a new platform for state-third sector relationships (Alcock, 2012). In a country as small as Scotland the creation of an infrastructure to manage state-third sector relationships meant real power and access for the sector. The new parliament shaped a different polity, with close connections between local and national political representatives; for example, 36% of Scotland's 129 MSPs in 2003 had previously served as local councillors (Sinclair, 2008). The local nature of the new national government, as well as its size, opened up new pathways for third sector relationships.

The endorsement of the *Scottish Compact* (Scottish Executive, 1999) with the third sector was one of the first debates in Holyrood, and reflected Scotland's commitment to a unique model of participation, openness and dissent as evidenced by the *Compact's* declaration that "partnership was not the inevitable state of relations between the sector and the government, and that some voluntary organisations would be more often in opposition to the state than in partnership with it" (Scottish Office cited in Maxwell, 2007, p.215). At the time of devolution, Labour governments held office in all four of the UK's nations (in Scotland Labour was in coalition with the Liberal Democrats); the third sector strategy was similar across all four, however the different histories shaped how devolution unfolded (Alcock, 2012). In Scotland, as across the UK, a strong investment was made in the third sector, however here too the approach was distinctive. Rather than equipping the sector to become a delivery arm of the state, as was the case in England, Scotland's engagement with the sector focused on developing and positioning it as a legitimate partner in the policy arena. Burt and Taylor (2002) chart the increased liberalisation of the sector during the first two terms of the Scottish Executive, both Labour-Liberal Democrat coalitions, identifying four key developments: the *Compact*, the changing infrastructure of government to expand and promote the third sector, the Charity Law Review Commission, and the promotion of Social Investment Scotland to reduce resource dependency on government so as to enable the sector to maintain its independence from the state. They argue that the Executive exhibited a "commitment … underpinned by measures intended to cultivate a more liberal attitude throughout the public sector towards the acceptance of a more politically active voluntary sector" (Burt and Taylor, 2002, p.93). The sector was on

the front-lines of community and therefore able to engage in ways impossible for the state, particularly at a time of declining trust in public sector and state institutions. The Scottish Executive placed particular value on the independence of the sector to engage in the policy landscape.

Over the course of the first two administrations, the third sector was on the radar of government, but not central to it. The primary vehicle for the reform was the public sector itself. Again, this highlights the more muted Scottish government approach to the third sector in delivery.

2.2.4.2 An enterprising third sector

The change in political leadership with the SNP minority government in 2007 signified a sea change in the approach not only towards the third sector but also to local authorities. This change was reflected in changes in government terminology. The term "voluntary sector" with its vestiges of paternalistic philanthropy was replaced by the term "third sector" reflecting the broader role envisioned for the sector in both supporting community cohesion as well as providing quality public services (Ford, 2011). The SNP government wanted an increased economic role for the sector, positioning it alongside the state and the market (Ford, 2011). New Labour had used the term from its early days in office, reflecting perhaps the "third way" politics that guided much of Labour's thinking.

The 2007 *Concordat* outlined the relationship between the two levels of government with the goal of creating the foundation for a new relationship based on mutual respect (Scottish Government, 2007). The *Concordat* transferred significant responsibility for third sector policy and engagement to the local level (Alcock, 2012), a process further developed through the development of third sector interfaces in 2011. However, the third sector remained on the national government's agenda; in addition to playing a key role in policy, the sector was envisioned as a driver of the economy with an expanded service delivery role. In the foreword to *The Enterprising Third Sector: Action Plan 2008-2011* (Scottish Government, 2008), John Swinney, Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Sustainable Growth stated, "The Scottish Government wants to create the right operating conditions in which an enterprising third sector can play a full role in the development, design and delivery of policy and services in Scotland, putting the people of Scotland at the heart of their plans" (Scottish Government, 2008, p.1). Amongst the objectives outlined in the strategy was the opening up of markets to the third sector and the promotion of social entrepreneurship

(Scottish Government, 2008, v). To complete this change in direction, the influential *Christie Commission* of 2011 highlighted the role of the third sector in public service provision, in delivering better value and in facilitating the engagement of users in co-production.

2.2.4.3 'The Scottish approach'

Alcock (2012) argues that there is policy convergence between Scotland and England, and that Kendall's characterisation of the "hyperactive mainstreaming" of the third sector could equally be applied in Scotland as well as Northern Ireland and Wales; he argues this despite providing compelling evidence to the contrary. Conversely, Danson and Whittam conclude that there is policy divergence in the Scottish approach to the third sector and in the degree of contracting out of public services, summarising "that while the peculiar UK/UK ('Anglo Saxon') social model continues to dominate and set the agenda at Westminster, restricting and corrupting the role of the voluntary and community sector in service delivery, in Scotland these tendencies are tempered by the government and civic society" (Danson and Whittam, 2011, p.354). Egdell and Dutton (2017) argue that social policy differences exist primarily in rhetoric rather than in reality despite Scotland's long held desire to be different; they do, however acknowledge that contractual practices and a mixed economy approach is more prevalent in England. In policies related to community participation, Rolfe's (2016) analysis of English and Scottish approaches clearly identifies very different rationales and highlights significant political and policy divergence with England favouring marketisation. Significant divergence is also evidenced by Westminster's 2014 *Transparency of Lobbying, Non-party Campaigning and Trade Union Administration Act* which put limits on third party campaigning and political lobbying, regulation that extended to charities. The *Act* was widely criticised by the sector as having a chilling effect on its independence of voice. A similar critique has been levelled at the introduction of gagging clauses into contracts issued by central government departments, preventing third sector contractors from using contract funds for campaigning or advocacy purposes, clauses which some argue have the potential to control the publication of research critical of government (Milbourne and Murray, 2017). In England there has also been more extensive privatisation of services and contracting out to large private companies such as Serco and G4S, with some third sector organisations operating as sub-contractors (Milbourne and Murray, 2017).

The Scottish approach to policy making is associated with the SNP and its development of an outcomes-based framework, known as the *National Performance Framework* (NPF) in 2007 (Scottish Parliament Information Centre, 2012). The NPF sets the direction of government, and aims to reduce policy silos. The plans of local authorities must also be linked to the NPF. The recommendations of the *Christie Commission* shaped an agenda for public service reform focusing on the four pillars of people, prevention, performance, and partnership; place is also considered significant. The Scottish approach promotes an asset-based philosophy and a coproduction approach (Ferguson, 2015), and the involvement of citizens and communities are central to the approach to policy making. Despite the government's commitment to subsidiarity, it is often critiqued for being centralising in its approach. Mazzei et al. (2019, p.15) note:

> The 'Scottish approach' to policymaking emphasises collaboration between government and citizens but has been introduced from 'above' at a time of limited resources, while expected to be implemented at the local level by local authorities who are not only potentially resistant to change but also facing significant cuts due to a decade of public sector austerity.

In Scotland, while slower to embrace the third sector in service delivery, there is an active engagement with the sector particularly through partnership working. Perhaps because of this slow involvement, there is limited research exploring the impact on the sector of close engagement with the state. Among relevant studies are those of Egdell and Dutton (2017) and Fyfe and Milligan (2001). Egdell and Dutton (2017) conducted research about the independence of the third sector involved in service delivery in Scotland, also drawing on the *Baring Barometer of Independence*. They concluded that independence of *voice* is contested, although the restrictions are not as extensive as in England; independence of *action* is constrained by commissioning processes and short termism. They found independence of *purpose* was compromised by the third sector's pursuit of contracts (Egdell and Dutton, 2017). Fyfe and Milligan (2001) researched the impact of third sector engagement in delivery in Glasgow. They highlighted a bi-furcation of the sector, critiquing corporatist organisations for replicating the bureaucratic hierarchies of the public sector and disempowering users, a trend which they linked to the increased role in service provision. These studies, though limited, do raise concerns about the impact of the Scottish third sector's closeness with the state in the service delivery context.

2.2.5 Analysis of relations between the third sector and the state

In this section I consider the nature of the sector's relationship with the state in each of the four historical periods detailed in section 2.2.3. I draw on the *Baring Barometer* to make a claim about the sector's independence of purpose (freedom to define vision and mission), independence of voice (ability to speak out), and independence of action (ability to provide services according to organisational ethos). I have compiled this analysis from the literature. There are, of course, dangers in undertaking an exercise that organises a complex and multifaceted history into neat categories and timeframes. The attempt to assess the degree of independence, a concept which is inherently amorphous, and further to make a conclusion about the nature of sector-state relations over vastly different time periods, is justifiably open to critique. This exercise undoubtably relies on historical reductionism and oversimplification. Neither the state nor the third sector is monolithic. In particular, and as previously noted, there is a critique about the bifurcation of the sector (Fyfe and Milligan, 2003; Knight, 1993); accordingly, it is questionable to even speak about *a* sector. There are in fact many sectors; relationships differ within sub-sectors and within different service areas, as well as across the four nations of the UK. There are also differences in the role of the state at different levels of governance, i.e. local versus national, and within different arenas of state action.

Despite the risks identified, the following analysis highlights the shifting role of the state and the sector through four historical periods that parallel fundamental changes in public administration paradigms (see section 3.1 in chapter three for a detailed discussion). While there may be contention about how the historical periods have been defined, and how the independence and the nature of the sector state relationship are characterised, the analysis presents an important conception of how the dynamics between the state and the sector have changed over time.

The following table presents a macro analysis through which to understand the broad changes in the sector's relationship with the state over time and assesses its degree of independence drawing on the *Baring Barometer*. An attempt is also made to compare the experience in England and Scotland from the period of NPM through to new public governance. The table is followed by a fuller interpretation.

Table 2:2 - Third sector's historical relationship with the state in the UK

	Independence of purpose?		Independence of voice?	Independence of action?	Nature of sector state relations
1600s – 1900s "parallel bars"	*Yes* Sector able to respond to needs as it determines		*Yes* Sector free to campaign without fear of retribution; assertive about independence; legitimacy of voice, no self-censorship	*Yes* Sector free to design and deliver activities to meet needs, free to innovate	*Independent* Sector seen as complementing state, operating in different but parallel spheres; state provides minimal services; clear demarcation between who state serves (undeserving) and sector serves (deserving)
			Service delivery and campaigning go hand in hand		
Early 1900s to early 1980s "extension ladder"	*To great extent* Although sector has a reduced scope, it is still able to respond to needs as it determines		*Yes* Sector still active in advocacy; assertive about independence; legitimacy of voice, no self-censorship	*Yes* Sector free to design and deliver activities to meet needs, free to innovate	*Independent to great extent* Sector has reduced role as state provision expanded; again clear demarcation of what state and sector provide
			Service delivery and campaigning go hand in hand		
Late 1980s to early 2000s **New public manage-ment**	**England**	*Compromised* Sector challenged in maintaining purpose, vision, values because of extent of contracting out; mission drift; needs identified by state, which changes purpose	*Compromised* Sector fearful to protest for fear of retribution; strong levels of self-censorship; activism no longer integrated across sector	*Compromised* Sector limited in ability to design and deliver to meet needs of community; needs and service models defined by state; innovation limited	*High levels of dependency* Contracting out of government services, means sector and state serving same people; sector highly dependent on state for funds; state in role of contractor

		Independence of purpose?	Independence of voice?	Independence of action?	Nature of sector state relations
	Scotland	*Somewhat compromised* Increased level of contracting out of services	*Somewhat compromised* Sector cautious because of level of contracting	*Somewhat compromised* Sector cautious because of level of contracting	*Growing level of dependency* In areas where services contracted out, growing level of dependency
Early 2000s to present **New public governance**	England	*Compromised* As above - with growth of large private sector sub-contracting	*Extremely compromised* As above - with additional challenge of gagging clauses	*Compromised* As above - with growth of large private sector sub-contracting; late 2000s austerity agenda and focus on volunteerism	*High levels of dependency* As above - and pressure on volunteerism as funds reduced
	Scotland	*Somewhat compromised* Increased level of contracting out of services	*Somewhat compromised* Sector cautious because of level of contracting	*Somewhat compromised* Sector cautious because of level of contracting	*Growing level of dependency* In areas where services contracted out, growing level of dependency

Source: author's own

As this analysis reflects, the only period of true independence of the third sector was in the early years of the sector's development, when it was the primary provider of services. Given that state's lack of involvement in service provision there was no conflict in how services were provided or funded; there was no overlap in who the sector and the state provided for. Organisations working at the front-lines were advocates with no fear of retribution as the third sector and state worked in parallel spheres.

In the second period of sector-state relations, the organisations that survived the state's expansion into service delivery remained significantly independent. However, the fact that the state's growth resulted in a contraction of the sector reveals its vulnerability. The state's takeover of services through legislation eclipsed, but did not obliterate, the third sector. For those organisations that survived, there was independence of purpose, voice and action. While there was an increased financial reliance of the sector on the state, the

spheres of responsibility continued to be quite distinct. It was not until the third period, beginning in the early 1980s, that the fundamental shift in independence took place with the sector taking on services previously provided by government; as noted this shift was related to NPM and the marketisation of services. Significantly in this period, an overlap took place between the people served by the state and those served by the sector; this was a new phenomenon from the previous periods of sector-state relations. The advent of contracting meant that the third sector was providing public services on behalf of the state. The contractual nature of the state's relationship with the sector reshaped not only the relationship between sector and state, but also restructured the sector (Fyfe, 2005). As noted, the extent of the shift was more limited in Scotland.

The fourth and current period from the beginning of the millennium also reflects a differing picture in Scotland than England. In England, the third sector's independence has been undermined by the intensive privatisation of public services, the domination of large private contractors in the public service market and their sub-contracting out to third sector organisations, and the blunt instrument of the gagging clause. The Scottish Government's approach, although built on the communitarian influence of the New Labour project, continues to value the independence of the third sector. In reality this may be compromised on the ground in the detail of contracting, but at a normative level the belief in the sector's independence prevails. The purpose of this research is to explore this question further through empirical investigation to understand what is happening in the field.

Section 2.2 has focused on the third sector, putting into context the theoretical and definitional approaches to the study of the sector; I have traced the sector's relationship with the state, exploring this from the perspective of the sector's independence. Much of the literature regarding the sector's independence focuses on the sector's role in the service delivery sphere; an area that is of increasing significance is the sector's involvement in wider governance arrangements. As identified in section 2.1, the democratisation of governance has opened up opportunities for the third sector, but this is accompanied with risks.

In the next chapter, I bring together the literature on public administration with that of the third sector.

3 Public administration regimes, representation and conceptual framework

The previous chapter situated the theoretical framing of the research study within democratic governance, detailed the history of the third sector's relationship with the state, and analysed the nature of the sector-state relationship with respect to independence. This chapter, in four sections, builds on the last. Section 3.1 brings together the literature on public administration regimes, the third sector, and independence. Section 3.2 explores the issue of representation and reviews the literature on intermediary bodies. Section 3.3 identifies the gaps in the literature and elucidates the rationale for my research questions. Section 3.4 presents the conceptual framework that I use to explore and analyse my data, employing concepts of space, power, and liminality as analytical tools.

3.1 Public administration regimes, the third sector, and independence

Chapter two identified literature exploring the impact of the third sector's engagement with the state in delivering services. An area that has received less attention relates to the involvement of the third sector, and specifically of intermediary bodies, in governance. There is scant literature that explores the involvement of third sector bodies that are not, themselves, service delivery bodies. Teles (2013) states that a discussion about the third sector's independence[11] is missing from theoretical debates on governance. This gap is one that deserves attention and one that this thesis aims to address.

The role and size of the third sector has been shaped directly by the governance mechanisms utilised by government, as well as by state policy. In this section I integrate the analysis of the shifting relationships between the third sector and the state with changes in governance. I employ the concepts used by Rhodes (1996) of steering and rowing to understand the distinction between government's policy decisions (steering) and the delivery of the services emanating from those decisions (rowing).

In the previous chapter I charted the third sector's relationship with the state in four periods; I employ the same categories here to explore public administration and the third sector, drawing on the three governance paradigms. In the first period ("parallel bars" – 1600s to early 1900s) the state had a minimal role in service provision; the development of

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[11] Teles uses the term autonomy rather than independence (2013, p.791).
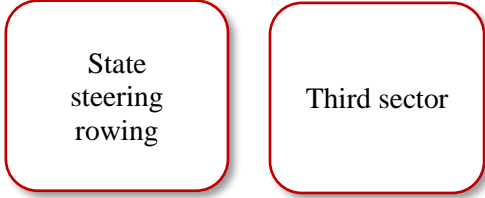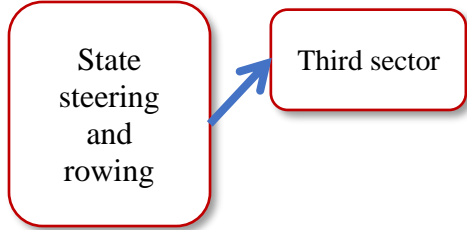
public administration did not develop until the late 1800s. In this period there was very little relationship between the third sector and state; the third sector and state both steered and rowed independently of one another in terms of the provision of services. In the second period ("extension ladder" – early 1900s to early 1980s), the governance mechanism was a hierarchical one; decisions were made by a unitary state (Osborne, 2010). The state was responsible for policy and implementation; drawing on Rhodes' analogy, the state did the steering and the rowing. This timeline covers a long historical period, and it is important to note differences in the state's role during this time. For example, in the 1970s and early 80s many projects were undertaken by communities with state support; there was considerable autonomy in projects and grants administered at the local authority level, despite the central state being the overall administrators (Milbourne and Murray, 2017).
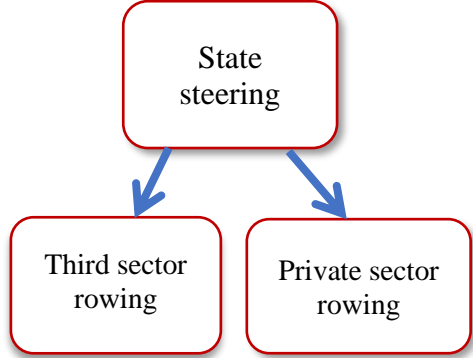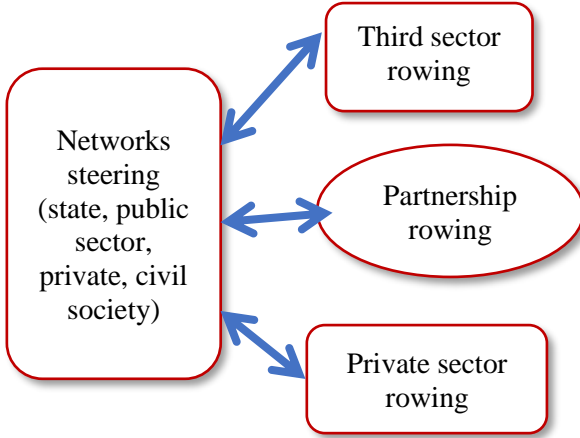
The third period of sector-state relations is identified with the rise of neo-liberalism and the influence of new public management (NPM – early 1980s to early 2000s), with the state taking on the role of manager rather than administrator, separating out finance from delivery, and conceptualising people as customers rather than citizens (Lewis, 1999). The civil service was no longer considered an appropriate provider of services. To continue the analogy, the state steered and contracted out the rowing to non-state actors. This period resulted in state fragmentation. The third sector was a major beneficiary in the contracting out of public services, although this was less the case in Scotland where a stronger belief in government provision persisted (Alcock, 2012; Maxwell, 2007). This period saw a major expansion of the sector but arguably at a cost to its independence (Brandsen et al., 2014; de Corte and Verschuere, 2014; Milbourne and Murray, 2017; Osborne, 2000; Smith and Smyth, 2010). The fourth period (new public governance – 2000s to current period) is characterised by the engagement of different stakeholders in the development of policy and the delivery of services. In this paradigm, networks steer and networks row. Governance theory has changed the role of the state, but has not decentred it. The third sector continues to play a significant role as it is a key provider of public services, a role that has expanded in Scotland over the past decade.

The following table brings together my previous analysis about the third sector's relationship with the state, particularly with respect to the degree of its independence, contrasting it with the state's public administration approach. It uses Rhodes' analogy of steering and rowing to reflect the dynamics between the state and non-state actors. An important caveat is necessary here, similar to the one noted in chapter two, section 2.2.5.

In order to characterise over four centuries of sector-state relations, against a backdrop of evolving public administration regimes, the analysis relies on oversimplification and historical reductionism. While such categorisation is clearly and justifiably open to challenge, the key purpose is to reflect the shifting relationship between the third sector and the state, and the central role of public administration approaches in shaping that relationship.

Table 3:1 - Contrast of third sector state relations with public administration regimes

	Nature of third sector state relations	State approach	State approach: analogy of steering (policy, design, funding) and rowing (delivery)
1600s – 1900s **"parallel bars"**	*Independent* • Third sector complementing the state; operating in different but parallel spheres • State provides minimal services • Clear demarcation between who state serves (undeserving) and sector (deserving)	*Hierarchy* • Small state, limited role • State hierarchical • Few services delivered by state • Strong third sector • System of public administration began developing in late 1800s	State steering rowing Third sector
Early 1900s through welfare state development to early 1980s **"extension ladder"**	*Independent to great extent* • Sector has reduced role as state provision expanded • Again, clear demarcation of what state and sector provide	*Hierarchy* • Unitary state • Expanding state • Cradle to grave provision • Creation of NHS • Takeover by the state of services delivered by third sector • 1960-70s – "overloaded state" • Continued expansion of state • 1960-80s - growth of self-help groups, self-organised networks • State contracting out services to third sector it cannot deliver	State steering and rowing → Third sector

	Nature of third sector state relations	State approach	State approach: analogy of steering (policy, design, funding) and rowing (delivery)
Late 1980s to early 2000s **New public management**	*High levels of dependency - more so in England than Scotland* • Contracting out of government services, means sector and state serving same people • Sector highly dependent on state for funds • State in role of contractor	*Markets* • 1980s-early 90s – "hollowed out state" • State as facilitator of the market Managerialism • Professional management • Standards, management by results • Creation of incentives and markets • Contracting out, quasi markets • Consumer choice • Late 1990s – "congested state" Results in fragmentation, issues with steering and accountability	State steering → Third sector rowing / Private sector rowing
Early 2000s to present **New public governance**	*Continued high levels of dependency – more so in England than Scotland* • Contracting out of government services, means sector and state serving same people • Sector highly dependent on state for funds • State in role of contractor and partner	*Networks* • Shift to partnerships and network governance • Shift from conflictual politics to consensus politics • State as facilitator of networks • Plural state, networks based on trust	Networks steering (state, public sector, private, civil society) ↔ Third sector rowing / Partnership rowing / Private sector rowing

Source: author's own

As the relationship between the third sector and the state has developed over time and its role in service delivery grown, the need for the sector to be represented has increased. In the next section I explore the issues of representation in the third sector, with a particular focus on the representation role in local governance networks undertaken by intermediary bodies.

3.2 Representation and the third sector

Along with independence, the concept of representation is fundamental to this research study, in particular the representation role undertaken by intermediary bodies. This section explores the concept of representation, reviews the literature on third sector participation in local governance, charts the evolution of local intermediary bodies, identifies issues of representation related specifically to intermediary bodies, and provides an overview of intermediary bodies in Scotland.

3.2.1 Representation

Representation is a thorny concept. I draw on the seminal work of Pitkin, from her book entitled The Concept of Representation (1967). Etymologically she describes the word as meaning a "*re-presentation,* a making present again" (Pitkin, 1967, p.8). In its general usage, she defines representation as, "the making present *in some sense* of something which is nevertheless *not* present literally or in fact" (1967, p.9). She identifies four types of representation that collectively bring some understanding to the complexity of the concept: formalistic, descriptive, symbolic, and substantive[12]. Formalistic views of representation are about the process of election rather than how an individual fulfils the representation role; descriptive representation, "standing for", refers to the idea that a representative needs to reflect or be a member of their constituency, to be like them; symbolic representation, also described as "standing for" refers to the idea that the representative is believed in, they are symbolic of the people; and finally, substantive representation, which she describes as "acting" describes the activities of the representative, it is about "the realm of action" (1967, p.142).

She presents an example where an individual is appointed to the board rather than elected. She states "their role, the reason for labelling their job as 'representing' is to speak for, act

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[12] Pitkin does not use the term substantive, she uses the term 'acting'; this term has been employed by Guo and Musso (2007) to characterise Pitkin's meaning. The term is now associated with Pitkin in the literature (for example, Metelsky et al., 2019).

for, look after the interests of their respective groups" (1967, p.116). This example is relevant to the TSI as it could be argued that the involvement of TSIs in local governance networks was an appointment by the Scottish government as opposed to an election by the community. An important element of the representative's role is what she refers to the "mandate – independence controversy"; this essentially is a question about how much autonomy the representative holds. This can be characterised as "wishes or welfare" (1967, p.445): does the representative act on behalf of the wishes of their constituents, or does the representative act according to what is best for their welfare?

Guo and Musso (2007) build on the work of Pitkin, adding participatory representation as an additional dimension that is particular to the third sector. Participatory representation describes the engagement of constituents through participatory mechanisms within an organisation. Guo and Musso (2007) draw on research that identifies a link between participatory arrangements and the substantive representation of organisations (Brown, 2002; Checkoway and Zimmerman, 1992; Freeman, 1984; Harrison and Mort, 1998); where these participatory mechanisms are in place and are effective, there is a positive impact on the substantive representation of constituents. It is important to note that the research they draw upon describes organisations within neighbourhood associations; the specific organisational structure that is the focus of this research, an intermediary body, is difficult to find in the literature. Substantive representation is described by Guo and Musso as an organisation acting "in the interests of its constituents, in a manner responsive to them", measured by "the congruence between leaders and constituents on issues of most importance" (2007, p.312).

The work of Hirschman (1970) is also relevant to questions of representation. He developed the concepts of exit, voice and loyalty and while his work was rooted in an economic analysis exploring the decline of firms and organisations, he employed an interdisciplinary approach to apply his concepts more broadly to social organisations and the state. In his analysis he describes the concept of exit as an option that people have in the marketplace; they can decide to stop buying a product. Exit is more complex in a social structure such as a family or the state. The concept of voice describes the idea of people raising their voices in protest against something; in a market situation this could be represented by individuals complaining to an organisation. This concept can more easily be extended to people raising their voices in the political context. The other related concept is loyalty; loyalty is about a commitment that either consumers or members of the society have to a particular company, organisation, or political party. These concepts, exit,

voice and loyalty work together to create pressures and tensions. He states for example that "the effectiveness of the voice mechanism is strengthened by the possibility of exit" (Hirschman, 1970, p.83), suggesting that the activation of voice will be stronger if it is accompanied by the potential that people will leave an organisation. He relates these concepts to the idea of flight (exit) versus fight (voice). In an analogy about integration in America he suggests that the "plucking" of promising members of black communities into white society could actually weaken the black movement as a whole. He states that this, "weakens the collective thrust which the group might otherwise muster" (1970, p.109). He concludes that "voice (was) fatally weakened by exit of some" (1970, p.110). This analogy, though in a very different context, is interesting to relate to the third sector. Is it possible that the active involvement of the third sector with the state has actually weakened the collective thrust of the sector? The next section reviews the literature related to third sector participation in local governance.

3.2.2 Third sector participation in local governance

There is a paucity of literature that specifically considers the experience of third sector organisations that participate in governance networks as representatives of the broader sector. There is the rich body of literature related to the participation of citizens and communities participating in governance networks and partnerships (for example, Brandsen et al., 2014; de Corte and Verschuere, 2014; Gaventa, 2004; Taylor, 2004a, 2011), but a limited empirical body related specifically to intermediary bodies; exceptions include Osborne (2000) and Sinclair (2011), reviewed in section 3.2.4. This is where my interest lies: to understand the role of a third sector interface, an intermediary body, in local governance. The definition of a state-initiated governance network[13] that I am employing is of an "institutionalised formal and informal resource exchange between government and non-government actors" (Davies, 2011, p.3).

Issues of representation in the third sector are rife with tension. As the sector has become increasingly involved with the state in both service delivery and governance, the question of how it represents itself has intensified. The state wants the sector to speak with one voice, preferably through a single representative (McLaughlin and Osborne, 2000; Taylor, 2004a), however it is impossible to represent the breadth and depth of the sector and in fact

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[13] The governance network is a space in which partnership working takes place; it is a type of partnership. There are however, partnerships that would not be considered governance networks; for example, partnerships of service providers who meet to share best practice. In this thesis I use the term 'governance networks' to refer to formal public sector partnerships initiated by the state, such as the CPP.

puts representatives in an untenable situation (Escobar, 2005; Gaventa, 2004; Osborne, 2000; Rochester, 2012; Sinclair, 2008; Taylor, 2004a, 2011). There are risks inherent in participation including the distancing of representatives from their community (Brandsen et al., 2014; Taylor, 2011; Teles, 2013), curbing the activism of third sector or community representatives in favour of professional behaviour and discourse (de Corte and Verschuere, 2014; McLaughlin and Osborne, 2000; Milbourne and Murray, 2017; Rose, 1999; Taylor, 2011), using third sector representatives as a shortcut to community (Osborne, 2000), and becoming complicit in state decision-making (Edwards, 2014; Smith and Smyth, 2010). The essential role of community organisations can also be subverted through participation (McLaughlin and Osborne, 2000). The evolution of local intermediary bodies and issues of representation are considered in the next two sections.

3.2.3 The evolution of local intermediary bodies

The Council for Voluntary Service (CVS) is the most ubiquitous form of local intermediary body in the UK, and is of direct relevance to this research as the organisation studied is a CVS. The history of CVSs is charted by Lansley (1996) and Rochester (2012). The predecessor for the CVS model, the Hampstead Council of Social Welfare, was developed by philanthropist Thomas Hancock Nunn in 1907 with a vision of coordinating the resources of churches, municipal bodies and voluntary organisations at the local level (Rochester, 2012). Nunn went on to campaign for similar bodies to be set up across the country; the model was referenced in a memorandum in the Report of the *Royal Commission on the Poor Laws* in 1909. By 1931 there were 120 Councils of Social Service (CSS). The CSS used an incubator model where the CSS responded to gaps in service with the understanding that an independent organisation would eventually take over the activity. The CSS model was expanded across the country in 1974 as a result of the reorganisation of local government. Lansley characterises this expansion as "top down" rather than driven by third sector need (1996, p.170). While CSSs were utilised by the sector, the statutory sector did not engage with them.

The influential Wolfenden Report of 1978 established to review voluntary action characterised the role of the sector as one that "complements, supplements, extends and influences the informal and statutory systems" (Wolfenden, 1978, p.26). It describes the CSSs, which by that time were beginning to be known as CVSs, as "local generalist intermediary bodies" (Wolfenden, 1978, p.100) with five key functions: development, services to other organisations, liaison, representation, and direct services to individuals

(pp.110-111). The report's approach to intermediary bodies is credited with developing the idea of there being a distinct *sector* for voluntary services (Kendall, 2000; Rochester, 2012). Rochester (2012) identifies three specific recommendations from the report: the membership of these bodies should consist exclusively of voluntary sector bodies rather than including statutory sector bodies; activities should be included for the benefit of the membership, that is, voluntary sector organisations; and their remit should be expanded to include all voluntary action rather than a limited focus on social welfare. The recommendations of the report were widely accepted although the terminology was not; the term 'local development agency' was adopted in the sector, which in turn was later replaced by 'infrastructure body'. In Scotland the current terminology of 'intermediary' has found favour.

The changing public administration regime of NPM in the 1980s, and then new public governance in the early 2000s, transformed the face of public service provision. The third sector became a vital partner in the delivery of services and later in planning and governance, thereby necessitating a more active liaison role for the sector's intermediary bodies in helping build the sector's capacity and professionalism and partnering with the state in the development of local Compacts and in strategic collaborations (Lansley, 1996; Macmillan, 2017; Rochester, 2012). The significance of the closer working relationship with the state was reflected by the National Association of Councils for Voluntary Service which in 2004 stated that "working in partnership at strategic level is now a central part of the work of the CVS" (NACVS, 2004, cited in Rochester, 2012, p.105). Rochester (2012) identifies a number of the challenges faced by CVSs which include resourcing, capacity, expertise, lack of first-hand experience, and token membership. Significantly, he argues that the representative role "is – and always has been – the most difficult of the CVS functions" (Rochester, 2012, p.108). Despite efforts of many CVSs to facilitate representation through participatory mechanisms, the demands on frontline organisations mean that the "CVS is often left holding the baby of representation" (Rochester, p.108). Lansley (1996) identifies the challenge for CVSs of negotiating their internal mandate to support the sector with the external mandate of facilitating relations with state. He also identifies a split within intermediary bodies between those that are acceptable to the local authority and those that are seen as challenging the establishment. The issues related to intermediary bodies and representation are considered in the next section.

3.2.4 Intermediary bodies and issues of representation

The issues associated with intermediary bodies and representation are detailed in a research study of Local Development Agencies (LDAs) in England. Representation was interrogated from the perspective of voluntary and community organisations and four issues were identified (Osborne, 2000). First, it is not possible for LDAs to represent the view of their members or clients because they just do not have the specialist knowledge and experience. Second, it is not appropriate for LDAs to try and speak on behalf of organisations which have their own perspectives, particularly in the case of larger organisations. Third, it is not realistic to think that LDAs could represent such a vast geographical area and range of organisations; at best their attempts would be partial. Finally, there is a risk that in having the LDA represent the community, local government is relieved of doing meaningful consultation. Sinclair (2008) echoes the limitations of representation in governance networks; in a study he undertook of Scottish CPPs, statutory partners expressed frustration that "voluntary and community services representatives do not speak with one voice" (p.382). Sinclair (2008) argues that in order to be effective at facilitating (rather than representing) the third sector voice, third sector representatives need to be supported and mechanisms are needed to enable an effective consultation within the community.

Sinclair (2011) undertook another relevant research study of a Scottish Community Planning Partnership (CPP); while it is not focused on the issue of representation, it provides rich insights into the role and place of a third sector intermediary in governance. He found that while third sector representatives were respected and the importance of their role was recognised, they were viewed as less significant than public sector players; the CPP could function without the third sector representative, but not without its public sector partners. Sinclair describes their role as that of a "junior partner" (Sinclair, 2011, p.77). This finding is corroborated by evaluations carried out by Volunteer Action Scotland indicating that despite being involved at the highest levels in community planning some TSIs felt they were not treated as equal partners (VAS, 2013, 2015).

Interestingly, in Sinclair's case study, the third sector's role was viewed differently by partners within the CPP; while the third sector saw their role as one of democratic accountability, other partners saw their role as more instrumental, bringing helpful insight from the coalface. This positions the third sector involvement as a special interest group, providing on the ground intelligence, as opposed to an equal partner in the policy making

process (Sinclair, 2011). This is the criticism that is often levelled about the role of communities in the CPP, that they are consulted but not truly engaged. Further evidence of third sector's marginal position was the strong will expressed by public sector partners that the participation of third sector, community or private sectors in the CPP not be allowed to compromise their duties as public agencies (Sinclair, 2011). This suggests that the non-statutory partners were seen as a potential threat to public sector partners in meeting their public sector responsibilities. Further, decisions were often made outside of formal meetings, with the actual CPP providing only an opportunity to comment on decisions rather than actually shaping them, demonstrating that the third sector had less influence than others between meetings (Sinclair, 2011).

Related very much to power, culture was a dominant feature of the CPP experience described above, with third sector representatives experiencing the way business was conducted as formal and alien. A focus on pragmatism and getting the work done characterised the process, experienced by some as "highly negative and disempowering" (Sinclair, 2011, p.81). Sinclair notes that the third sector's inability to influence this way of working again reflects its lesser status in the CPP. Culture and expectations had a profound impact on how the third sector representatives participated in the CPP. They were expected to be "professional rather than adversarial in their relationship to others" and to be "more business like" (Sinclair, 2011, p.85). This expectation was embodied by a third sector representative in the chilling statement, "I think you have got to work alongside them and be one of them" (Sinclair, 2011, p.85), a statement that gets to the heart of the question about the sector's independence in these governance structures.

The professionalism of the third sector representatives was contrasted with the behaviour of some of the community groups that were known to the CPP who were seen as confrontational, unrealistic and not genuinely representative (Sinclair, 2011). This appears to create a dichotomy of us and them; the "us" who work together professionally for the community versus the unrepresentative messy community groups who are unreasonable and are not representative. This highlights the distinction made by Cowell (2004) about the process of democratic engagement being at odds with the instrumental roles of partnerships, and reinforces the issues identified in the previous chapter about the role of consensus in network governance.

Sinclair concludes that the third sector representative was more likely to exert influence if they behaved like other public sector partners; he states, "they had to be reconstituted by

the CPP to make it fit for the requirements of partnership" (Sinclair, 2011, p.88). This particularly disturbing finding raises important questions about the independence of the third sector in community planning. While Sinclair's study is directly relevant, it highlights the paucity of research in the field. Further, there are specific questions not addressed through Sinclair's work that require consideration; these include the relationship between the third sector body and the broader third sector it represented in the CPP, and the implications on the independence of the third sector through participation in local governance.

Kelly (2007) distinguishes the role of two key national intermediary bodies in England; the National Council of Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) and the Association of Chief Executives of Voluntary Organisations (ACEVO), both of which have Scottish equivalents. She characterises NCVO as an advocate for the sector, cautious about the government's agenda for the third sector, and focused on the sector's independence. On the other hand, ACEVO is committed to professionalising and modernising the sector, and therefore works closely with the government to secure a role for the sector in delivering public services. Kelly characterises intermediary bodies, including the CVSs, as "notionally independent" and questions whether they are able to reflect the diversity of the third sector (2007, p.1007). She links the question of the sector's dependence on the state with its ability to represent the sector to the state:

> More generally, it is a critical point whether there are sufficient safeguards that decouple dependency on national or local government funding and representation of the sector to government (Kelly, 2007, p.1008).

The next section charts the Scottish landscape of intermediary bodies.

3.2.5 Intermediary bodies in Scotland

Evaluation Support Scotland (ESS) (2018) produced a resource to help intermediaries in Scotland identify their impact. This document provides relevant information about the landscape of intermediary bodies in Scotland; it was developed in active partnership with the sector. ESS defines an intermediary as "a third sector organisation, whose members are mainly other third sector organisations and whose role (partly or wholly) is to represent and support those members. Intermediaries are legally independent and are governed by a Board of Trustees and led by members" (2018, p.5). The three core roles are defined as: "providing a platform for member and sector voices, supporting front line organisations to

deliver well, and connecting people and organisations" (2018, p.9). Six core functions are articulated: "representation and policy influencing (identifying different perspectives on policy influence); building and sharing intelligence and evaluation; information and support; organisational development and capacity building; developing and promoting good practice; and creating opportunities for networking/collaboration" (2018, p.9).

The Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations produced a report on intermediaries in Scotland (2017). It identified over 40,000 voluntary organisations and 60 national intermediaries (SCVO, 2017, p.1). Some of the intermediaries are sector wide, some are policy specific, and some are specialist. SCVO describes the role of intermediaries as communication and networking; information and support; organisational development and capacity building; intelligence and evaluation; research, monitoring and evaluation; and promoting good practice (SCVO, p.2). It characterises the growth of intermediary bodies as attributable to the growth in the sector's turnover from £2 billion in 2000 to nearly £5 billion in 2015, the Scottish Parliament's focus on collaborative policy and development, and effectiveness of the bodies (SCVO, p.2). SCVO is an example of a national, generalist intermediary body. The TSIs, which exist in each of Scotland's 32 local authorities, are not included in these figures as they are local in nature.

An intermediary body quoted in the report under the section entitled 'representation and policy making' states: "Most of our members are not 'policy people' – they just want to deliver a good service locally to the people that rely on them" (SCVO, p.1). This quote highlights one of the issues identified by Rochester (2012), that members may be content to leave the intermediary body with the role of representation (what Rochester refers to as "holding the baby of representation" (p.108)), enabling them to focus their energies on different priorities.

This section has explored the concept of representation and considered the issues of representation within the third sector, particularly for intermediary bodies involved in local governance. In the following section I restate the gaps in the literature, provide a rationale for this research, and identify my research questions.

3.3 Justification for this research study

I came into the PhD with an interest in intermediary bodies and how they navigate their independence from the state, as well as their relationship with the broader third sector that

they represent. In particular, I wanted to focus on the third sector's participation in local governance. At the time that I began my research, the TSI model was still in its infancy and had been the subject of very little evaluation or research: an evaluation had been undertaken by Voluntary Action Scotland (the umbrella body for the TSIs) in 2013, the TSIs had been referenced in a report commissioned by the Scottish Government on the challenges and opportunities for the third sector of the changing public service environment (Scottish Government, 2014), and in the academic literature there was one study (Sinclair, 2011). The TSI model served as an ideal vehicle through which to explore the sector-state relationship.

The literature on independence related to the third sector focuses primarily on organisations providing services (Brandsen et al., 2014; de Corte and Verschuere, 2014; Egdell and Dutton, 2016; Kelly, 2007; Lewis, 2005; Milbourne and Murray, 2017; Osborne, 2000; Papadopoulos, 2013; Pestoff, 2009; Smith and Smyth, 2010). The independence question in relation to the sector's involvement in governance networks is less evident in the literature; while it is referenced as a concern (Craig et al., 2004; Lewis, 2005; Kelly, 2007; Rochester, 2012; 2013), empirical evidence is lacking (exceptions include Davies, 2007; Sinclair, 2011; and Tsukamoto and Nishimura, 2006). In relation to representation, while there is significant literature related to the participation of citizens and communities in governance networks (Brandsen et al., 2014; de Corte and Verschuere, 2014; Gaventa, 2004; Taylor, 2004a, 2011), there is limited empirical work related specifically to intermediary bodies; exceptions include Osborne (2000) and Sinclair (2011). Given the significant role that intermediary bodies play in governance networks, and the more recent political and policy changes that have shaped the context within which these bodies work, the gap in the literature is one that needs to be addressed. Accordingly, my research question, research aims, and research goals are as follows:

3.3.1 Research question

> How does the third sector's participation in state-initiated governance networks through third sector interfaces (TSIs) impact on issues of the third sector's independence and representation in Scotland?

3.3.2 Research aims

> To explore whether and to what extent third sector engagement in community planning compromises the independence of the third sector

To explore how the third sector manages issues of representation in community planning

3.3.3 Research objectives

To explore how TSIs advocate for third sector interests in community planning

To explore how TSIs represent the needs of a diverse third sector

To explore if and to what extent TSIs can represent the interests of communities as well as the third sector

In the final section of this chapter I develop the conceptual framework that I use to analyse my data.

3.4 Conceptual analysis – space, power, and liminality

In this thesis, I have drawn on theories of reflexive modernity, democratic governance, and governance within public administration, together with critiques drawn from post-politics and agonistic pluralism. These theories provide a framework through which to understand the broad societal and political shifts that contextualise my research study. In order to understand the impact of TSIs in governance networks, a framework for analysing power is essential. The theories I draw on either explicitly address power (agonistic pluralism) or are critical of the lack of power analysis (post-politics, governance theory). As a further analytical tool, I draw on three concepts: space, power and liminality. Space is used as a metaphorical and literal concept through which to understand power relations in governance networks; space is also employed together with the concept of liminality to understand the role of TSIs and to raise questions about the complexity of a space where different forms of democracy, that is, representative and participatory, meet. I utilise Cornwall's (2004a, b) conception of space as being both metaphorical and literal, and take up her assertion that, "Thinking about participation as a spatial practice highlights the relations of power" (Cornwall, 2004a, p.1).

I begin by outlining a conceptual framework for understanding the relationship between space and power and outline how this framework is utilised to analyse my data. I then outline a framework for understanding the concept of liminality, drawing on the idea of space.

3.4.1 Space and power

The conceptualisation of space and power that I am utilising reflects the approach developed by Cornwall (2004a, 2004b) and Gaventa (2004, 2006). Their work is situated within the field of participatory democracy, with a particular focus on the experience of citizens in the development context. Gaventa argues that power is difficult to understand within the context of participatory governance with its increased opportunities for engagement and the changing use of language; he states:

> The very spread and adoption by powerful actors of the language and discourse of participation and inclusion confuses boundaries of who has authority and who does not (2006, p.23).

The approach that Cornwall (2004a, 2004b) and Gaventa (2004, 2006) have developed attempts to analyse power in the spaces that create an interface between civil society and the state, taking into account the systems of power that shape and are shaped by different actors.

Gaventa (2006) builds on Cornwall's work, conceptualising spaces as existing along a continuum; these are *closed* spaces, *invited* spaces, and *claimed or created* spaces. Closed spaces are those in which decisions are made behind doors; there is no public access and no attempt to open up this space. Invited spaces are those in which the public and/or civil society actors are invited into decision-making processes by the authorities. Invited spaces will differ in their locus of creation; they may have been *provided* by authorities or may have been *conquered* by the public and/or civil society. Claimed or created spaces are those that are pursued and taken up by less powerful actors, such as through protest movements; Cornwall (2002) describes these spaces as 'organic'.

Cornwall (2004a) argues that invited spaces hold the potential for changing relationships of power, but that this depends on the locus of their creation, the governance landscape, the context, and the particular culture of politics. She cautions that invited spaces may "re-inscribe existing relationships, hierarchies and rules of the game" (Cornwall, 2004a, p.2). Space is, in itself, political. Gaventa draws on Lefebvre who theorises about space as a social product and a form of power. Lefebvre (1991) states, "[Space] is not simply 'there', a neutral container waiting to be filled, but is a dynamic, humanly constructed means of control, and hence of domination, of power" (p.24). Invited spaces are contested spaces that pose not only opportunities but also threats.

In employing the concept of space, I focus primarily on invited spaces. My thesis seeks to understand the impact of TSIs participating in state-initiated governance networks; these networks are invited spaces. I focused on the Community Planning Partnership, the Integration Joint Board, and a Public Social Partnership. These spaces exist in both the literal sense, an actual space where there is a "lived experience" (Hickey and Mohan, 2004, p.16), and a metaphorical one (for example envisioned as a space where representative democracy meets participatory democracy). In analysing these invited spaces, it is essential to understand how and by whom they were developed as these will shape power relations (Barnes et al., 2007; Gaventa, 2004; Scott, 2001).

In order to understand power relations, I draw on VeneKlasen and Miller's (2002) framework of power in advocacy work; building on Lukes's (1974) three dimensions of power, they identify three forms of power: *visible* power, *hidden* power, and *invisible* power. Visible power refers to observable decision making, incorporating formal rules and processes of decision making. Hidden power pertains to setting the political agenda, controlling who participates and what issues are raised. Invisible power incorporates the shaping of meaning and what is acceptable, acting on individual consciousness and defining what is considered normal. Invisible power plays a powerful role in shaping culture and the unwritten rules of the game. Invisible power is insidious as it acts on the level of the individual as well as contributing to generally held beliefs about what is acceptable. In addition to the term invisible power, I also employ the term insidious power; this term more clearly highlights how this kind of power can result in people acting against their own interests, and/or actively in the interests of others.

Through an analysis of the data, I explore how the TSI navigates its power in its relations with the state and in its relations with the third sector; I also look at how power is used by state actors. The framework of visible, hidden and invisible power is a useful heuristic for this analysis. I explore the notion of consensus and consider whether it is, in fact a form of insidious power. As reflected in the theoretical framing of reflexive modernity and the politics of New Labour, the drive for consensus has had a profound effect on shaping the politics of partnership working in governance networks. I also consider whether third sector funding dependency on the state is another form of insidious power.

3.4.2 Space and liminality

Liminality as a term was coined by Arnold van Gennep, an anthropologist. In his book, *Rites of Passage,* van Gennep (1960/1909) stresses the important role of transitions in societies; in particular, he singles out rites of passage as a special category, consisting of three sub-categories: rites of separation, transition rites, and rites of incorporation (p.11). He refers to transition rites as existing in a liminal space; the stage before is preliminal, and the stage after postliminal (Gennep, 1960/1909, p.11). Liminality was originally developed as a temporal concept, describing the transition from boy to man. The word is derived from the Latin word limin which describes a threshold; the Oxford dictionary definition of liminality is "Occupying a position at, or on both sides of, a boundary or threshold" (Oxford Dictionary website, 2019). In 1960 *Rites of Passage* was translated and the concept of liminality gained in significance. Victor Turner (1967) popularised the concept of liminality in his publication, *The Forest of Symbols,* in a chapter entitled "Betwixt and Between: The Liminal Period in Rites of Passage" (Thomassen, 2009).

Thomassen extends the understanding of liminality beyond that suggested by Turner. He argues that liminality can relate to different types of subject (individuals, groups, and societies) and can have both temporal and spatial dimensions (2009, p.16). The temporal dimension relates to moments, periods, and epochs; the spatial dimension relates to places, areas, and regions. Further, Thomassen contends that scale can be added as a dimension, describing the intensity of the liminal period (2009, p.17). He asks whether modernity is a "permanent liminality" and suggests that liminality can be incorporated and reproduced in structures (Thomassen, 2009, p.17).

I use the concept of liminality as an analytical tool for understanding the data as well as a reflexive tool for my own personal reflection of my positionality as a researcher and of the PhD journey. Further, I use the concept of liminality to describe my own journey through the PhD where I have occupied an in-between space where I am still associated with the third sector, but also as a researcher in an academic milieu. The in-between space incorporates aspects of both the before and after; it is a space that shapes a process of becoming. The discomfort is not in belonging in both but not fully belonging in either.

3.4.3 Theoretical journey and framework

I did not begin my research journey with a pre-established theoretical framework through which to view and make sense of the field. The theories and concepts that I utilise in this thesis emerged from the data, through a process that was highly inductive and iterative. In the process of trying to make sense of my data I explored a number of different theories including field theory (Fligstein and McAdam, 2012), governmentality (Foucault, 1991), institutional logics (Thornton et al., 2012), and isomorphism (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983). While there were aspects of each of these theories that were helpful in analysing the data and the wider context, none of them gave me the overall theoretical grounding I was seeking.

Through the data I was increasingly drawn to theories of democratic governance that helped me understand the participation of civil society actors in institutional forms of governance. Discovering the post-politics literature was the turning point in my journey as it introduced me to critiques of consensus politics and arguments for agonistic pluralism in society, tracing consensus politics to the reflexive modernity thesis. Reflexive modernity became the overarching framework through which I came to understand both the changes in public administration regimes (the move from government to governance) and the growth of democratic governance (the involvement of citizens in governance). Further, the influence of reflexive modernity with its promotion of consensus politics helped me understand the Third Way politics of New Labour, which profoundly influenced the growth and direction of the third sector from the end of the twentieth century and the acceleration of governance networks across the UK. The concepts of space, power, and liminality all emerged from the data, providing helpful tools through which to analyse the relationship between the third sector and the state in state-initiated governance networks. Governance networks are one of the most ubiquitous forms of governance, reflecting both the state's new public governance paradigm and a manifestation of democratic governance.

Bringing together theories of reflexive modernity, new public governance, democratic governance, post-politics and agonistic pluralism provides a theoretical scaffolding through which to understand the broad context of the themes emergent in my research. These theories help to frame, analyse and understand the research findings. Along with these broad theories, I use the concepts of space, power, and liminality as analytical tools through which to understand my data. Space is used as a metaphorical and literal concept through which to understand power relations in governance networks; space is also

employed with the concept of liminality to understand the role of TSIs and to raise questions about the complexity of a space where representative and participatory democracy meet.

3.5 Conclusion

This chapter has reviewed how public administration regimes have shaped the relationship between the third sector and the state and the degree of the third sector's independence. It has also explored the issue of representation and reviewed the literature on third sector intermediary bodies, highlighting the particular challenges they face in trying to represent the depth and breadth of a diverse sector. There is a paucity of empirical literature that addresses the issues of representation for intermediary bodies participating in local governance networks. As identified in the previous chapter, there is also scant empirical literature on the question of how intermediary bodies navigate their independence in local governance networks. This research aims to address these gaps.

This chapter has also detailed the conceptual framework that I have developed to facilitate the analysis of the field data. I draw on the concepts of space, power and liminality and utilise them as specific analytical tools to explore the data. Space is used as an organising concept to analyse issues of power and to frame the concept of liminality. Spaces are conceptualised along a continuum; spaces can be closed, invited, or claimed (Gaventa, 2006). This is a useful framework for analysing the issues of power in governance networks. I also use the concept of liminality as an analytical tool for understanding the data as well as a reflexive tool for my own personal reflection of my positionality as a researcher and of the PhD journey. The next chapter explores the methodology used in this thesis.

4　Methodology

This chapter describes the methodological approach I have used to conduct my research. A researcher's methodological approach stems from their ontological and epistemological beliefs; to reflect this, in section 4.1 I begin by outlining my theoretical beliefs and detail how they shape my research and identity as an interpretivist researcher. I have taken a case study approach to the research; to set the stage, section 4.2 provides an overview of case study methodology which includes a discussion about the strengths and weaknesses of the approach and explores in particular the debate about generalisability. In section 4.3 I describe why I chose the case study approach and provide an overview of the key components of case studies (the selection, type, number and bounding). In section 4.4 I focus on the data collection methods employed: interviews and observation, and in section 4.5 I detail how I analysed the data. From here, in section 4.6, I move to the role of the researcher, considering the issues of positionality and reflexivity. The section on ethics, section 4.7, considers issues of consent and well as the ethics of representation. In the final section, 4.8, I explain the claims I am making about my research study.

4.1　Theoretical foundations

The methodological approach (framework) to research is shaped by one's epistemology (theory of knowledge) and ontology (world view). Crotty (1998) writes that epistemology frames one's theoretical perspective which shapes methodology, and in turn the methods employed (individual research tools). I consider ontology to be the foundational concept. Ontology reflects our standpoint, or our world view; as stated by Hammond and Wellington, "ontology concerns claims about the nature of being and existence" (2013, p.114). My ontological perspective is that reality does not exist in an objective form; reality is socially constructed, but there is a material basis to this existence. Reality is not socially constructed to the extent that it exists only in the eyes and minds of the beholder. I believe that societal structures and economic systems shape people's lives and that these structures and systems are enacted by people. People's socio-economic status, where they live, how they live, the opportunities they have are all shaped by structures and systems. This is not wholly deterministic, however; people have agency, an ability to act.

This ontology shapes my epistemology, though it is often argued that they are entwined (Crotty, 1998; Hammond and Wellington, 2013). Epistemology is concerned with what is considered to be knowledge and how this knowledge can be known. Hammond and

Wellington state that epistemology "refers to what we believe about how we come to know and understand the world" (2013, p.57). Crotty (1998) suggests that the major epistemological traditions are objectivism, constructionism and subjectivism; given my belief that we make meaning and that meaning is constructed rather than uncovered, I identify with constructionism as an epistemology. My epistemological position means I consider people's experiences to represent valid knowledge.

4.2 Case study methodology

This is a qualitative research study using a case study approach. The strength of this approach is in the depth of understanding that it generates. The subject area is investigated from a number of perspectives and positions, providing rich detail. The case study approach resonates with my epistemological and ontological perspective, as case studies attempt to develop an understanding of people and events in their environment, and the various perspectives and experiences they have. Case study research recognises that people live in natural environments that cannot be controlled; the case study approach creates context-dependent knowledge (Flyvberg, 2006).

There is debate about whether or not case study is a methodology. Stake (2005) and Thomas (2011) argue that the case study is a focus and not a methodology. Stake (2005, p.443) notes, "Case study is not a methodological choice but a choice of what is to be studied… By whatever methods, we choose to study *the case*." Creswell takes up this debate, stating in contrast, "I choose to view [case study] as a methodology: a type of design in qualitative research that may be an object of study, as well as a product of inquiry" (2013, p.97), and cites others who share his position (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Yin, 2009). Whether an approach or a methodology, it signals a clear plan of action for the research.

Case study research has its roots in anthropology and sociology, and became popular in a wide number of fields including psychology, law, political science and management studies (Creswell, 2013). One of the key considerations in doing a case study is the clear identification and bounding of the case (Creswell, 2013). There needs to be a rationale for why a particular case has been selected. While Creswell identifies this as justifying a purposeful sampling strategy, Thomas rejects the idea of sampling outright. He argues that the case study approach is about trying to reflect the "quality of the whole"; the case is "not a sample; it's a choice, a selection" (2011, p.62). Consistent with the notion that a

case study is about reflecting the quality of the whole, case studies do not attempt to generalise; in fact, their strength is their "particularisation not generalisation" (Stake, 1995, p.8).

Case studies have a number of strengths; they facilitate in-depth exploration that is "grounded in lived reality" (Hodkinson and Hodkinson, 2001, p.3), enabling an understanding of complex relationships and dynamics. Swanborn defines a case study as the "study of a *social phenomenon*" (2010, p.13) enabling the researcher to explore the multiple realities and interpretations of different social actors. The case study provides a rich picture of a phenomenon facilitating analytical insights (Thomas, 2011). Further the case study can support the development of concepts and theories (Flyvberg, 2006; Hodkinson and Hodkinson, 2001; Thomas, 2011; Yin, 2009). The weaknesses associated with case studies are identified as the inability to generalise from the findings, the challenge of analysing the volume of data that is produced, the difficulty of representing the complexity of the findings, questions about researcher objectivity, the costs of attempting this on a larger scale, and the ease with which findings can be dismissed (Hodkinson and Hodkinson, 2001; Stake, 2000; Yin, 2014).

The characterisation of these weaknesses reflects a positivist bias which endures in the social sciences, founded on the assumption that qualitative findings are less rigorous than quantitative ones. Flyvberg (2006, p.219) contests this paradigm by identifying and challenging five misunderstandings that surround case study research; these are: (1) theoretical knowledge is more valuable than practical knowledge; (2) it is not possible to generalise from a single case; (3) case studies are good for the generation of hypotheses but not for testing hypotheses or theory building; (4) there is a bias towards verification; and (5) it is difficult to summarise case studies. He characterises these misunderstandings as highlighting concerns with theory, reliability and validity in case study research (2006, p.221), all of which he then dispels. The critique about not generalising case study findings is common in the literature (Baškarada, 2014; Creswell, 2013; Morrow, 2005; Stake, 1995; Swanborn, 2010; Thomas, 2011). In contrast, Flyvbjerg (2006) argues that, depending on the case and how it is selected, it is possible to generalise from a single case; he states:

> One can often generalise on the basis of a single case, and a case study may be
> central to scientific development via generalisation as supplement or
> alternative to other methods. But formal generalisation is overvalued as a

source of scientific development, whereas 'the force of example' is underestimated (2006, p.228).

He cites examples from history that draw heavily on the use of cases, including Galileo's rejection of Aristotle's law of gravity, Weber's study of bureaucracy, and the work of Darwin, Marx and Freud. He also cites his own work about the study of urban politics and planning which he claims falsified the neoclassical model of economics. He is not alone in his critique. Walton (1992) argues that generalisation from a case is possible because the case is a microcosm of society; in fact, the reason cases are selected is because of the characteristics of society that they represent. He states "the case implies a family… it alleges that the particular is a case of something else. Implicit in the case is a claim" (1992, p.121). Yin (2014) takes a more measured approach arguing that case studies do not have as their aim generalisability to the population (statistical generalisation) but rather generalisation to theories (analytical generalisation). From another perspective, Stake (1978) argues that case studies lend themselves to naturalistic generalisations.

The critique about the subjective nature of case studies is also common. This concern is rooted in a more objectivist epistemology which holds that there is a truth to be uncovered. Flyvberg (2006) tackles the question of subjective bias which he describes as the belief that the researcher will validate their own preconceived ideas; qualitative methods in general, and the case study approach in particular, are considered particularly prone because of the belief that bias is hard to control. Rather, he argues that the case study has its own rigour; the depth of the research and the engagement in real life phenomena challenge the researcher. In this analysis he draws on Geertz who describes "The Field" as a "powerful disciplinary force: assertive, demanding, even coercive," one that could not be evaded by the researcher (Geertz, 1995, cited in Flyvberg, 2006, p.235). Flyvberg cites research that claims that in-depth case studies typically result in preconceived perspectives, concepts and hypotheses being revised (Campbell, 1975; Flyvberg, 1998, 2001; Geertz, 1995; Ragin, 1992; Wieviorka, 1992).

The question about researcher bias cuts to the heart of the debate between positivist paradigms that tend to rely on quantitative deductive methods, versus interpretivist approaches that draw on qualitative inductive methods. The idea that researcher bias can be eliminated is a positivist idea based on the belief that there is an objective reality that can be uncovered; qualitative research, drawing on interpretivism, is more circumspect about the role of the researcher. Of course, these are not binary positions; it is possible to

have qualitative research that is underpinned by a positivist tradition. For example, Yin, a recognised expert in case study methodology, has been characterised as positivistic in his approach (Andrade, 2009; Yazan, 2015).

Mason argues that interviews are "social interactions" and that it is not appropriate to consider these interactions as a form of bias that can be eliminated. Fieldwork takes place within a social context; she states "you cannot separate the interview from the social interaction in which it was produced… and you should not try to do so" (2002, p.65). Flyvberg makes the case that there are limitations to large-scale design and that one of the weaknesses of quantitative work is that the subjects are not able to "talk back" to the researcher in order to correct results (2006, p.236). He argues that research is a form of learning, and that researchers need to place themselves within the context being studied; he invokes Beveridge who concluded "that there are more discoveries stemming from the type of intense observation made possible by case study than from statistics applied to large groups" (Beveridge, 1951, quoted in Flyvberg, 2006, p.236).

Yazan in her comparison of the case study approaches of Yin, Merriam and Stake characterises Stake's description of researchers "as interpreters, and gatherers of interpretations which require them to report their rendition or construction of the constructed reality or knowledge that they gather" (2015, p.137). There are three levels of knowledge construction: 'reality' as presented by the researched, the interpretation of this reality by the researcher, and the reality as constructed by the reader. Based on these interpretations, Stake concludes "there are multiple perspectives or views of the case that need to be represented, but there is no way to establish, beyond contention, the best view (1995, p.108).

Case study methodology acknowledges subjectivity; its strength is in the insight that can be gained, not in an objective reality that can be revealed. The case study approach is one that provides deep and rich insights from the field; rather than being limited in its application, the case study creates potential for learning far beyond the case.

4.3 Data collection methods

In this section I outline the research methods utilised to gather data in the research: interviews and observation.

4.3.1 Recruitment

I conducted the interviews in two stages: the first was a scoping process, focused on national level stakeholders; the second was in the case study area of Wychwood and included staff from the TSIP and stakeholders (see table 4.2 for details of all interviews conducted). National stakeholders were selected based on their roles in either the third or public sectors. I began by making a list of potential national participants and discussed these with my supervisors. From the initial list, I knew one individual and had met three others at events. Three participants were recommended by my supervisors, and they facilitated the initial contact. During my interviews I asked participants if there was anyone they would recommend I speak to; this is an example of the snowball technique (Bryman, 2016). Through this process, six other participants were identified, and introductions facilitated; this resulted in five interviews. The remaining participant I had no connection to, but they were interested in the research and agreed to be interviewed.

The first meeting with the TSIP was with the deputy director to describe my research and to seek their assistance. I followed the meeting up with a letter to the deputy director and the chief executive officer who had been unable to attend the initial meeting. Both gave consent for me to focus on their organisation as a case study and to interview staff; they also offered to facilitate my access to the field including attending relevant meetings. As a first step, they suggested I attend a team meeting and talk about my research with the staff. They made recommendations about which staff would be good for me to speak to, and communicated to staff that they were free to meet with me but that there was no obligation. The senior staff recommended meetings in the field that would be appropriate and facilitated my access to particular meetings. Once I had met some of the staff and observed some of the meetings in the field, I began interviews with stakeholders. Throughout the rest of my time in the field, interviews with TSIP staff and stakeholders happened concurrently. I conducted five interviews with the two senior management representatives; I met with the director twice and the deputy director four times (in one interview they were together). I interviewed one particular staff member three times as she was actively involved in the public social partnership (PSP). Of the stakeholder interviews, 13 of the 19 contacts resulted from observation meetings; these were individuals that I approached directly after a meeting. The TSIP suggested individuals, of whom I interviewed four. I interviewed two individuals as a result of stakeholder recommendations.

4.3.2 Interviews

My ontological perspective is that reality is socially constructed; in order to gain knowledge about a social phenomenon I need to ask people about their experiences and perspectives of that phenomenon. My epistemology is one that considers the interpretations and experiences of individuals as a legitimate form of knowledge. Interviews provide a unique and rich opportunity to learn about the world from another's perspective. The qualitative interview is a social interaction in which meaning is generated rather than excavated (Mason, 2002). Interviews were the most significant component of the data collection process.

A total of 44 interviews were conducted, 13 in the scoping stage and 31 in the case study stage as detailed in the following table providing a breakdown of the interviews by stage and type of participant. The total number of people interviewed was 43. The reason for the difference between interviews and people interviewed is that in some cases an interview involved more than one person; also, during the case study stage, a number of the TSIP staff were interviewed more than once. The column 'types of stakeholders by interview' provides the relevant detail.

Table 4:1 - Detailed breakdown of interviews conducted

	Total interviews	Breakdown	People interviewed	Types of stakeholders by interview

Scoping stage	13	Stakeholders (13)	16	• Third sector intermediary bodies (7)
				  o of which are 5 specialists and 2 generalists
				• Scottish Government (2)
				  o 2 interviews with a total of 3 people
				• Local government support bodies (2)
				  o 2 interviews with a total of 4 people
				• Retired MSP (1)
				• Academic (1)

Case study stage	31	TSIP (12)	8	• Senior management (5)
				  o 5 interviews involving the same 2 people
				• Outreach staff (7)
				  o 7 interviews with a total of 6 people; one individual interviewed twice

		Stakeholders (19)	19	• Third sector organisations (9)
				  o 1 is a TSIP partner; 4 participate in TSIP planning mechanisms; 4 not involved in TSIP
				• Community members (2)
				  o 1 a service user; 1 a carer representative
				• Statutory sector (7)
				  o 2 NHS; 2 Health & Social Care; 1 Council; 1 Scottish Government; 1 Scottish Fire & Rescue
				• Local councillor (1)

Total	44	44	43	

I conducted in-depth, semi-structured interviews in order to give participants some control over the interview, to facilitate a more natural conversation, and to allow for flexibility. I developed an interview guide to ensure that key areas were covered; each guide was customised to the particular stakeholder interviewed (for examples, see appendices 3-5). The questions evolved from the data collection process and from the themes that were arising in the field. I ensured that some key questions were always asked and that the questions tied back to the research questions and aims. For example, I asked all participants what they thought about the TSI model; the core questions of the research,

namely independence and representation, were a theme in all of the interviews. I viewed the interview guide as a tool to facilitate the conversation, rather than a script to be adhered to. The guide provided a way of structuring the issues I wanted to cover (Thomas, 2011) and an aide memoir (see appendices 3, 4 and 5 as examples). The iterative nature of the development of the questions enabled me to get people's perspectives on some of the themes that arose through the fieldwork. For example, the theme of liminality is one that I presented to participants late in the fieldwork journey; this enabled me to hear their perspectives on a theme as it evolved.

4.3.3 Observation

The use of observation recognises the strength of being in the environment that is the focus of the research. It facilitates the development of data and analysis that is grounded (Mason, 2002). I chose to employ observation as a method of data collection in part to learn about the processes and dynamics of the third sector's involvement in local governance networks as I did not have direct experience of these networks. By the time I entered the field I had done extensive research about local governance networks, CPPs in particular; I wanted to experience first-hand partnership working in these settings. I wanted to explore if there was a difference between the discourse of partnership and its reality on the ground. In particular I want to observe the relationships between statutory stakeholders and third sector representatives, as well as between third sector representatives and the broader third sector community. I also wanted to compare what I learned through the interviews about participants' experiences with direct observation of the processes.

The purpose of observation is to increase the researcher's knowledge and understanding of the case (Stake, 1995). In order to make the best use of observation, specific aspects of the case need to be the focus (Stake, 1995). The key concepts I am using of representation and independence formed my observational template. I developed a guide to help frame the process of observation. As recommended by Stake (1995, p.62), I aimed to detail "a relatively *incontestable description* for further analysis." By definition these notes are selective and subjective; they reflect the issues I identified as important to the research and were written from my perspective. During meetings I took notes; immediately after I wrote up my notes in a template (see appendix 6) that I used throughout the observations. Unlike the interview guide, I did not adapt the observational template; it was a more passive instrument as I did not participate in the meetings.

Observation is a method often associated with ethnography, though not exclusive to it (Mason, 2002; Thomas, 2011). While a case study is closely related to ethnography, it is not an ethnography. I was active in the field, but was not embedded in the TSIP or the local governance networks. I visited the TSIP office on numerous occasions, but I did not have a desk there; I was not considered a member of the team. I attended the meetings as an observer, not a participant. During my time in the field I attended 16 meetings; these were meetings related to community planning through the formal CPP forums, to health and social care through the IJB, and to the development of mental health services through a PSP. A number of these meetings were formal local government networks and others were community networks designed to feed into formal networks through third sector representatives. I also attended a staff meeting of the TSIP at the beginning of the fieldwork in order to meet the team and explain my work. The following section details the data analysis process.

4.4 Case study approach

In this section I present why I selected a case study approach and outline the case study design. This section includes an explanation of the selection of the case study approach, the type of case, the bounding of the case, the number of cases, and the selection of the actual case. This section draws heavily on three seminal thinkers in case study research, Yin, Merriam and Stake (Yazan, 2015).

4.4.1 Selection of the case study approach

Mason describes the methodological strategy as "the logic by which you go about answering your research questions" (2002, p.30). The methodological strategy needs to reflect the researcher's epistemology and ontology. As noted, I position myself as an interpretivist; I believe that there is no one objective reality, reality is socially constructed and experienced differently by different people. There is no one truth that can be uncovered by a researcher, only multiple and diverse insights. Given this, I wanted a methodological approach that would enable me to uncover many truths. I set about to explore how the third sector's involvement in governance networks impacts on issues of third sector independence and representation. In order to fully investigate this question, I felt I needed to be immersed in the field. Given the role of the TSI as an interface between the sector and the state, I needed to understand the impact of the TSI's involvement from many perspectives. I set out with the key question asking 'how' and wanted to see local

governance networks in action; I did not want to rely solely on people's perspectives, I wanted to go beyond interviews and to directly observe the field. Ethnography and case study were the two approaches that appeared most suitable to my goals and could provide in-depth insights which would illuminate my questions.

Ethnography is a methodological approach that seeks to understand how a culture works (Creswell, 2013). The goal is to take an emic perspective, to develop a deep understanding from the standpoint of those being researched. In order to develop this understanding, the researcher is embedded in the culture, typically for an extended period of time. My goal differed; I wanted to understand the impact of the TSI's involvement with the state from a number of perspectives and to analyse these through the concepts of independence and representation. Whereas ethnography aims to present the stories from within a particular setting bounded by the logic of the setting, case study research is illustrative of an issue (Creswell, 2013). Given this, I decided to choose a case study approach based on its suitability to my research aims.

4.4.2 Type of case

Case studies are ideal for asking *how* and *why* questions (Yin, 2009). There are different types of case studies. Yin (2014) describes case studies as being either explanatory, exploratory or descriptive; explanatory cases are mainly used for theory testing, whereas exploratory and descriptive for theory building. Merriam (1988) categorises studies as descriptive, interpretive, or evaluative. Stake (1995) classifies case studies as being either intrinsic (case is dominant) or instrumental (issue is dominant). My study is exploratory (Yin) and interpretive (Merriam), designed to answer the research question, *how* does the third sector's participation in state-initiated governance networks through TSIs impact on issues of independence and representation in Scotland? It is an instrumental case (Stake), as it is the issue being researched that is fundamental. The research question is exploratory in nature; it is not designed to test a theory but to understand the impact of a phenomenon, with the potential that this may lead to theory building.

4.4.3 Selection of the case

In order to select the case, I undertook analysis of the 32 TSIs in Scotland and the 32 local authorities that they work in. The following framework was used to gather information:

Table 4:2 - Criteria used to analyse potential case study areas

Criteria	Detail
Population	Number of people living in each local authority area with breakdown of: • Life expectancy (male/female) • Unemployment rate • Number of areas of multiple deprivation
Geography	Using the Scottish Government's urban/rural classification system I considered the urban/rural mix across local authorities.
TSI structure	Most of the TSIs are built on the existing architecture of councils for voluntary service and volunteer centres; 20 TSIs are a singular body, 12 are partnerships. The development of the TSIs was an intensely political and in some case bitter process. I considered the structure and history of each to gain an understanding of the context in which they operate.
National and local politics	I researched the political relationship between the local authority and the Scottish Government. The relationship between these two levels of government tends to be more harmonious where the political affiliations are similar.

Using this information, I created a spreadsheet of the 32 TSIs. In addition to using secondary sources, I also gathered information through the initial scoping stage of my interviews. The scoping stage involved interviews with relevant stakeholders at the national level; I asked each individual if there was a TSI that they would recommend. Based on the data compiled, I made a shortlist of 10 potential case study areas. This shortlist was selected not only on the information compiled, but also in consideration of sites that would be sufficiently different to enable a rich comparison. The area I selected for the first case study, and ultimately the only case study, was an area I am referring to by the pseudonym of Wychwood. It was selected for a number of reasons: it is in a predominantly urban centre which leads to quite complex local governance networks; there was a long history of cooperation between the third sector and statutory stakeholders; and the particular TSI was well regarded and came up in a number of the scoping interviews as a good model with effective representatives. I approached the organisation by email to introduce my research and to ask if they would consider participating; I had met the deputy director through a previous position I held in the sector. An initial meeting took place with the deputy director, after which confirmation was provided of their willingness to participate.

4.4.4 Number of cases

Case studies can be single, single with embedded units, or multiple (Baxter and Jack, 2008), also referred to as collective (Creswell, 2013). In the original research design I planned to do three case studies; as the research evolved I made a decision to focus only on one site. I had shortlisted a diverse group of TSIs across Scotland; my original plan was to spend equal time in the three areas. The three case studies were to provide rich comparison due to their distinct differences. I spent a great deal of time in weighing up the options of a single versus multiple case studies. This was an issue I discussed with my supervisors, at my annual review, and with other students; I also consulted the literature which I found to be lacking. The question initially arose due to the time required in the first case study area; at the point at which I expected to be able to withdraw from the field, I still had a number of interviews scheduled and more meetings to observe. More importantly, I did not feel that I yet had the depth of understanding needed to explore all the issues that were arising. To assist in this process, I considered the pros and cons of focusing on one site versus three, analysing them from a methodological, empirical, theoretical, and practical perspective.

The arguments in favour of doing a comparative study were primarily methodological and theoretical; the literature suggested that a strong justification was needed for a single case study (Yin, 2009), that three studies would allow for contrast and potentially for stronger theory building. The arguments in favour of doing a single case study were also methodological and theoretical, but also practical. The complexity of the single case study required deep engagement in the field, a depth I felt I did not yet have. In order to produce a detailed case study with the potential for a theoretical contribution I felt I needed to have the depth of one case study rather than the breadth of three. I also had a concern, methodologically, that given the amount of time I had already spent in one site it would be difficult to achieve a similar depth in other sites, particularly given some of the practical barriers of access and time that geography would present. I was concerned that as a result any kind of comparison would be uneven. On a practical level I had secured access in Wychwood and had developed a good network of contacts; I was able to commute so was able to be physically in the field 2 to 3 days a week. The decision to focus on one case study in greater depth was one of the more challenging ones I experienced throughout the PhD process. I felt at the time, and still do, that it was the right decision. The ability to engage deeply in Wychwood gave me the opportunity to develop a comprehensive understanding of the issues which enabled deeper insights.

4.4.5 Bounding the case

Defining the case is a critical step in the research design. Different terminology is used in the literature; some authors refer to defining the unit of analysis (Baškarada, 2014; Baxter and Jack, 2008), others to bounding the case (Creswell, 2013; Merriam, 1998; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2009), or casing the case (Ragin, 1992). While there are differences in language, the key point is to be specific about what is being researched; clear boundaries help contain the scope of the research (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2009). Ragin describes casing as a "research tactic" (1992, p.217), one that can "bring operational closure to some problematic relationship between ideas and evidence, between theory and data" (1992, p.218). Merriam states the importance of specifying the phenomenon of interest and "fencing in" the boundaries of enquiry (1998, p.27).

In my study, the case is the council for voluntary services (CVS) that is one of the partners in the TSI in Wychwood. The TSI model in Wychwood is a partnership of three organisations: the volunteer centre takes responsibility for the volunteering remit, the social enterprise network takes responsibility for social enterprise, and the CVS takes responsibility for providing capacity building to the third sector and being the link into community planning. The Wychwood TSI is one of ten TSIs across Scotland that has a partnership model. Throughout the thesis I make a distinction between TSIs in general, and the particular CVS that was part of the Wychwood TSI where I undertook the case study research. When I am referring to this specific CVS, I use the term Third Sector Interface Partner (TSIP); when I am referring to the third sector interface organisations in general, I use the term TSI.

The bounding of the case is an active process that continues to be refined whilst in the field (Ragin, 1992). The case was *not* the local authority area, although the TSIP operates across the whole local authority. The case was *not* the local governance networks, even though it explored what happened in these networks. The case focused on the actual TSIP and its involvement in these networks. In my case, based on how my time in the field evolved, I focused on three governance networks the TSIP participated in; namely, the Community Planning Partnership (CPP), the Integration Joint Board (IJB) and a Public Social Partnership (PSP).

4.5 Data analysis

Data analysis is an ongoing, iterative process. It does not start at the point that data collection is completed, but rather begins from the moment that contact is made with the field (Stake, 1995). Data was comprised of transcripts from the interviews, observation notes, summaries of documents reviewed, and field notes. I kept a diary throughout the PhD process which I used both for substantive notes on fieldwork as well as for capturing the reflexive process of doing the PhD and being in the field. After some interviews and observations, I captured initial impressions using my smart phone.

In terms of data analysis, I used an inductive approach, identifying themes from the transcripts and coding them using NVivo. This was an intensely iterative process; themes were reviewed, modified, grouped and regrouped. This iteration happened a number of times throughout the data gathering process, the data analysis process, and the write up of the research. I analysed the data interpretively and reflexively, meaning that I constructed meaning from the data and considered my own place in the data (Mason, 2002). This is consistent with my ontology that reality is socially constructed. My participants did not provide "the truth", rather they provided me with their perspectives that I, in turn, interpreted. Both the process of data collection and analysis was a process of constructing a version of reality rather than excavating the objective facts. Accordingly, my approach was also a reflexive one meaning that I was an essential part of the making of meaning, both in the interview and the analysis. Assumptions about the personal nature of case study research is articulated by Stake (1995, p.135):

> The way the case and the researcher interact is presumed unique… The quality and utility of the research is not based on its reproducibility but on whether or not the meanings generated, by the researcher or the reader, are valued. Thus a personal valuing of the work is expected.

The approach I used to my data analysis was inductive. I employed an iterative and comprehensive data analysis process. After each interview I took notes; I listened to the interview again, at least twice; I had transcripts for 28 out of the 44 interviews; I produced a 4-6-page summary of each interview; and I coded each interview into NVivo. The coding process in NVivo was also highly iterative. At the beginning of the coding process I identified broad themes based on the analysis that I had already undertaken as well as the research aims; for example, these included independence, representation, the third sector-state relationship, the TSIs. As I worked through the transcripts and summaries I added to

the themes and created sub-themes; this process continued throughout the data analysis. The number of themes and sub-themes varied throughout the coding process; at the end of the process I had 13 broad themes and 102 sub-themes. Early on in the process I created a category titled "broad themes" which were more analytical; I used sub-themes within this category to develop what would eventually form the four data chapters. The process of coding was, in and of itself, analytical and helped to deepen my understanding of the data.

On reflection, I see that there were four different levels of data analysis: the first stage, in the field, was my introduction and initial engagement with the data; the second stage, after leaving the field, was a deeper engagement with the data in part facilitated through the coding process; the third stage, the initial writing up, involved a holistic engagement with the data that involved grouping the themes into meta themes that eventually created the shape for my chapters; and the fourth stage, redrafting, intertwined the analysis of the themes with the theoretical and conceptual literature. The coding moved from being descriptive in the first stage, to analytical in the second and third stages, to relational in the fourth stage. The third stage was the most challenging; to help me organise and relate the themes to one another, I wrote each of the main themes and sub themes on pieces of paper and literally moved them around to see how they worked with each other. The use of NVivo made the mechanical process of developing themes and sub themes, and analysing them against one another, straightforward; while the use of this software still requires you to do the thinking and analysis, it enables the data to be tracked and moved around in a simple fashion. During the PhD process, I attended a number of conferences where I presented papers on my emerging themes. This process of preparing for and giving presentations, as well as feedback from attendees, was also helpful in the reflection and data analysis process.

4.6 Role of the researcher

In this section I explore the role of the researcher; this includes a discussion about positionality and reflexivity.

4.6.1 Positionality

An important ethical consideration is the researcher's positionality to the research. This refers to the researcher's personal experience with the topic and the interview participants. The interview experience is shaped by a number of factors that contribute to the symmetry or asymmetry between the researcher and the researched (Hammond and Wellington,

2013); it is also shaped by where and how the interview is conducted (Manderson et al., 2006). These factors include personal characteristics such as age, race, class, sexuality, disability, and gender identity (Manderson et al., 2006). The researcher's positionality can be associated with the existence of bias, but bias is a contested term in qualitative research as it suggests that research can be objective. Mason contends that interviews are social interactions and that it is not appropriate to consider social interaction as reflecting bias in interviews; rather it is important to "develop a sense of how context and situation work in interview interactions" (2002, p.65). Morrow makes the point that, "Depending on the underlying paradigm, we may work to limit, control, or manage subjectivity – or we embrace it and use it as data" (2005, p.254). Thomas (2011) contends that the recognition that objectivity is not attainable is, in fact, a strength. Flyvberg (2006) also argues that in order for the researcher to fully understand the context in which the research takes place they need to be close to it, involved in it. This is the stance I adopted, drawing on considerations raised by authors above, to ensure as much rigour as possible in my analysis.

I shared a high degree of symmetry with most of my interview participants; many of them were in the same age range and most were from the same class. In setting out the context of my research, I always talked about my experience working in the third sector. This potentially positioned me as an 'insider' in the interviews I conducted with people from the third sector, but also possibly as an 'outsider' given my move to academia. Regardless, there was a high degree of commonality because of my time in the sector. The symmetry I experienced with most of the interview participants and my insider status undoubtedly shaped the interview process and the meaning that was co-constructed. I agree with Morrow's claim that "interpretivists/constructivists… are more likely to embrace the positioning of the researcher as co-constructor of meaning, as integral to the interpretation of the data" (2005, p.254). The next section on reflexivity is inextricably linked to positionality.

4.6.2 Reflexivity

Reflexivity requires that the researcher reflect on their positionality and consider and reflect on how this has shaped the research process and outcomes. As noted by Manderson et al. "interviewer positionality and reflexivity become central to how understandings and knowledge are produced, understood and mediated" (2006, p.1318). Engaging in reflexivity is an important part of the research process, one that is increasingly expected of

social researchers undertaking qualitative research (Dean et al., 2019). Dean (2017) argues that reflexivity should be built into all stages of the research process from the initial research design. Malterud describes researcher reflexivity as "the knower's mirror" (2001, p.484).

I built reflexive practice into every aspect of the research process. I began by keeping notes on the computer, reflecting on the early stages of the PhD journey. As someone who had kept a diary in my early years, typing my reflections into a Word document felt clinical; instead I began writing my reflections in a journal which felt like the more appropriate medium. In addition to reflecting on the research process, I took notes after each interview to reflect on the experience. My interview notes were both substantive, reflecting on the content, and also personal, reflecting on my impressions about how the interview had gone and how I felt about the interview.

There were three areas that I reflected on in particular: my self-identification as someone from the third sector; my developing identity as an academic; and whilst on a Scottish Government internship, my temporary identity as a civil servant. Prior to starting the PhD, I had spent most of my career working in the third sector with which I have a strong identification. Apart from a few years working in the private sector at the beginning of my career, I have only worked in the third sector; it is a place that feels like home. My research topic grew out of my experience in the sector and concerns I had about the sector's relationship with the state. In my interviews, I always provided a context for why I had developed the research topic, sharing my third sector experience and identity. This strong sense of identity shaped my relationships with my participants, and also affected how I felt about what I heard in the field. These feelings are not singular; I felt both compassion for the TSIP for the difficult position it occupied, as well as frustration with the TSIP for not being more outspoken.

I strongly identified with the very difficult position of the TSIP in its role as an interface between the sector and the state, and the compromises it had to make. In my previous role as a chief executive, there were numerous times where I felt we compromised our values as an organisation in order to maintain our funding. It is easy to be ideological about taking principled positions, but very hard to put this into action when there are direct and deleterious impacts to your organisation and staff (and to yourself). While I often identified with the TSIP, I also understood the frustration expressed by many in the third sector about the TSIP's caution in tackling controversial issues. It is possible that now that

I am free from the responsibility of managing an organisation, and managing contracts and relationships with the state, it is easier for me to become more political about the role of the third sector, while still feeling sympathetic towards the TSIP.

The second area I grappled with was my emerging identity as an academic. After a lifetime in the third sector, I found it difficult at times to inhabit this new identity. In the field, one of the themes that emerged was that of liminality; I apply the same concept to my own identity. Throughout the PhD journey I have felt that I was occupying a liminal space, caught between the third sector and the academic world.

The third area that I reflected on was my short-lived identity as an intern with the Scottish Government. I undertook an internship during my write-up phase; during this three-month period, my PhD was suspended. I was located in the Local Government and Communities Division, and worked on the *Local Governance Review*. During this period I worked with a number of people who have been closely involved with the *Community Empowerment Act* and community planning; I also had the opportunity to meet with people from the Third Sector Unit. My desk was located close to an individual I had interviewed for my research. It was my first experience of working in government. I experienced some feelings of confusion as I had developed some rather negative opinions about civil servants through the research process. In contrast, the civil servants I worked with were passionate individuals with a genuine desire to effect change for communities and a real commitment to coproduction. At times I felt conflicted representing and introducing myself as a civil servant at community events. Significantly, as I became immersed in the environment, I began to see the world from a different perspective. I began to understand the frustrations and barriers from a Scottish Government perspective. Manderson et al. state "reflexive practice has moved to acknowledge and deconstruct the research encounter, emphasizing the social and political context in which meaning is produced" (2006, p.1330). My time in government broadened my understanding of the social and political context of national policy-making. It has, undoubtedly, influenced the way I have ultimately analysed and written up my research. Researchers carry with them a repertoire of interpretations (Alvesson and Sköldberg, 2000); these are not fixed, rather they are constantly evolving. During my PhD journey my repertoires have been shaped by my identity as an insider and outsider to the third sector, my emerging identity as an academic, and by the insight I gained from my time at the Scottish Government.

4.7 Ethics

In this section I consider ethics. I discuss the issue of consent and detail what ethical measures were taken with the TSIP, with interview participants, in observation meetings, and also in the wider local authority area to ensure my research was conducted in line with the University of Glasgow's College of Social Sciences ethical codes of practice. Central to consent is the issue of anonymity. After considering issues of consent, I explore the ethics of representation.

4.7.1 Consent

The issues of consent are particularly salient in qualitative research (Mason, 2002). The process of consent needs to ensure that participants are fully aware of what they are participating in, that they know how the data will be used, and that they understand how confidentiality (protection of the actual data) and anonymity (protection of identity) will be handled. Issues of consent carry with them a higher threshold in qualitative research than is the case for quantitative research because of the greater risk of revealing participant identity (Mason, 2002). The consideration of consent is an important component of the research design and continues throughout the research process, into publication and beyond (Pickering and Kara, 2017).

Ethics were secured through the University of Glasgow ethics process. This required the submission of a detailed plan, a Plain Language Statement, and a Consent Form. The commitments regarding anonymity with the local authority area, TSIP, interview participants, and observational meetings are outlined below.

4.7.1.1 The local authority area

In order to maintain the anonymity of the TSIP, I anonymised the name of the local authority area. There is only one TSI in each local authority, therefore naming the local authority would reveal the identity of the TSI partner involved in community planning. The commitment to anonymity of the local authority area and the TSIP does create constraints on my ability to provide full details of the history and characteristics of both. On balance I felt that the anonymity was more critical than a detailed account of the local authority or the TSIP. For the purpose of the PhD and to maintain anonymity, I have used the pseudonym of Wychwood.

4.7.1.2 The TSIP

At the beginning of the research process, I met with the deputy director of the TSIP to discuss the potential for their involvement in the research and the steps that would be taken to maintain confidentiality and anonymity. At this meeting and during the subsequent interview which included the director, both challenged my suggestion that the name of the TSIP and the location be anonymous. They both felt that the research would be helpful to the organisation and were open to feedback. I felt conflicted about their position as I was concerned that without the protection of anonymity stakeholders may feel constrained about speaking honestly. I was also concerned that ultimately the PhD might contain information that the TSIP would not be happy about. After much discussion, the TSIP agreed that their identity would be anonymised. This was a difficult situation as I felt that I was not respecting their position, however I felt strongly that this needed to be the case. Official permission was granted by the TSIP for me to have access to the organisation and its staff; they also offered to facilitate my access to meetings and to make introductions to relevant stakeholders.

4.7.1.3 Interview participants

Prior to each interview, I sent participants the Plain Language Statement by email which provided a short summary of the purpose of the research and what was being asked of them, and the Consent Form. At the beginning of the interview I explained how my interest in the topic had evolved; I asked if there were any questions about the statement. I then discussed how interview data would be kept confidential, and how anonymity would be maintained through the research, after which I asked if there were any questions. I then reviewed the consent form with the individual and they filled it out. Only one participant refused to have the interview recorded; in this situation, I took extensive notes. Two participants asked that I check with them about how I had used their quotes. One of these participants asked that I remove his use of the term "you know" throughout his quotes. During the course of the PhD I used quotes from one of these individuals a number of times; I secured her consent for this. To create another safeguard, I have changed the gender of some of the participants. I was concerned that, while I have very general descriptions of the types of organisations involved at both the local and national levels, the identity of some may be evident to some in the field.

In the PhD I have identified people using an alpha-numeral system as follow: interviews with the national stakeholders are identified as N1-N13; those with the TSIP in Wychwood as TSIP1-TSIP12; and stakeholders in Wychwood as S1-19.

4.7.1.4 Observation

In the field I observed 16 meetings. One of these was a staff meeting at the TSIP. My attendance at all of the other meetings was facilitated by the TSIP. Five of these meetings were public meetings for which consent was not required; however, the TSIP spoke to the Chairperson to inform them about my attendance and its purpose ahead of time. For the other ten meetings, the relevant staff person sent an email about my attendance ahead of time, asking people to make contact if there was a concern about my participation; I provided a short introduction that was included in the email. At the beginning of each meeting I spoke about my research, explained that I would be taking notes during the meeting but would not be naming people, and that I would not be participating in the meeting. I asked at each meeting if there were any concerns with my participation; there were none. References to observations are identified in this document as OB1-OB16.

4.7.2 Ethics of representation

In this section I reflect on the ethics of representation, that is, how I give voice to the participants in the study; my voice is an active part of this process. Pickering and Kara explore the issues of representation in research describing it as a "deeply ethical arena" (2017, p.300), and one that is of increasing importance given the public nature of academic work. Their work really resonated for me since my research grapples with the question of representation, specifically how a TSI represents an entire sector. There was an important parallel consideration for me as a researcher: how do I represent the voices I have heard through the research process?

One of the ideas that these authors draw on is that of the interpretive authority of the researcher (Josselson, 2007, p.550). The researcher engages in interpretation of their experiences in the field, and participants may only see fragments of themselves in the work as they are only a part of the process. How the study is presented by the researcher therefore reflects the whole body of the data collected, rather than its individual parts; further, it is also shaped by the literature and by the researcher's "repertoire of interpretations" (Alvesson and Sköldberg, 2000). Pickering and Kara state, "Social

scientists are engaged in the task of representation: of their participants, of themselves, of social worlds" (2017, p.306).

I anticipate different reactions to this thesis, and some may feel that it unfairly represents the TSIP. It is inevitable, given the range of perspectives in the field, that a study of this nature will take a position that will divide opinion. I have grappled with this, particularly given the enthusiasm with which I was greeted by the TSIP and the respect I hold for them. However, the purpose of research is to create knowledge and to further debate, and this can generate dissent. I did not want to feel constrained by the same cloak of consensus which is such a feature of state-initiated governance networks. It is my hope that I have sufficiently portrayed the very difficult position that the TSIP is in as it tries to navigate a liminal space between the third sector and the state.

4.8 Claims

This research is an in-depth case study of one TSI in Scotland. It is not possible, nor is it the goal of qualitative research, to generalise the findings in the way that is understood for quantitative research. What I do claim, however, is that the study provides insights into the challenges that the current approach of bringing civil society into governance networks presents. While the findings of this study are particular to Wychwood, there is a high probability that some of the dynamics and issues are common beyond the boundaries of this particular case. The findings are what Flyvberg refers to as the "force of example" (2006, p.228). Walton argues that "the universe is inferred from the case" (Walton, 1992, p. 126). Findings cannot be generalised, but learning is inferred.

As this study is a qualitative interpretivist study, I do not employ quantitative concepts such as reliability, validity, and triangulation. Thomas argues that reliability is a concept imported from psychometrics, relevant when tests are a feature of the research process; in case study research, he states, "expectations about reliability drop away" (2011, p.63). It is not expected that if someone else undertook the research they would find the same results. The concept of validity is employed to measure whether the research design enabled the researcher to find out what they intended; Thomas (2011) argues that this concept is less meaningful in case studies that are inductive. Many other terms for validity have been substituted for qualitative research including plausibility, relevance, credibility, comprehensiveness, significance, and confirmability (Morrow, 2005; Whittemore et al., 2001); Thomas discounts them all referring to them as "tools of an audit society, not of

good research" (2011, p.65). Triangulation is a mathematical term, used in the social sciences to reflect the different perspectives that are being employed; Thomas characterises the utilisation of different perspectives as the "raison d'etre of the case study" (2011, p.66). In summary, Thomas states:

> The case study, as a study of one thing, is not the kind of enquiry in which considerations about validity and reliability should be to the fore since it is the singleness – the peculiarity, even – of the interpretation and analysis of the evidence that a significant (2011, p.66).

4.9 Conclusion

In this research study, I seek to develop a deeper understanding of the issues of independence and representation in the third sector's engagement in local governance networks. The approach taken to the case study has been an interpretivist one. It is understood in this approach that I am part of the process of constructing meaning, and this is considered a strength. Stake states, "The function of research is not necessarily to map and conquer the world but to sophisticate the beholding of it" (1995, p.43).

The next chapter provides the context of the case study in the local authority area is known by the pseudonym of Wychwood. The chapter provides an overview of community planning, describes the local third sector and the third sector interface, and details the relationship between the third sector and the local authority.

5   Case study context

In this chapter I introduce the case study, providing the broader context of community planning in the local authority area, the third sector, and the relationship between the third sector and the local state. As noted in the methodology chapter, the identity of the local authority area and of the actual third sector organisation studied has been anonymised. The commitment to anonymity was made to ensure that all participants could speak freely, resulting in richer data. Upholding the commitment to anonymity constrains the extent to and the specificity with which information can be provided and referenced about both the local authority area and the organisation. In this section I draw on publicly available information as well as information gathered through the field research, particularly papers related to the meetings observed. Staff from the case study organisation were a key source of information about the local context, providing valuable information about governance networks, key players, as well as the history and evolution of democratic governance in the local authority area. When referencing, I describe the type of document but do not provide specific titles or website links; at times I have made information general to maintain anonymity. I have attempted to provide enough information to set the meso and micro context of the case study despite the constraints presented by maintaining anonymity.

This chapter is organised into three sections. In section 5.1 I focus on community planning in Wychwood, describing its purpose and structures, and its relationship with the local third sector. Section 5.2 focuses on the third sector in Wychwood, the TSI model, and the actual third sector organisation studied (the TSIP). In section 5.3, the three types of local governance networks that I studied in the field are described: the Community Planning Partnership (CPP), the Integration Joint Board (IJB), and the Public Social Partnership (PSP).

5.1 Community planning in Wychwood

This section focuses on Wychwood, the local authority in which the case study organisation was located, exploring its approach to community planning and its relationship with the third sector. Wychwood is classified as a "large urban" area according to the Scottish Government's urban rural classification system (Scottish Government, 2017a). The definition of the large urban area is one that has a population of over 125,000 people. Wychwood is primarily urban and has a number of the top 15% data zones in the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) (Scottish Government, 2017b).

5.1.1 Purpose and importance of community planning in Wychwood

As noted in chapter one (see section 1.3), community planning describes the process through which public bodies work together with local communities to design and deliver local services. As set out by the *Local Government in Scotland Act 2003* and the *Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015,* community planning is a partnership-based approach through which to address local needs. The Scottish Government views community planning as the vehicle through which public service reform is delivered (Scottish Government, 2020). Each local authority has its own CPP and is responsible for developing a community plan in active consultation with local partners and communities. The plan sets out high-level outcomes, priorities, actions, and measurable targets that shape the collective direction of public services. Community planning, while critiqued for being bureaucratic and detached (Audit Scotland, 2006, 2013, 2014, 2016a, 2016b; Sinclair, 2008), is important because the process results in both the prioritisation of issues and the allocation of resources amongst statutory partners (and to a lesser degree the third sector) at the local level.

At the time of the field research, the Wychwood CPP was guided by a community plan covering the period 2015 to 2018. The partnership vision is of a thriving, successful and sustainable city where deprivation and inequality are reduced. The CPP identifies four strategic outcomes relating to the economy, health and well-being, children and young people, and communities and their social fabric. Against these four strategic outcomes, twelve related strategic priorities are articulated. Each strategic priority is broken down into a series of specific actions, against which start and complete dates are listed, human resources committed, and the partners/partnerships responsible identified. There are almost 100 specific actions identified in the plan. Performance indicators and targets for the partners/partnerships are defined, describing the data source, the baseline number, targets for each year, as well as long-term targets. A specific example from the plan is given in section 5.1.4, outlining how the third sector participates in the CPP. The community plan is a comprehensive public document that sets the agenda for Wychwood's public services, delivered in partnership with the third sector. The plan identifies how it contributes to the Scottish Government's national outcomes framework and provides a performance monitoring and reporting framework.

The key ambition of the CPP's plan is to improve services and deliver better outcomes for service users, citizens and communities. The CPP's 2015-2018 community plan makes

reference to a new approach to partnership working where the focus is on developing shared priorities rather than each partner bringing their own priorities to the table. The CPP engages in joint planning and resourcing, joint service delivery, joint performance reporting, shared people development, and the integration of services. The following section describes the structures of community planning.

5.1.2 Structures of community planning

The CPP is governed by a partnership board made up of representatives from all the partner organisations, including the third sector. The partnership board is the strategic decision-making body for the overall partnership. It has responsibility for the community plan, monitoring progress and performance, assessing risks, and reporting to elected members, partners and communities. The membership of the partnership board is specified by the *Community Empowerment Act (Scotland) 2015*, although local authorities are able to identify additional local partners. In Wychwood, the membership of the partnership board is: the leader of the council, an armed forces representative, a business sector representative from the Chamber of Commerce, the chair of the Integration Joint Board Health and Social Care (IJB), the chair of the NHS board, a community of place representative through the Association of Community Councils, the convener of the police and fire scrutiny committee, an equality and rights representative, a further education representative, a higher education representative, the council's Leader of the Opposition, a representative from the neighbourhood partnerships, Skills Development Scotland, a social enterprise representative, and a third sector representative. A number of advisers also sit on the board, these are: the Chair of the Compact Group, the Chief Executive of the NHS, the Chief Executive of the Council, the Police Scotland Commander, the Chief Officer of the Integration Joint Board Health and Social Care, the Head of Public Protection and Chief Social Worker; a local senior officer Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, and a Scottish Government location director.

As noted in the previous section, the community plan is a comprehensive document that requires the participation of a number of key partners. The CPP describes its work as being undertaken by a 'family' of partners; these include the partnership board, strategic partnerships, advisory groups, and the twelve neighbourhood partnerships. There are nine strategic partnerships which include economic development, the IJB, children's partnership, alcohol and drug, community learning and development, community safety, reoffending strategic group, sustainable development, and the compact. The strategic

partnerships are responsible for delivering on strategic priorities, incorporating prevention, sustainability, and reducing poverty and inequality. The five advisory groups provide information, advice, and support to help deliver outcomes. The groups are: the collaborative asset management group, Wychwood partnership lead officer group, tackling poverty and advancing equality partnership, chief officers' group, and the transportation forum.

At the local level there are twelve neighbourhood partnerships each of which is chaired by a local councillor; the neighbourhood partnership is the local community planning body and develops its own local plan in consultation with the community. The 'family' of community planning partners is reflected in the diagram below; the involvement of the third sector in these partnerships is described in section 5.1.4:
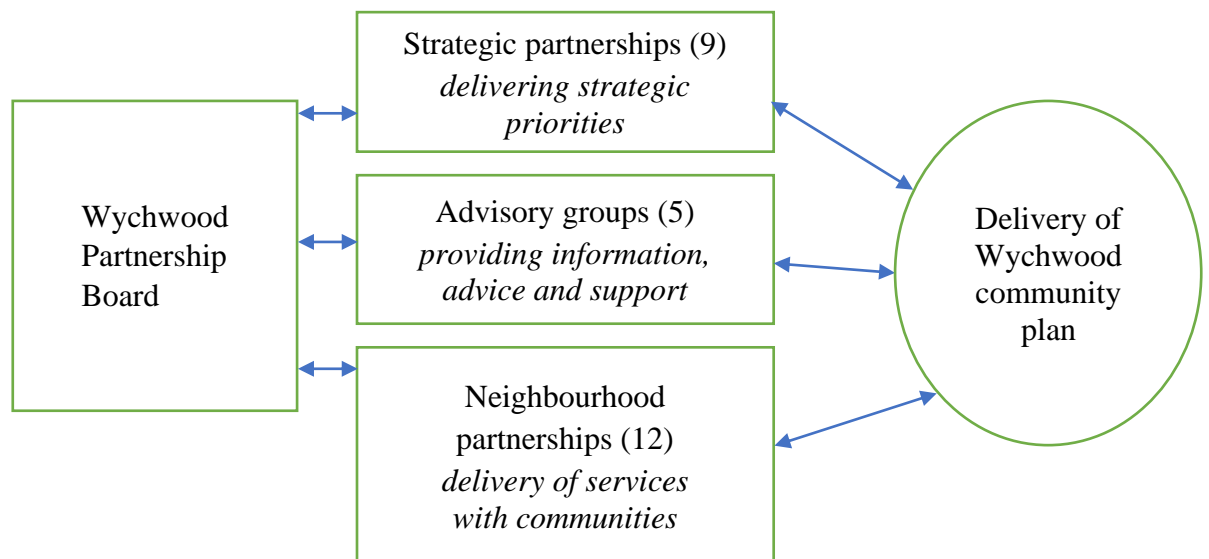
Figure 5.1 - Wychwood community planning partnerships arrangements

During the period I was in the field, Wychwood was developing a new locality model, in part to respond to the requirements of the *Community Empowerment Act (2015)* and the health and social care partnership, as well as to capitalise on lessons learned from local initiatives. Four new localities aligned to the existing neighbourhood partnerships had been identified, the goal of these localities being to bring local service coordination closer to communities.

5.1.3 Evolution of third sector involvement in community planning

Wychwood's formal relationship with the third sector began in the early 2000s when the council approved the development of a multi-agency compact. This decision evolved from

the wider political context as well as local consultation with third sector groups; when the Scottish Parliament resumed in 1999 it formalised a compact with Scotland's third sector at the national level and called for similar compacts at the local level. In Wychwood a working group was convened made up of the council for voluntary services (CVS[14]), the council, the NHS, the police, Communities Scotland, and Scottish Enterprise. National observers were invited including SCVO and COSLA, and an independent chair facilitated the work of the group. The CVS provided significant leadership to the development of the working group and the compact group. The vision of the compact was for the public sector and the voluntary/community sectors to work collectively for the good of the community. Specifically a strategy and framework were developed with the goal to improve joint planning and provision of services; increase mutual recognition of the role and strengths of the voluntary and community and public sectors; increase the role of the voluntary and community sector in policy, decision-making and service delivery at all levels in the city; sustain the resources available to the voluntary and community sector; support the particular role of volunteering and active citizenship in voluntary and community and public sectors; deliver increased and improved community engagement; and increase mutual confidence in the ability of partners to deliver effectively. In the report to the Wychwood Council Executive, the Director of Corporate Services recommended that the compact protocols and actions be included in the council's corporate plan, and that the compact be integrated with the highest level of community planning in the city; these recommendations were supported by the executive of council.

In the mid 2000s, a compact group was formed with an equal number of public sector and third sector partners, with a remit to improve and strengthen the relationship between the sectors, to influence public policy, and to encourage collaborative working. The initial phase of the compact coincided with the early development of community planning in Wychwood. This group, funded through Wychwood Council, continues to this day; it is one of the strategic partnerships of the community planning family. One of the key contributions of the compact group has been in advocating for issues of inequality and poverty to be central to Wychwood's Community Plan. The compact highlights the significant role of the third sector in achieving community planning outcomes.

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[14] When the TSI model was introduced, this CVS became the community planning partner.

5.1.4 Third sector involvement in community planning

The third sector is an active member of the community planning family. The third sector in general, and the TSIP in particular, is involved throughout the community planning process and is represented in all the groupings of community planning structures identified in figure 5.1 (namely the Wychwood Partnership Board, the strategic partnerships, the advisory groups, and the neighbourhood partnerships). Of particular relevance is the compact group that brings together statutory partners and third sector representatives to act as an advisory group to the Wychwood Partnership Board (see figure 5.2).

As an example of how the third sector engages, I have selected one of the strategic priorities from the Wychwood Partnership community plan, that of *reducing health inequalities* in relation to the overall outcome of *improving health and well-being* in Wychwood. One of the specific actions that directly involves the third sector is to ensure that mental health and well-being services meet particular outcomes in line with the Mental Health and Wellbeing Commissioning Plan. The key partner identified is the Wychwood Mental Health Partnership which includes the council, the NHS, and third sector staff with service users and carers (including a representative from the TSIP). The resource identified is the Mental Health Well Being Commissioning budget, a budget allocated through the Integration Joint Board. This example demonstrates specific activities that involve the third sector. The accountability of activities related to this priority area is reported to the Integration Joint Board, which is one of nine strategic partnerships which delivers on the priorities of the community plan (as well as its own). This example shows the interconnectedness of the CPP and the IJB.

5.2 The Wychwood third sector and TSIP

This section provides an overview of the third sector in Wychwood, details the TSI model in Wychwood, and describes relationships between the TSIP and the broader third sector.

5.2.1 The third sector in Wychwood

The compact group described in the previous section undertakes an annual survey of the third sector. I draw here on the annual survey of 2017 as this is when I was in the field. The compact group compiles information from an online survey of the third sector, information from the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR), an annual volunteering survey undertaken by the local volunteer centre, and the TSIP's database. In

2017 there were over 2,000 charities in Wychwood, 87% of which work exclusively within the local authority area; there were also over 1,000 community groups[15] and over 200 social enterprises. The five top categories of charitable purposes were education; citizenship and community development; arts, heritage, culture or science; disadvantaged people; and health. Of the organisations responding, 60% said their focus was on prevention work.

5.2.2 The TSIP

The TSIP is a long-standing organisation in Wychwood, set up originally to respond to the needs of the poor. In its early years it took on a sector coordinating role, and in the 1970s was associated with campaigning. It has an established relationship with the broader third sector community and, as a result of the compact group, was already active in planning processes that preceded the development of TSI model. The TSIP's mission is to support the sector to build and enable resilient, sustainable, and inclusive communities; it does this by speaking up for the third sector as well as by enabling representatives of third sector networks to speak for themselves. It defines its role as contributing to the support, development and promotion of the sector's interests and work in Wychwood. It provides capacity building to the sector, such as governance workshops; it maintains a directory of third sector organisations; and it provides an interface to the statutory sector in order to support the development of an environment which allows the sector to prosper. As an interface, the TSIP sits on a number of local governance networks to promote third sector interests; it provides information to the third sector through events, engagement opportunities, and communication channels such as a newsletter and website; it also hosts a number of partnership forums, which are described in more detail in the following section. The TSIP receives money from a number of sources, including the Scottish Government and the local council.

5.2.3 Mechanisms for third sector engagement in local governance

There are a number of mechanisms that are designed to facilitate the involvement of the third sector into community planning and other local governance processes; some of these are facilitated by the TSIP, some through the council. The diagram below reflects the relationships; it is modified from the 2017 Wychwood annual survey of the sector.

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[15] It is likely that the actual number of community groups is higher as often community groups operate below the radar.
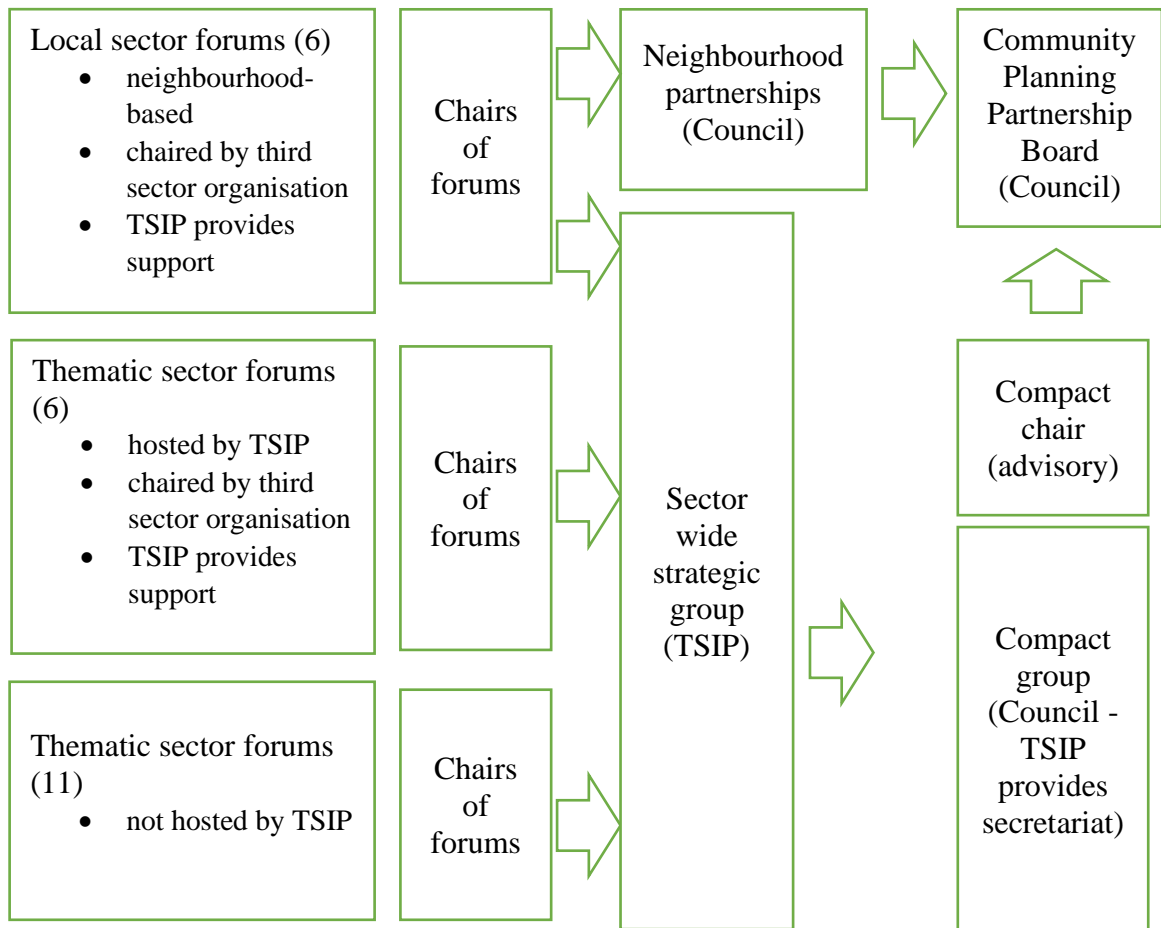
Figure 5.2 - How local forums link into Wychwood's community planning

At the grassroots level, the TSIP supports six neighbourhood-based local sector forums that bring together local third sector organisations. The TSIP provides the secretariat support to the forums and facilitates communication amongst partners; the forums are chaired by a third sector member. The chairs of the six forums participate in the local neighbourhood partnerships that are run by the council and chaired by a local councillor; they are also encouraged to participate in a sector wide strategic group facilitated by the TSIP. The TSIP describes the local sector forums as facilitating communication and planning among local voluntary sector organisations and as being an influential voice to senior staff within local planning structures. Their primary function is to improve local service delivery through partnership working. At the time of my research the new locality leadership teams were in the process of being developed with a vision that the local sector forums would feed into these teams.

The TSIP also hosts thematic sector forums that have been identified as important to the sector; at the time of my research, there were six forums in the areas of: substance use; mental health; children, young people and families; older people; disability; and transport. These networks bring together organisations with a common interest to share information,

learn from each other, and work on collective issues to bring about change. The TSIP provides the secretariat support and facilitates communication. The forums are chaired by third sector members, who are also invited to sit on the sector wide strategic group. There are also a number of other third sector forums that are not hosted by the TSIP; at the time of my research there were eleven in areas such as housing, welfare rights, social enterprise, equalities, health, and employment. The chairs of these forums are also invited to participate in the TSIP's sector wide strategic group. This sector wide group brings together a diversity of third sector interests to consider matters of strategic importance, taking the pulse of the sector. Information gathered through this group is relayed into city level conversations and also informs the work and priorities of the TSIP.

The local council runs a number of neighbourhood partnerships; as noted the chairs of the local sector forums sit on these partnerships. There is a representative from the neighbourhood partnerships who sits on the partnership board of the CPP, thereby facilitating the linking of local issues through to the highest level of community planning. The compact group is considered a council body, but the TSIP provides the secretariat support. The goal of the compact group is to improve relationships between the public and third sectors, and to contribute to decision-making and shape policy. The principles of the compact group, adopted when it was formed, are transparency, accountability, clear communication, equity, and respect. The chair of the compact group is a third sector member and sits on the partnership board in an advisory capacity. There is also a link between the sector wide strategic group and the compact group, with an individual from the strategic group sitting on the compact group. These are the formal mechanisms that enable the sector to be involved in processes that feed into community planning.

The next section describes the governance networks that were studied during the field research.

5.3 Local governance networks in Wychwood

There were three governance networks that I studied during my fieldwork: the Community Planning Partnership (CPP), the Integration Joint Board (IJB), and a Public Social Partnership (PSP). They are each described in turn.

5.3.1 The CPP

Community planning in Wychwood has been described in some detail in section 5.1.1, describing its purpose, and section 5.1.2, describing its structures. Wychwood's CPP provides an overarching community planning framework aimed at strengthening, coordinating and simplifying partnership working in the city. The Wychwood Partnership Board is the strategic decision-making body for the CPP. The term CPP is broader, incorporating the wider partnership family including its strategic partnerships, advisory groups, and neighbourhood partnerships. For the purpose of this research, I use the term CPP as an all-encompassing term to describe the family of partnership working. When I am referring to a specific meeting, I use the formal name of the grouping (for example, the partnership board).

5.3.2 The IJB

The Public Bodies (Joint Working) (Scotland) Act was proclaimed in 2014 (Scottish Government, 2014), requiring local authorities and health boards to create integration boards, delegating functions and resources to improve the quality and consistency of health and social care. National outcomes for health and well-being are determined by the Scottish Government. The *Act* specifies the establishment of an integration joint board and an integration joint monitoring committee as the required governance model. The IJB appoints a chief officer who is responsible to both the local authority and the relevant health board. The IJB has two types of members: voting and non-voting. The voting members are elected by the local council and health board; each has five members on the IJB. The non-voting members include the chief officer of the integration authority, the chief finance officer, the chief social work officer of the local authority, a general practitioner representative appointed by the health board, a secondary care medical practitioner appointed by the health board, a nursing representative employed by the health board, a staff-side representative that can represent the interests of integration authority staff employed by both the NHS and local authority, a third sector representative, a carer representative, and a service user representative. The composition, operating procedures, and structures of the IJB are prescribed by the Scottish Government through the use of statutory instruments (for example, *The Public Bodies (Joint Working) (Integration Joint Boards) (Scotland) Order 2014, Scottish Statutory Instruments 2014 No. 285*; accessed 30 July, 2019). In this respect the IJB is far more regulated and formal than the partnership boards of the CPPs. In Wychwood, the TSIP represents the third sector. In addition to the

IJB there are four committees: audit and risk, performance, professional advisory, and strategic planning. The TSIP sits on the audit and risk and the performance subgroup. In relation to figure 5.1, the IJB is one of the strategic partnerships of the community planning partnership which delivers on the priorities of the community plan, as well as on its own priorities.

5.3.3 The PSP

The Scottish Government describes public social partnerships as "a strategic partnering arrangement which involves the third sector earlier and more deeply in the design and commissioning of public services" (Scottish Government, 2011, p.4). Co-production is central to the PSP model, involving service users in its development. Typically, there are three stages of a PSP: a service is designed by third sector organisations working in partnership with public sector purchasers; a pilot is then run to test out the model; finally, the service is further developed before a competitive tendering process is implemented (Scottish Government, 2011). At the time I began my research, a PSP process was underway to design well-being services under the auspices of the IJB. As is typical, the PSP brought together service users, service providers, and carers to plan the model. The TSIP acted as the third sector representative in the planning process and sat on the Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation Group (IME). In relation to figure 5.1, the PSP is one of the projects funded by the IJB, which is one of the strategic partnerships of the community planning partnership.

Wychwood has a history of using the PSP model; there has been some controversy in the past about how the model was developed and how funding decisions were made. During my fieldwork research I attended a number of meetings related to the PSP as many issues of concern were identified by third sector organisations. These issues are highlighted in the data chapters that follow.

5.4 Conclusion

This chapter has provided the context in Wychwood, the area in which the case study was conducted. The Wychwood local authority has a strong history in community planning and a model of engagement with the third sector that predates the TSI model. The TSI in Wychwood is made up of three partners; this research focuses on the CVS partner that is the lead in building the relationship between the third sector and community planning, and other forms of local governance. This organisation, the TSIP, has developed a number of

mechanisms to link the broader third sector into community planning. During the field research I focused on three particular local governance networks: namely, the CPP, the IJB and the PSP.

The next four chapters describe four of the key themes that emerged from my fieldwork in Wychwood and address the research question: how does the third sector's participation in state-initiated local governance networks through TSIs impact on issues of the sector's independence and representation in Scotland.

6 Where representative democracy and participatory democracy meet

> The whole representative, participatory democracy relationship, how do you
> play those two together, because the ballot box is what we consider sacrosanct.
> *Director, national specialist network (N5)*

In the preceding chapters the broad context has been articulated, drawing on reflexive modernity as an overall framework to understand societal changes in governance. Governance has shifted fundamentally from top down bureaucratic activities driven by the state in isolation, to processes of engagement facilitated by the state with relevant stakeholders. The following four chapters explore the key themes that emerged from my interviews and observations about democratic governance in Wychwood. Chapter six, *where representative democracy meets participatory democracy*, describes the dynamics and issues that arise from bringing together two very different democratic systems. Chapter seven, the *civil servant construct*, describes a state designed model designed to bring the third sector into the space where representative democracy meets participatory democracy. Chapter eight, *representing voice*, explores the issues and impacts for the TSIP in being the voice of the third sector in local governance networks. Chapter nine, *managed talk*, describes the discourse and culture of local governance networks and considers ways in which they may constrain and control conflict. The study concludes that, as a result of its participation in local governance, there is an impact on both the TSI's independence from the state and the ways in which it represents the third sector. The findings lead to an argument that democratic governance requires a different approach; rather than inviting civil society into a state-defined space, new spaces that have been created collaboratively and organically need to be developed. This proposition is explored in the final chapter, as well as the implications for the third sector and how it engages in governance networks.

This chapter explores the issues and tensions that exist in the space, literal and figurative, where representative and participatory democracy converge. I have chosen this particular theme as a starting point as it sets the stage at a macro level, framing the environment in which relationships and power occur at a local level. During the field work, participants raised questions about democratic governance, articulated by some as the challenge of bringing together representative democracy and participatory democracy. Using different language but describing a related dynamic, others referred to the challenge of top down meeting bottom-up and the tension arising from the clash of these different approaches.

These related themes were evident amongst all three groups of people interviewed: national stakeholders, local stakeholders, and representatives from the TSIP. The framing of the issue around the convergence of different forms of democracy was identified by national level stakeholders, reflecting a macro level analysis. Related, the framing of the issue as a top-down bottom-up conflict reflected the actual experience on the ground, at the micro level; this characterisation was used by all three groups of people.

The local governance networks that are the focus of this research are the mechanisms through which the state, statutory bodies and non-state actors are brought together. Specifically, in the partnership board of the community planning partnership (CPP) and the integration joint board (IJB) elected representatives sit alongside unelected representatives from statutory agencies and non-state actors. The governance turn and Scotland's agenda for democratic renewal have transformed the relationships between state and non-state actors. However, while local governance networks are intended to be spaces for the production of collective solutions and actions, they are not collectively designed; they are modelled by, on and for the structures of the state. The actual design of the CPP and IJB are rooted in legislation; in the case of the IJB much of the procedural protocol is legislated. Further, as I will illustrate in chapter seven, the actual TSI model was created by the state. The development of the TSI model is part of the journey of bringing participatory democracy into play with representative democracy, but one that reflects a statutory approach to engaging civil society rather than one that reflects a bottom-up or collaborative approach.

This chapter considers the tensions and impacts of bringing together representative and participatory democracy, with a particular focus on the impact on the third sector. Two broad themes are explored: the ways that the governance turn challenges representative democracy, and ways that the governance turn brings the third sector closer to the state.

6.1 The governance turn challenges representative democracy

> Representative democracy and participatory democracy, how do those two
> things come together, and there's always a danger that they are seen as two
> tribes that are at odds with each other.
>
> *Officer, local government membership body (N12a)*

The framing of state-initiated governance networks as spaces in which representative and participatory democracy converge emerged through the field work. It was expressed in political language, as reflected in the above quote, as well as through descriptive examples of the tensions arising from the clash of differing traditions. This section explores what happens in this space, with a particular focus on the impact of the third sector's engagement. The shift from 'government to governance' (Rhodes, 1996, p.658) has brought state and non-state actors together, bringing with them very different traditions and cultures; this section focuses on the challenges that result from this engagement. Section 6.1.1 considers resistance to the governance turn, looking specifically at elected councillors and council officers. Section 6.1.2 considers the culture that exists in state-initiated local governance spaces and makes the argument that these spaces are dominated by a bureaucratic culture that clashes with third sector culture. The space where these two types of democratic tradition converge creates challenges for both politicians and civil servants, and for civil society organisations; this section highlights some of these challenges and importantly, considers the issue of power. Power is perceived as asymmetrical amongst stakeholders with the state continuing to hold significant power, despite arguments that the move to governance would decentre the state (Rhodes, 1996). This inequality of power poses challenges for civil society organisations.

6.1.1 Resistance to change

Reflecting the governance turn, Scotland's CPPs were originally piloted in the late 1990s and quickly became an established part of the local infrastructure (Rogers et al., 2000). As noted in the chapter five, the systematic involvement of the third sector came later; the development of the TSIs in the late 2000s became the vehicle through which third sector voices were engaged in community planning. Scotland's democratic renewal agenda, particularly associated with the SNP, built on the governance turn and is most clearly evidenced through the *Community Empowerment Act (2015)* which introduced statutory duties and mechanisms on CPPs to engage community bodies in planning. The CPPs are a site where representative democracy and participatory democracy converge.

A number of participants stated that there was resistance to the democratisation of local planning, both at the councillor and officer level. This resistance appeared symptomatic of the tension of bringing together representative democracy with more participatory forms of democracy. The past-chair of a national third sector intermediary body articulated the tension of representation without an electoral mandate in community planning:

That's where you get into problems of representation which means so much to local authorities, I mean they hang on to this idea that they have an electoral mandate. It may only be 20% but it's an electoral mandate that we don't have, and there's nothing the third sector can ever do to, to make that the same, and exploring alternative ways of gaining authority is something which I never got involved in any discussion of that was helpful. It just was, a sort of block there, and that is symbolic I think of the sort of mind-set that sets up a community planning partnership and then expects the third sector to come into it (N1).

Rather than being a collective space, the CPP is a place for statutory decision making with the third sector's input as a special interest group; it is not as an equal partner. The third sector is not a formal representative body and consequently will never have the same democratic standing as elected councillors.

The challenge to representative democracy is also experienced at the civil servant level. In the field, an example was given about the role of development trusts impinging on the traditional mandate of local authorities. The director of a national third sector development organisation observed:

Local authorities by and large tend to resist development trusts, I think they see them as a kind of threat. I think it highlights that whole, kind of, tension where representative democracy meets participatory democracy (N8).

This resistance was identified primarily by national stakeholders. An example of the tension experienced was also recounted by the director of a national specialist network who attended a meeting of council officers and a development trust in a community that runs a successful wind turbine:

It was going to give them a decent income stream and I was at the meeting where the community were there and some council folk were there and they were just talking about income projections, and somebody in the community said, 'With that sort of money, we could lay that road that's always been so bumpy down to wherever,' and you could just see the council officials going, 'Hold on now that's our, that's what we do, you can't do that,' and, so it does begin to change everything when the money is shifted (N5).

The space created by more participatory forms of democracy raises deeper questions about representation, issues which are explored in chapter eight. Democratic governance challenges the long-held tradition that representation is legitimate because it is based on an electoral mandate. There are questions, however, about how effectively elected officials can represent the needs of constituents. The space where representative democracy meets

participatory democracy raises fundamental questions about the nature of a representative system. The question of the relative merits of an elected representative versus a community-based third sector representative was posed by a long-standing local third sector leader:

> [The chief executive], sitting there from the third sector will have as great, or probably better, understanding and better voice and overview of things as any councillor has (S4).

This claim raises the question of the value of experience over the value of an electoral mandate. While there is a school of thought in the literature that participatory democracy weakens representative democracy, there is also one that argues the opposite: participatory democracy actually strengthens representative democracy by the inclusion of diverse voices and lived experience (Durose et al., 2015; Sterling, 2005). Given the recent crisis of representative democracy and the erosion of trust in elected officials (Barnes et al., 2007; Davidson and Elstub, 2014; McNulty and Wampler, 2015; Taylor, 2006; Wampler, 2012), there is a strong incentive for embracing the inclusion of citizens and civil society organisations to complement our traditional systems of democracy. However, how roles play out and the extent to which such networks can be complementary depend on how power is shared, or not.

The resistance of representatives and officials to participatory forms of democracy is a significant obstacle because of the asymmetrical power held through their positions in comparison to the power held by the third sector. The state and influential statutory bodies like the NHS have formidable power which enables them to shape the experience of the third sector participating in governance networks. In this case study, particularly in the partnership board, there was a strong engagement with the TSIP; at the time of the research, the council leader who chaired the partnership board held the sector in high regard and held quarterly meetings with sector organisations. The chief executive of the TSIP was the deputy chair of the partnership board, a strong endorsement of the reputation of the organisation. However, the experience for TSIs is variable across the country (VAS, 2013), and previous research about a CPP concluded that the third sector was a "junior partner" (Sinclair, 2011, p.77). Ironically, the strength of the relationship of this particular TSIP with statutory partners seemed to weaken its legitimacy in the broader third sector because of the perception that it was too closely aligned with the state. The chief executive of a local third sector network expressed deep cynicism about how the TSIP interacted with officials:

> It was clamouring far more for recognition and acceptance with elected members and chief officers than from its natural constituency and I was witnessing this and it made me sick. I thought no this is not the organisation that represents us (S19).

The term "natural constituency" suggests that the TSIP's primary relationship and accountability is with the third sector and not the state. In this particular example, the actions of the TSIP had significant consequences on its legitimacy.

There is a rich debate in the literature about the democratic challenge posed by governance networks, with fundamental questions being raised about the legitimacy of bringing in non-state actors with no clear accountability or transparency into decision making (Papadopoulos, 2013; Rhodes, 1996; Sørensen, 2002; Swyngedouw, 2005). The examples from the field, while from a third sector perspective, contribute to these debates. The resistance that was identified by research participants is also borne out by the literature (Barnes et al., 2004; Lowndes and Wilson, 2001; Taylor, 2004a).

One of the more consistent challenges for the sector of working in state-initiated governance networks is the culture of the work. Currently the space where representative and participatory forms of democracy meet is one that bears that culture of statutory ways of working. The next section explores the clash of cultures that is created in this shared space, and further explores issues of power together with space.

6.1.2 A clash of cultures

The culture of local governance spaces and processes was another theme that wove its way through the field work. The collective governance spaces of the CPP and the IJB are ones that reflect statutory ways of working, approaches often rooted in a more bureaucratic style that is alienating to non-state actors. There is also a particular style of working that was described by one participant as "managed talk", a theme that is taken up in chapter nine which suggests that managed talk makes it hard to explore issues in any depth and also quietens dissent.

While the critique about the statutory culture is one most often heard from the third sector, the concern is not limited to the sector; a Member of the Scottish Parliament (MSP) who was in the cabinet at the time that community planning was introduced lamented the way that community planning has been operationalised:

> In some cases it's just become bureaucratic and it's bound in formal meetings and agendas that are complex and I know people that attend community planning meetings and they kind of lose the will to live during the middle of the meeting, and that was never the intention really. The intention was just to be dynamic and creative…
>
> But it's become, it became bureaucratised at a certain point … and I don't know for sure but I reckon that a lot of third sector people might feel quite alienated by the amount of process that's got to be gone through and the vocabulary and the language and, kind of, exclusive nature of that (N10).

The past-chair of a national intermediary body commented on the culture clash in these terms:

> So, you've got that top-down structure basically, meeting energy that is coming up from the bottom, and I think that one of the problems is that the community planning partnerships don't speak the language of the community groups that they're trying to bring in… there's that feeling of freedom that comes from the grassroots organisations, that then, it faces the cold water of a table where everybody else is speaking the same language and has the same kind of expectations, and that's where you get into problems of representation (N1).

While it may not have been the intention for community planning to be bureaucratic and exclusive, the experience on the ground is that these are statutory spaces that expect the third sector and community to come to them and to participate in ways that are culturally appropriate from a statutory perspective.

The CPP and the IJB are both creations of Scottish Government legislation that prescribe a particular form of partnership working; the participation of elected representatives at the local level, the local authority and state agencies is a statutory duty. Hence these partnerships, while operationalised at the local level, are centrally mandated; this is a good example of why the Scottish Government is consistently critiqued for having a centralised approach. Tensions between central and local government are a particularly salient feature of the Scottish context. This tension was a theme that repeatedly emerged throughout my field work; people used the term 'top down' not only to describe community planning but also to describe the relationship between the Scottish Government and local authorities. The national government was consistently described as being centralising in its approach while at the same time encouraging local governance and the principle of subsidiarity, as reflected in the following comment from the chief officer of a third sector organisation in Wychwood:

> We do have a government in Scotland who simultaneously say we should be working at a local level and it's all about the local, but is possibly one of the most centrist governments. I don't understand it. You can't have them both (S2).

In the case of the CPP, the legislation (*the Community Empowerment Act, 2015*) requires that the partnership engage with 'community bodies'; while TSIs are not and could not specifically be named because they are not statutory bodies, the practice across Scotland is that the local TSI sits on the CPP. As previously noted, the TSI is funded by the Scottish Government; one of its specific roles is to be the interface in community planning. Although the TSI's participation is not legislated, it is required by virtue of the funding relationship with the national government.

The TSIP researched was held in high regard by state and statutory partners in both the CPP and the IJB; its participation was genuinely welcomed and its contribution acknowledged. This is articulated by the leader of the council who also chaired the CPP: she stated, "you couldn't operate, in the spirit of what is now the law, without the voluntary sector at the table – they play such a huge role in community delivery of services… as equal partners" (S1). This sentiment was echoed in the words of the council's local community planning manager, "I think people accept that the third sector makes a massive contribution to the wellbeing of citizens in the city and as long as there's a common acceptance of that then there's credibility at that table" (S6). In part this particular TSIP was chosen for the case study because of the many positive comments made about the organisation and the CPP throughout the scoping stage of the research. Despite the warmth and sincerity of the invitation, the TSIP still had to engage within a state culture and rules, participating in a space that was shaped by this institutional logic.

The third sector was acknowledged as a unique partner around the community planning table; however, it comes from a different tradition, born out of community needs rather than public administration and its roots are democratic rather than instrumental. The sector does not represent an organisation or an institution; it represents an entire sector of society. With this distinctiveness, in its history and its ethos, a visible clash of cultures around the CPP table was observable. Rochester (2013) argues that a statutory culture frames the way that discussions take place and shapes what is expected in terms of professionalism; the findings in this particular case study confirm this argument. The statutory culture affects the way that the third sector engages in these spaces. This theme is picked up in chapter

seven which explores how the professionalisation of communication contributes to third sector organisations adopting state-like behaviour.

As previously outlined in chapter three, the theoretical concepts of space and power are helpful tools through which to analyse the clash of cultures that was identified by participants in the field. Cornwall (2004a) identifies spaces as *closed* (no civic participation), *invited* (civil society is brought in), and *created* (civil society takes up its own space). Drawing on her framework, these local governance networks would be considered invited spaces, where non-state actors are invited into decision-making processes by the state. She argues that the potential for changing power relations in these spaces depends in part on the locus of their creation, the governance landscape, the context, and the particular culture of politics (Cornwall, 2004a). The role of the Scottish Government is central to understanding all of these factors. Given this, the framing of the CPP as an *invited* space is questionable; the space could more appropriately be described as a *compelled* space.

Cornwall cautions that invited spaces may "re-inscribe existing relationships, hierarchies and rules of the game" (Cornwall, 2004a, p.2). Given the legislative context of these governance spaces, it is unsurprising that they are experienced by the third sector as alienating. The cultural alienation articulated through my fieldwork echoes Sinclair's study of a CPP, where third sector representatives experienced the way business was conducted as formal and alien. A focus on pragmatism and getting the work done characterised the process, experienced by some as "highly negative and disempowering" (Sinclair, 2011, p.81). The risk of working within a space that is shaped by a state logic is that nonstate actors begin to resemble state actors, a dynamic that DiMaggio and Powell (1983) term isomorphism.

Power is an important dynamic to consider in democratic governance, and here I frame culture as an expression of power. VeneKlasen and Miller (2002) identify three forms of power, building on the work of Lukes (1974): visible, hidden, and invisible. As discussed in chapter three, *visible* power refers to observable decision making, incorporating formal rules and processes. *Hidden* power pertains to setting the political agenda and is reflected in who participates. *Invisible* power acts at the level of the individual as well as contributing to generally held beliefs about what is acceptable. All these forms of power shape the culture of the space and the participation of the stakeholders, as evidenced by the examples of visible, hidden, and invisible power below.

The relatively formal rules of engagement in the CPP and the very formal and prescribed processes in the IJB reflect *visible* power. For example, the IJB stipulates that no proxy is allowed for the third sector representative on the IJB; this meant that when the chief executive of the TSIP was unable to attend a meeting where an important vote was being taken, no other representative from the TSIP was able to take their place.

One of the local forum chairs who was also a community member provided a clear example of *hidden* power in the agenda setting of a neighbourhood partnership. She described how the agenda has been shaped to focus on non-controversial issues such as dog mess rather than the closure of local schools (S11). Another respondent familiar with TSIs through his role in a local government support organisation described a pattern in the CPPs of the agenda being "skewed by the big beasts" (N2).

The PSP demonstrates clearly how *invisible* or *insidious* power operates: local third sector organisations stayed quiet at a community event with the PSP lead, despite having expressed many concerns in a previously-held sector forum. It was left to the TSIP development officer to ask the difficult questions. In reflecting on this meeting, she stated "partners are really passive… they can't - they're there saying please commission me" (TSIP10). The power of culture and norms of practice are poignantly expressed by the deputy director of the TSIP who stated, "Culture eats strategy for breakfast" (TSIP8). This highlights how powerful cultures, incorporating expected norms and the rules of the game, override the words of a strategy document suppressing discussion from those less able to operate within these norms.

This section has considered how the governance turn has impacted the dynamics in spaces where representative democracy and participatory democracy meet. It has explored resistance in these spaces, particularly in the maintenance of traditional democratic processes to which state agencies adhere. It has also considered the clash of cultures in these spaces drawing out how power is enacted and potentially suppresses the views and abilities of third sector organisations to participate.

The next section considers the impact on the relationship between the third sector and the state in local governance spaces.

6.2 The governance turn brings the third sector closer to the state

> There's a price to pay for your behaviour because we are around the table by consent and occasionally by the regulations, so I think [we try] to play it very cool.
> *Deputy director, TSIP (TSIP11)*

In this section I build on the previous findings to explore in more detail the consequences of bringing together state and non-state actors. My analysis suggests that local planning structures reflect state priorities and needs and that through these structures the third sector is brought closer to the state. The development of the CPPs is considered alongside the impact that this model has had on the third sector. In particular I explore how the TSIP's engagement in local governance structures has impacted on its relationship with the broader third sector. Section 6.2.1 illustrates how local governance structures are created in the image of the state. Section 6.2.2 considers the price of engagement, exploring three areas: the price of activism, the price of partnership, and the price of sharing decision-making. Section 6.2.3 concludes by arguing that the state retrofits parts of the third sector into its ways of working.

6.2.1 Creating local governance in the image of the state

There is little contention to the assertion that CPPs were top down creations. In fact, there is common agreement that the term "community planning" was a misnomer that had negative consequences as it did not, originally, have anything to do with the actual community. The original goal was to bring local state and statutory partners to work in partnership to plan and deliver local public services – for the community, rather than with the community. An MSP who was in the cabinet at the time that community planning was introduced described it in this way:

> People in the third sector and at community level think this is about communities doing planning. Rather than this was really a top-down system of local authority, of public authorities planning better together for communities rather than communities planning for themselves, and I think the name in that context has actually been unhelpful in slightly misleading people (N10).

Regardless of how the CPP was named and understood, it is the structure that has remained to this day. In recent years, there have been attempts to integrate a broader range of non-statutory voices, including the third sector. The structures of local governance reflect the culture and priorities of their architects. Of particular importance is the mechanism for the

third sector's primary involvement in community planning, the TSI. Similar to the TSI model, the CPP and the IJB are also "civil servant constructs." While both the CPP and the IJB have created routes for civil society engagement, they were designed in isolation from civil society. These governance networks are constitutive of power relations.

The experience of working in these new spaces was described by a past-chair of a national intermediary body who had active involvement in some of the planning bodies associated with community planning:

> I got the feeling time and again that the community planning partnerships and the local authorities on them and the government people on them were all trying to make the third sector into vehicles for the local authority rather than saying, 'Here's are the third sector organisations that have bubbled up with other concerns, with other ways of doing things' (N1).

This engagement of the third sector highlights how local governance reflects state ways of working; it is an example of invisible power at work. Governance networks are political spaces; power is embodied in the people who participate in them and the institutions they represent. As Gaventa describes, such spaces are "social products" as opposed to "neutral containers" (2006). Drawing again on Cornwall's conceptual framing, these are spaces that hold power – visible, hidden and invisible. As noted in the previous section, there is often a culture clash for the third sector in engaging in these spaces. The culture and structure of community planning has created a legacy that has impacted on the third sector. The next section explores the impact on the third sector more fully.

6.2.2 The price of engagement

The active engagement of the third sector in local governance comes with a price. Engagement gives the third sector a voice but has an impact on its overall activities and potentially on how activist its voice can be. On a very practical level, the enormous time commitment to local governance activities (particularly sitting on the CPP and the IJB) shapes the time available for a TSI to do other things – particularly for the chief executive who is typically the person who attends the CPP and the IJB. Engagement in local statutory governance means that the leadership of the TSI spends its time in statutory meetings rather than in community spaces. It could be argued that this influence over the TSI's time is a form of hidden power, and that as more time is spent in these spaces, the cultures and practices become learned, expected, and assumed. A local third sector leader in Wychwood captured the impact of the third sector's active role:

What the third sector did and has done is it wanted to play with the big boys and has, and for a long period of time started behaving like that and the compact, to a certain extent, is part of that and community planning structures are part of that and, you know, the integrated joint board is part of that, is we all have a seat at the table and that's really important, and yes it is really important but it's only really important if 1) you can say what you think, 2) you don't worry about what the consequences of what that is are and, and 3) it actually then comes up with a shift in behaviour (S7).

In the section below, three areas are considered with explicit reference to the case study: the first is the price of speaking out, the second is the price of partnership, and the last is the price of shared decision-making with the state. The concept of liminality is utilised here as an analytical tool to highlight the enormous challenge faced by the TSIP in navigating its role as a representative of the third sector in a statutory space. Liminality describes an in-between space, a space that is betwixt and between; it is neither one nor the other. Throughout this thesis, I conceptualise TSIs as being in a permanent state of liminality; they sit between the state and the third sector. In this particular research study, the TSIP was viewed by the state and statutory partners as a positive stakeholder and a friend; within the third sector community they were generally viewed as being too close to the state and therefore treated with suspicion, and at times referred to as "agents of the state".

6.2.2.1 The price of speaking out

During the case study research, a number of local stakeholders and staff of the TSIP made reference to a situation that had occurred in the past where the TSIP had spoken out on behalf of the broader third sector community and suffered a cut to its funding as a result. In the interviews, this example was recalled in relation to questions about the independence of the third sector and the ability of third sector organisations to be outspoken. In this particular situation the TSIP was speaking on behalf of a number of third sector organisations regarding concerns with a Public Social Partnership with the NHS. In a conversation about the reluctance of organisations to speak out, the chief executive of the TSIP stated:

> Partly there's a bit of the TSI will do that job, they'll stick their head above the parapet … and there's a huge bit of fear – if we stick our head above the parapet it'll got shot. And they will know that the TSI did stick its head above the parapet with one of the PSPs a couple of years ago, and we severely got our head shot off and within about a month we had lost 40 grand" (TSIP9).

The third sector's issues were articulated in a report produced by the TSIP; no organisational names were used. The TSIP spoke out on behalf of the community – which is the key role of an intermediary body. The chief executive recalled how this was challenged by the funder:

> We were asked to name organisations and we refused, absolutely refused… we were told surely it's not legitimate then if we're not prepared to name, but that's our purpose and actually that's why we're funded, to provide an interface, and broker, and negotiate, and work to make sure that each of us are communicating better with each other… (TSIP9).

This is a stark example of the cost of speaking out, of biting the hand that feeds you, and having it withdrawn. It was the TSIP's role to be the voice of the sector; in using this voice, it was punished. The situation highlights the inequality of power and vulnerability that exists for third sector organisations that are reliant on funding from the state. In my observations, I was struck by how reluctant third sector organisations appeared to be to challenge issues in the development of a new PSP; this history sheds light on the fear that was experienced within the community of third sector groups and why there was such reluctance. Past experience lived on in the memories of the third sector organisations. This example accentuates the differential nature of power that is evident when relationships are circumscribed by funding.

The PSP model is characterised in a recent evaluation of six PSPs in Scotland as "an example of co-production which should be understood as part of a wider international movement, rooted in the idea of citizen participation in the design and delivery of goods or services" (Scottish Government, 2018b, p.7). This model is a form of local planning, focused on the needs of service users and the expertise of delivery partners. Utilising the concepts of space and power, the PSP would, on the face of it, be conceived as an invited space. However, again this could be argued to be a *compelled* space. In this particular example the PSP was being used as a way to develop a model for mental health services; active participation in the process was essential if organisations wanted to be considered for funding. For the third sector, particularly in this local authority, there was a legacy of deep distrust because of how previous PSPs had been managed. A significant amount of power was held by the NHS lead officer and power was evident in visible, hidden and invisible forms. Visible power was demonstrated in the expectations of participation required by the community; hidden power existed in how issues and concerns were

responded to; invisible power was reflected in the near silence of community organisations that, in private, expressed grave concerns about the process.

6.2.2.2 The price of partnership

An example related to Fairer Scotland, Scottish Government funding designed to support low-income communities, illustrates the way in which the TSIP experienced tensions from its partnership work with state agencies potentially compromising its support from third sector organisations. In this particular local authority, there was controversy about the funding to low-income communities, decisions that were made through the CPP partnership board.   The TSI was involved at a strategic level through the partnership board and was also involved on the ground in local communities through its development staff. This situation created internal conflict for the TSIP. A local forum chair recounted the situation:

> That was the first time I really had a, a disconnect with the TSI if you like. We had a very good worker, support worker who was able to work for us so far of the way but when it actually came to challenging the council she had to step back, she was told by her boss that she had to step back and that was always one of the problems, when you talk about tightropes that was always, I think, for the TSI, the fact is that they were funded by the council and they couldnae be seen to be supportive of something else that was very critical of the council and that, that means you look again, a wee bit, at relationships I think. But I totally understanding where the TSI's coming fae … working within certain confines in that it's trying to represent the third sector to the best of its ability but there's always an element of the third sector there's gonna be a mistrust there because the TSI is basically an agent of the council, I mean it's seen as that quite often, and that was my experience back in the Fairer Scotland days (S11).

This example shows the difficult position that the TSIP occupies in working in partnership with the state; while the front-line worker was clearly working in and for the third sector, managers of the organisation were working in the CPP in a space where they were pulled between the state and the third sector. Herein lies the fundamental challenge for third sector bodies that sit within governance networks representing the third sector; these third sector bodies have to navigate a liminal space. In this particular example it appears that the TSIP made a decision to align itself with the state. While this was not a situation that was explored through the interviews with the TSIP management, what is significant is that their actions were seen by community members as compromising their role as representatives of the third sector. The price of partnership in this case is a weakening of trust from the community, hence the legitimacy of their representative role is undermined.

While this individual is still active within the TSIP, there is a continuing degree of caution about the relationship. The challenges are further exemplified in the next sub-section on shared decision-making.

6.2.2.3 The price of shared decision-making

Related to the price of partnership working is the price of shared decision-making, particularly when those decisions have a directly negative impact on the third sector. A poignant example was provided by a senior manager from the NHS. The TSIP sits on a core group that designs and makes decisions about substance misuse services in the city. This role requires the core group to make funding decisions about which organisations get funded. In simple terms this means that the TSIP is both the voice for the sector as well as a funder – seemingly contradictory roles. The NHS senior manager characterised the challenges this way:

> The core group try to have cabinet solidarity, we've made this decision together, we've all agreed with this, this is where the axe has to fall, and that's tough sometimes for the TSI… (S13).

In another example the same manager stated:

> Recent [cuts from statutory services] were between two TS agencies, hard to be the bearer of that news and to say you were part of that decision, so I see the conflict there (S13).

The TSIP's involvement in these very direct kinds of decision making embeds an important third sector perspective into critical choices about services, but also implicates the third sector in state decision making. In this role the TSIP holds power over other third sector organisations, the very same organisations that are also members of the TSIP. This power relationship and the proximity of the TSIP to the state make it difficult for the TSIP to act as a trusted voice for the third sector, a theme that is explored in chapter eight. The TSIP's perceived closeness to the state contributes to a distancing of third sector organisations from the TSIP, and accusations that the TSIP is an agent of the state. The governance turn has reshaped the relationship between the TSIP and the state; the TSIP is more closely aligned with the state complicating its relationship with other third sector organisations. In part this stems from the culture of governance networks which assume consensus in decision-making and commonality of expectations and goals (Davies, 2011; Mouffe, 2005 a, b).

In summary, there are costs to the TSIP in its participation in governance networks which undermine its ability to be a voice for the sector. The TSIP exists in a permanent liminality, constantly navigating its relationship between the third sector and the state. The next section considers models of local governance and the engagement of the third sector.

6.2.3 Retrofitting the local third sector into local governance

In this chapter I have made the argument that state initiated local governance networks are created in the image of the state. The participation of some third sector bodies in these governance networks aligns parts of the third sector more closely with the state. While there has been an increased interest in, and commitment to, bringing third sector and community voices into local governance networks, the approach used with the TSIs has been instrumental. TSIs have been invited into a space that is shaped by the state; the sector did not have a say in how this space is created. A term that was used by an officer with a local government membership body to describe the process of creating and bringing the TSIs into the community planning space was that of "retrofitting" the third sector:

> But when it comes to community planning partnerships … there is a danger
> that it tries to retrofit a system onto a wider way of organising the public sector
> which doesn't necessarily work that well, and perhaps the creation of TSIs was
> a way of trying to find a way to fit into that retrofitting rather than actually the
> organic, kind of, bottom-up way, which might actually be more effective
> locally (N12a).

Governance networks, like the CPP and IJB, reflect a space that is designed by the state; power relations are imprinted on and enacted through these spaces. These spaces are not neutral; they are constitutive of the power relations held by the state and statutory partners. The shaping of these spaces by the state impacts on the non-state actors that participate, a process that Brandsen et al. term "manufacturing civil society" (2014, p.1). The risk of participation is that the sector becomes a reflection of the state rather than an expression of civil society.

Inviting third sector and community bodies and expecting them to conform, to be retrofitted, to state initiated and state defined spaces limits the potential for creativity, as well as contributing to a reshaping of the third sector bodies. However, a number of participants suggested that while there are risks in participation, there is also potential in the space where representative democracy and participatory democracy meet if a different approach to shaping these spaces could be undertaken. The director of a national third

sector development organisation highlighted the failure to make room for diverse groups and voices:

> You've got all this activity bubbling away but increasingly, I think, community enterprise, development trusts, all that sort of stuff is a much more interesting side of things. So, the challenge is how you create a space where almost top-down meets bottom-up. And, if that's the question, for me the answer is not community planning partnerships. You need to create a much more creative space (N8).

The co-creation of collaborative spaces is explored in more detail in the discussion chapter.

6.3 Conclusion

Local governance networks, such as CPPs and IJBs, provide examples of the kinds of mechanisms that exist in the space where representative democracy and participatory democracy meet. These networks engage non-state actors, like the third sector, with state and statutory partners; they are an example of democratic governance in action. My research set out to explore the impact for the third sector, and the TSIs in particular, of engaging in these types of networks.

This chapter has argued that the governance turn challenges representative democracy; democratic governance requires that both elected officials and civil servants work in a different way. Yet the spaces in which democratic governance takes place have been designed by the state using traditional top-down practices, with TSIs being retrofitted into them. I have demonstrated, drawing on many examples from the field, that the TSIP's active participation in these spaces has brought it closer to the state but distanced it from the third sector. This distancing is a cause of great concern because the third sector is the TSIP's constituency; while the state may be the TSIP's primary funder, the TSIP does not exist to serve the state, it exists to serve the third sector. The TSIP is a membership organisation with a mission to support, develop and promote the interests and work of voluntary and community organisations. The perspective of third sector organisations is the most critical as ultimately the TSIP's mission is in its work with the third sector. Through its role in governance networks, however, it has become compromised because of its closeness to the state. The TSIP navigates a liminal space, playing the role of an interface between the state and the third sector rather than acting as a traditional shop steward in the interests of its membership. While governance networks held the promise

of bringing civil society voices into statutory spaces, the experience in this particular space suggests that this inclusion has come with an enormous price.

While the governance turn began in the early 2000s, the democratisation – or its potential – through local governance is still in its infancy. To date these spaces in Scotland have been largely created by the state and have mirrored state ways of working. This has impacted on the how the third sector engages. Not only does this constrain the third sector's potential for innovation, but my case indicates that it also undermines the relationship of the third sector interface body with its constituents. Drawing on my field work, some individuals spoke hopefully about the potential to shape local governance spaces into more collaborative, dynamic spaces, an idea that is explored further in the discussion chapter.

The next chapter details the evolution of the TSI model and explores the relationship between the third sector and state, echoing many of the themes that have been outlined in this chapter.

7 Civil servant construct

> [The TSI is] a construct, that's a construct by civil servants that actually has bugger all to do with real people and real service.
>
> *Chief officer, TSIP partner organisation (S2)*

The previous chapter provided the broad context, situating democratic governance occurring in the space where representative democracy and participatory democracy meet. Governance networks form one of the mechanisms of democratic governance, bringing together state and nonstate actors. While the third sector was not considered a major stakeholder in the early days of community planning, its participation was increasingly viewed as critical. One of the primary mechanisms to bring the third sector into local governance was the third sector interface (TSI), a model created by the Scottish Government. As a result of the TSI model, the third sector was represented in each of Scotland's 32 local authorities, initially in the CPPs and later, in most places, on the Integration Joint Boards (IJBs).

In each of my interviews I asked people what they thought of the TSI model. The quote above is the response from the chief officer of a third sector organisation in Wychwood that is one of the partners in the TSIP. While a more extreme expression of the sentiment voiced in the field, this quote captures a common critique reflecting the genesis of the TSI model. Within government there is acknowledgement that if the model were being developed today, it would be done differently, reflecting a co-productive approach to engaging the third sector. It is important to note that the TSI model was developed between 2008 to 2011; significantly, since that time the Christie Commission (2011) was published with wide ranging influence on public service reform and a re-conceptualisation of the relationship between the state and civil society. Of equal significance, the *Community Empowerment Act (2015)* came into effect, reflecting the ethos of the Christie Commission and introducing mechanisms to engage citizens and community bodies in civic matters. Both represent major milestones in the thinking of how the state engages with civil society.

In my interviews, the actual development of the TSI model stood out as a significant theme across all groups of stakeholders, with the majority of participants critical about its evolution and implementation. This chapter explores the development of the TSI model and its impact on the third sector, both on the third sector's relationship with the state and on the relationships within the third sector community. The chapter is organised in three

sections: the first traces the development of the TSI model exploring the drivers for the model and the reactions and opinions about the model from different stakeholder perspectives. The evolution of the TSI model and its implications on the third sector's independence from the state is considered, drawing on the *Baring Barometer of Independence* and the concept of isomorphism. The second section explores the impact of the TSI model on the third sector's relationship with the state. It looks at the professionalisation of the sector and the shift away from activism. The issues of being an insider or an outsider are considered, drawing on the concepts of space and power. The third section explores the impact of the TSI model on the relationships within the third sector, and amongst the 32 TSIs across Scotland. The weakening of the TSIs as a vehicle for civil society is considered, drawing on the concept of invisible power.

7.1 TSI model: a creation of the state for the state's purposes

> The government was keen to have a single reference point in each local authority basically... I think was that, kind of, suspicion around that TSIs had been set up for government's convenience rather for something that the local charities themselves needed.
> *Past-chair, national third sector intermediary body (N1)*

This research set out to understand the impact of a TSI's participation in local governance. As a starting point, developing an understanding of the history and evolution of the actual TSI model was essential, a full account of which is provided in the chapter five. The story of the model's conception and its tumultuous implementation became a central theme to emerge from my data because of the significant consequences that participants identified for the TSIP and the third sector community. This section charts the history of the state's creation of the TSI model outlining the drivers for the model in section 7.1.1 and the reactions from different stakeholders in section 7.1.2. Further, the implications for the third sector's independence are considered in 7.1.3.

7.1.1 Drivers for the TSI model

In the 1990s the third sector was represented locally through a number of bodies including councils for voluntary services (CVS), volunteer centres, local social economy partnerships, and social enterprise networks. The challenge for the state of interfacing with such a diversity of bodies was reflected by an MSP who held a senior cabinet post in the early days of community planning:

> If you look at this from a government point of view, and from a local government point of view, one of the great dilemmas for those big public authorities and institutions is who do you talk to in the third sector …? (N10).

In addition to the question of whose voice to listen to, there was the administrative complication of managing different Scottish Government funding pots in the sector. The chief executive of a national third sector network body described the drivers from the government's perspective:

> The TSI model was generated not by the sector and not by the organisations, it was generated by government and it was very much around efficiency from a government perspective. At that point the Scottish Government had, I think what it described as 80 or so individual relationships at local level and their stated desire was to reduce that to 32. One per local authority area. So, they wanted one relationship, one funding mechanism in each local authority. So, in terms of that independence and who shapes what, the current model was shaped by government (N3)[16].

The independence of the third sector in the actual creation of the model is highlighted by this individual, a theme that I will return to. A Scottish Government civil servant interviewed for the research confirmed that one of the drivers was about rationalising funding; she stated,

> To a certain extent there is merit in saying, 'Yes, we were rationalising the funding,' and we were actually rationalising the funding because we had, as I say, we had 120 different funding agreements (N11a).

The drivers for the restructuring of this landscape were characterised by a Scottish Government civil servant who was close to the model's development as being about rationalising complex funding arrangements, creating a mechanism for a third sector voice in CPPs, and bringing the sector in line. Her description portrayed a serious lack of confidence in the sector:

> So, the third sector was all over the place and at that stage was regarded as a bit of a nuisance, full of strange people who, whose only role in life was to demand money, and I'm putting this in a pejorative way (N6).

Within the Scottish Government she stated that the third sector was "regarded as being incompetent" (N6). The development of the TSI model had the effect of bringing local

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[16] This individual makes reference to 80 individual relationships, whereas the official record reflects 120 (Scottish Government, 2016).

networks closer to the state, a theme that was explored in the previous chapter. The TSI model was developed without consultation and was introduced with a calculation of how to minimise the political fallout. The same civil servant explained the thinking:

> We're about to come up to the end of the three-year cycle of grants for these organisations and if we give another three-year grant that means we can't change anything and if we're not careful in three years' time we'll be coming up to another election when we can't do anything radical because it'll upset people just before the election. We've just had an election therefore this is the time where you break it because you'll, you've got three years to heal, four years to heal and in that time people will have forgotten that you were horrible in 2007 (N6).

With the introduction of the TSI model, several funding streams were merged into one and the number of contracts reduced from 120 to 32 (Scottish Government, 2016). Currently there are 32 TSIs; 10 TSIs operate a partnership structure and 22 are single entities. The single entity TSIs were typically formed through a merger of existing CVSs and volunteer centres. The imposition of the TSI model fundamentally reshaped the architecture of Scotland's local network bodies, and led to the closure of many organisations.

The new model created clear requirements and lines of accountability that were previously lacking. This action took place within a wider context of a shifting strategy towards the third sector; the recently elected SNP administration wanted to engage the third sector more effectively in the government's agenda. This is evidenced by the Voluntary Sector Unit's move to the Public Sector Reform unit. The same civil servant noted, "the voluntary services unit which was this strange backwater suddenly moved to a more central place, and more senior people were sent in" (N6).

The development of the TSI model was driven by efficiency considerations to both rationalise funding and to reduce the number of organisations the state liaised with. The development of one interface was a particularly important consideration in implementing a third sector voice around the community planning table. Another important driver was the state's relationship with the sector particularly driven by the SNP's desire for the sector to have a closer role with the state (Scottish Government, 2008). The following section explores reactions to the TSI model.

7.1.2 Reactions to the TSI model

Across the board significant criticism was expressed by different stakeholders about the TSI model and its genesis. It is important to note, however, that many were supportive of having some kind of an interface; there was also widespread acknowledgement that a number of the previous CVSs and volunteer centres were not fit for purpose. Some participants felt there had been a need to shake things up in the third sector and to stimulate better partnership working. However, the overwhelming concern expressed was that the model was designed by the state for the state; the model was not about the third sector or its needs. In particular, the model was questioned because of its mirroring of state structures; a civil society academic offered this critique:

> To me that's, you know, the Scottish Government trying to shape the world according to the structures that they want to recognise and it's almost like an ontological job that was done there. So, if we have 32 local authorities, we'll have 32 community planning partnerships, we'll have 32 TSIs and the world is made up of 32 of each so we can fit it within our - and once they went down that path there was a lot of resistance (N13).

The director of a national third sector specialist body encapsulated the complexity of issues associated with both the historical context and the impact of the TSI development, and recognised the challenges from a state perspective:

> I don't know much about the politics of it, I think it was probably driven by, some kind of economy type imperative to make sure that we weren't duplicating and try and make it more streamlined and coherent and so on, but what that does is it, kind of, contradicts the value in terms of something being community or sector led, right. So, from that point of view I suppose, you know, maybe a wee bit sceptical about any government imposing a national model on something, particularly in terms of trying to organise civil society, but I also see the need for some kind of level of efficiency and I believe that in some areas those organisations, whatever they were set up to do, could be in competition with one another and so on and maybe, and in some areas they were actually quite hostile to one another (N4).

From a statutory perspective, the model created efficiency in engaging with a diverse and complex sector; this was reflected in the words of an MSP who held a senior cabinet post in the early days of community planning:

> Because it's so diverse and so vast that to me the notion of a third sector interface is actually the right thing to do because it creates a clear point of contact within a clear structure and government can then talk to the third sector

at a local level through the TSI rather than worrying about this diversity of voices to hear (N10).

A critique of the process of the TSI model was offered by the director of a national specialist third sector organisation:

> The negative consequence is two-fold, one is that there's been forced mergers locally, there's been things rushed through in order to meet the funding requirements rather than in order to meet what actually might be appropriate locally, and presumably there might be a sense of suspicion from the sector that these are government created agencies rather than bottom-up created agencies (N7).

While many participants were critical about the actual process through which the model was developed, or lack of process, there were also concerns expressed about the actual model itself. The creation of an interface that brought together capacity building, third sector representation, volunteer development, and social enterprise was viewed as overly ambitious and not necessarily strategic. The capacity of one organisation to deliver on all areas had not been thought through. This broad mandate required community-based organisations to develop expertise in areas unknown to them. The area that they appear to have found most challenging is that of social enterprise as it required a different set of skills than was possessed by most third sector organisations. The director of a national third sector development organisation offered this critique of the model and the process:

> To say, 'Okay, we're going to have a TSI for every local authority area,' is just nonsense. You know, in Highland you had to collapse, what is it, 7, I think it's 7 or 8 different organisations to create one TSI, where actually in our experience, 2 or 3 of them were really good in the Highlands. So, you lost some of the best practice I think by trying to bring that together, and the idea that you've got a region of Scotland that's the same land mass as Belgium, a country and there's one TSI, just because it matches local authorities…
> There's all this activity under social enterprise, historically the, sort of, people who have been around TSIs have not been that involved in it, so, they were just, kind of, told, 'Do social enterprise' (N8).

There were many stakeholders who were critical about the TSI model, identifying the model as a top down creation that served the needs of the state without consideration about the consequences for the sector. The implications of the relationship between the sector and the state, and what this might mean for the independence of the sector were also not thought through.

7.1.3 The TSI model and independence

This research set out to explore the impact of a TSI's involvement in community planning and to understand the implications of the sector's participation on its independence from the state. Through the field work I came to understand that the consequence of the top down TSI model, the civil servant construct, was in and of itself an erosion of the sector's independence. The civil servant construct created TSIs at the behest of the state; the overall purpose of these organisations was established by the state, whereas historically interface organisations had been formed by the third sector to support purposes identified from within the sector. The *Baring Barometer of Independence*, outlined in section 2.2.2, identifies independence as having three dimensions: purpose, voice, and action. Independence of purpose relates to the ability of organisations to set their own vision and mission, to respond to the changing needs of their constituents, and to have strong independent governance. The imposition of the TSI model on the sector illustrates an erosion of their independence of purpose.

The original TSI model prescribed four areas of activities; in order to secure funding the interface organisation was required to "ensure that outcomes are delivered across the whole local authority area in each of the following areas: volunteering development, social enterprise development, supporting and developing a strong third sector, and building the third sector relationship with community planning" (Pearson, 2010). As already noted, the model was an ambitious one encompassing four distinct areas of activities. While some of this activity was similar to the historical work of CVSs and volunteer centres, the work in community planning partnerships (CPPs) was largely new, as were the social enterprise functions in most cases. These activities ostensibly reflected the organisation and management of the government's priorities, rather than the sector's; hence the state drove and reframed the sector's mission. While it is common practice for third sector organisations to respond to the funding priorities of the state, participants regarded this situation as necessitating a seismic change in their mission (what services they provided), the geographic areas they served (the boundaries had to be co-terminous with the local authority), and in their governance (a model that provided oversight of all four functions). In order to secure funding, organisations had to change fundamentally; in most cases they had to merge or create formal partnerships, and in some organisations closed down. The model required a fundamental restructuring within the sector; in order to survive, organisations had to conform to the government's agenda.

While TSIs can and do have funding from a range of sources, many of the TSIs are first and foremost a third sector interface. The historical creation of the TSIs conflated the organisation's purpose with a government contract; the contract reflected the government priorities at a particular point in time. The TSI is government language; in fact, many of the TSIs describe their purpose on the website using Scottish Government language, and four of them have the term "TSI" as part of their legal name. The chief executive of a national third sector network body commented on the term stating, "One of the interesting things, TSI, third sector interface, was a label developed by government, it's never stuck, people don't like it, you say to people in the street, they've got no idea what it is" (N3). This shaping by the state suggests that TSIs are more like arm's length external organisations, ALEOs, rather than independent third sector bodies.

The concept of isomorphism provides a conceptual frame for analysis of this shift. Coercive isomorphic pressure is of particular relevance to the creation of the TSIs. Coercive isomorphism is the pressure brought to bear on organisations, both formally and informally, to adopt features imposed by more powerful actors upon which they are dependent (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983; Taylor, 2012). In the case of the TSIs, fundamental aspects of their identity and purpose have been defined by the state; this is a blunt form of coercive isomorphism. Pre-existing organisations had to fundamentally restructure in order to survive. Most of the "new" organisations describe themselves as TSIs, although some make a distinction by saying that they deliver the TSI functions. While the previous CVSs and volunteer centres were more grass-roots organisations, the TSI model has ensured that 32 organisations (or organisations in partnership) offer exactly the same mandate across Scotland in an effort to provide consistency of service. While from a government perspective consistent delivery is an understandable goal, such active state intervention poses significant risks to the organic nature of the third sector, compelling organisations to adhere to state requirements and to become uniform in their service. The wholesale adoption of the TSI model reflects isomorphic pressure.

The close relationship between the third sector and the state in relation to service delivery brought with it debates that centred on the potential risk that the sector would become an arm of the state. Kelly (2007) warned of organsations operating in "the shadow of hierarchy" (p.1008); in a similar vein, Wolch (1989, p.197) cautioned that the sector risked becoming "a shadow state". It appears the debate needs to broaden to consider the risk of direct state intervention in the shaping of third sector organisations to fulfil state priorities.

This section has detailed the drivers behind the TSI model, the civil servant construct, and outlined the reactions to the model. It is ironic that a model that was designed to help build a platform for democratic governance was imposed by the state. I have concluded that the imposition of the TSI model contributed to an erosion of the third sector's independence from the state. In the next section I draw out the consequences of the third sector's participation in local governance.

7.2 Restructuring the local third sector relationship with the state

> The third sector was strong and vocal at that point [mid 1990s]. I mean, you know, we'd go out on the streets about things in those days. We don't go out on the streets anymore.
>
> *Long-standing local third sector leader, Wychwood (S4)*

In the previous chapter I argued that the governance turn has brought TSIs closer to the state; in this section my data leads me to conclude that the governance turn, through the creation of the TSI model, has contributed to a restructuring of the local third sector's relationship with the state. Throughout the interviews, across stakeholders, a theme that resonated related to changes in how the third sector interacts with the state. The professionalisation of the sector and of TSI representatives was noted by a number of statutory partners, although in this particular case study area there were already good established partner relationships. In particular the shaping of the TSIs as professional organisations with internationally recognised quality management systems was highlighted.

This section outlines two themes. The first is professionalisation that was tied directly into the development of the TSI model by the state. The current day TSIs have their roots, in part, with councils for voluntary services; these were community development organisations, rooted in community (Lansley, 1996; Osborne, 2000; Rochester, 2012) rather than professional brokers. The linked theme of communication is explored further in chapter nine which examines in more detail the nature of the discourse that takes place around local governance tables. The second theme relates to the shift away from campaigning and activism across parts of the sector. This shift was not specific to the TSIs but was identified as affecting the third sector more broadly. There were different perspectives as to whether these shifts were positive or negative. In general, individuals in

government or government support bodies characterised changes as positive, whereas in the third sector there were both positive and negative opinions.

7.2.1 Professionalisation of the TSIs

After the initial establishment of the TSI model (2008-2011), future Scottish Government funding brought with it a requirement that TSIs work towards achieving the EFQM Excellence Model Award. The Excellence Model is managed through the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) and is a globally recognised designation. While the award has been developed primarily for the business environment, it is increasingly being used in the public and third sectors. A Scottish Government civil servant close to the development of the TSI model described the communication that was relayed to the TSIs for the EFQM requirement:

> We would expect everyone to achieve EFQM within the next grant period
> because it would become a requirement of the next grant, which would be
> 2014, that you have achieved this level because we're trying to raise the quality
> of the way in which third sector stuff is provided - and the best way to do that
> is not to rely on your own judgement but to give you something to judge
> yourself against and there will then be a commonality (N6).

As with the development of the TSI model, the requirement for EFQM certification was initiated by the state and not by the sector; there had not been a conversation about the certification model with the sector. While there appears to have been some resistance to the certification, it was very difficult for third sector organisations to argue that they did not want a form of quality assurance applied to their work.

Another example of the capacity building and professionalisation of TSIs is reflected in the work of the Improvement Service, Scotland's national improvement organisation for local government. The *TSI Community Planning Improvement Programme* was an initiative designed to "focus on improving the impact of TSIs on Community Planning and on better outcomes for local communities across Scotland" (Improvement Service, 2015). The model was based on the PSIF model – Public Service Improvement Framework (interview N2). Eleven TSIs worked with the Improvement Service, and community planning partners, to strengthen their relationships. This is an example of capacity building focused on governance, rather than service delivery.

The director of a national specialist third sector organisation captured the shift in how the third sector interacts with the state; she framed the professionalisation of the relationship in positive terms:

> You can influence much more if you're in rather than outside, and we saw a third sector, people in the third sector getting very good and skilled at knowing how to influence in a more collaborative and conciliatory way. Not everybody manages it but you see that far more, and it's much less common to be in a room with very cross people (N7).

She continued, "we need to find ways to foster the cross people to keep being cross while not, you know, *not necessarily doing that themselves*" (N7, emphasis added). This point suggests a belief that intermediaries are needed to carry forward people's voices and that cross people should not be speaking for themselves. The reference to communication being "collaborative and conciliatory" echoes arguments and critiques about the consensus-based nature of partnership working (Davies, 2011; Mouffe, 2005a, 2005b).

The professional nature of the CPP space is further reflected in the positive assessment of the third sector's involvement from an MSP who held a senior cabinet post in the early days of community planning:

> I think they're pretty capable of going into those fora, like the community planning partnership and *yes conforming to the extent that you have to be professional* and you have to get your point across well but doing it in a way which reflects the values and the characteristics of their sector, and part of the reason they're there is they're distinctly different and they do things in a different way (N10) (emphasis added).

The professionalisation of the third sector has been a priority for the state, particularly since the active engagement of the sector in service delivery from the late 1980s (Carmel and Harlock, 2008; Kelly, 2007; Macmillan, 2017; Milbourne and Murray, 2017; Sinclair, 2011; Smith and Smyth, 2010). Significant funding has been provided by the state to third sector organisations to build their capacity; the building of capacity was designed to professionalise the sector in order for it to be more effectively positioned to secure funding and deliver services. Through the process of professionalisation many organisations adopted private sector practices that had a profound effect on the sector both on its internal systems and external relations (Macmillan, 2017; Milbourne and Cushman, 2014; Milbourne and Murray, 2017). The focus on management systems shifted organisational investment away from mission and responsive client services to internal infrastructure; the

relationship with volunteers also changed as they could not be brought into organisations in the same way (Fyfe and Milligan, 2003; Smith and Smyth, 2010). The pressure to meet outcomes dictated by government resulted in the process of creaming clients, that is working with those individuals most likely to succeed. Smith and Smyth (2010) describe the impact of contracting on the sector as "killing the golden goose" (p.270); they conclude, "the ripple effect on the service provider is internal restructuring to ensure that the organisation reflects the management priorities of government" (p.295). This echoes the argument I make in this chapter that the civil servant construct restructures the governance of the third sector intermediary bodies to reflect government need.

It must be noted that much of the literature is reflective of the experience in England rather than Scotland where the process of capacity building has been slower to emerge (a fuller examination of the literature is provided in chapter two). In Scotland the drive to professionalise the third sector was reflected in the priorities of the SNP who came into power in 2007; the SNP had a particular focus on the role of the third sector that brought it closer to the state and shifted the civil service's relationship with the sector. As noted, the third sector was not previously held in high regard by the civil service.

The programmes and initiatives designed to professionalise the sector contributed to the professionalisation of communication. There were, however, more subtle processes at play. Broad societal changes shaped the context within which democratic governance developed. In particular in the UK in the final years of the Conservative government "a speech genre of partnership" was taking hold (Davies, 2011, p.42). As noted in chapter two, Third Way politics and the promotion of consensus were powerful influences shaping the evolving relationship between the third sector the state, and in turn shaping the very nature of the third sector. Sinclair concluded through his research into CPPs that:

> While VSO [voluntary sector organisation] participants were able to partially shape the decisions of the CPP, they were themselves reconfigured in the process. A paradox of VSO involvement in CP is that they were more likely to be taken seriously and exert influence to the extent that they became similar to the main public agencies (2011, p88).

My data concurs with Sinclair's conclusion that the professionalisation of TSI participation is essential in order for the sector to have the *right kind of voice*. Rather than an activist voice, the voice has to be professional. The professionalisation of participation can be analysed drawing on VeneKlasen and Miller's (2002) conception of invisible power; this is

a form of insidious power that operates at the level of the individual. The unspoken rules about how to play the game and how to participate shape how third sector voices are expressed in governance networks. It is not necessary for threats to be made, power is not overt; individuals present themselves and participate reflecting statutory norms of communication and professionalism. While this kind of power operates at the individual level, the combined impact of the self-management of third sector leaders contributes to compliance across the entire sector.

7.2.2 Shift away from activism

A number of participants referred to the changes in the third sector relationship with the state in terms of the shift away from activism. The more activist past was referred to by a development worker in a local youth network as "the glory days" (S14); the quote at the beginning of this section makes reference to going out on the streets and protesting (S4). These observations were not specific to the development of the TSI model but a more general commentary. There appeared to be a reluctant recognition that the more activist days were a thing of the past, and that the rise of partnership working heralded a different kind of engagement. The director of a national specialist network spoke about the sector's engagement in partnership working and the gradual erosion of protest:

> There was constantly this discussion about, right, when are we just going to say, 'No more, everyone just get up and leave,' because the whole thing was kind of shifting, you know, by tiny wee, kind of, increments, just little blows, but eventually you were getting knocked out of shape. And that just happens on a national level as well, you know, so, I think very rarely does anybody fall out (N5).

The shift away from activism was identified as being correlated with stronger democratic mechanisms by the director of a national third sector specialist body:

> You know, people organised around issues and then they'd have to take on local government or what have you about particular needs and try and make progress that way. In some senses though we've started to put mechanisms in place that actually support a voice on how things are done, and to some extent that's been a good thing but in another way of looking at it is to say we've actually sanitised some of this stuff, do you know what I mean, because people now have a way to get into debates, those debates depend on how they're facilitated, there's still power at play there in terms of how people really get listened to and heard and all sorts of things, and I'm sometimes quite surprised that there's not more direct action and campaigning takes place but I think people get exhausted by it. So, there is that danger of, kind of, colluding with a system (N4).

The definition of campaigning is also raised as a challenge for the sector by the director of a national specialist third sector organisation:

> I mean, we've done some work with some bits of Scottish Government who are directly funding third sector organisations and they'll say, 'We don't want any of our money used for campaigning,' and then you're into well, what do you mean by campaigning? Does that mean that, you know, fair enough, yes, don't, not placards on the street, but what about criticising legislation or commenting on a policy, does that count as campaigning? (N7).

The thread that weaves throughout these quotes is the question of working from the inside or the outside; the risk of being on the inside is the risk of collusion with the system and finding your critical voice suppressed. Prior to the growth of partnership working, there was a clearer demarcation between the third sector and the state. In order to effect change third sector and other civil society organisations were more activist outsiders. Davies draws on Kearns' analysis describing the "partnership turn as part of a reconciliationist strategy to discourage further protest, a central theme for New Labour" (Davies, 2011, p.42). Milbourne also argues that "advocacy strategies are increasingly becoming 'insider' activities, adapting to the dominant rules of play" (2013, p.182). Davies makes the case that "cooperation and trust replaced solidarity and resistance as symbols of the new realism" (2011, p47). These are all concerns that my primary research highlighted, building on the shift away from activism that is evident in the literature (Fyfe, 2005; Kelly, 2007; Milbourne and Murray, 2017; Milbourne, 2013; Smith and Smyth, 2010). The lived tension of whether to work from the inside or the outside was expressed by a development worker in a local youth network:

> It's a very human thing, if you're trying to maintain an organisation with staff you've got to try to get new funding streams in, so you will change and you will get sucked into things – should I be inside the tent pissing out on participatory budgeting and youth work or should I be on the outside railing against the state (S14).

Cornwall's notion of space is helpful here; as previously noted, she categorises spaces of democratic participation as being closed, invited, and claimed (2004a). Prior to the partnership turn, state decision-making took place in *closed* spaces; citizens engaged through the ballot box or through protest, taking up *claimed* spaces. The emergence of partnership working, one of the primary mechanisms of democratic governance, saw the creation of *invited* spaces. Invited spaces are *provided* or *conquered*; to this framing I have added the idea that invited spaces can be *compelled*, typically through funding and

structural arrangements. It is the very provision of invited spaces, particularly those that are compelled, that has eroded activism. There are now extensive opportunities for the third sector to engage with the state, through governance networks, through joint commissioning, and through coproduction activities. A significant number of services and programmes are delivered through the third sector on behalf of the state. This active and ongoing relationship with the state has made it difficult to consider activist strategies, prioritising a "consensual civil society role" for the sector rather than promoting dissent (Milbourne and Murray, 2017, p.10). This is reflected by a manager of a local carers' organisation, who in response to a question about the role of protest in affecting change expressed her feeling that protest was not the right approach; rather the sector's goal should be to work through existing structures but to make the structures more equitable (S5).

This section has explored the impact of the partnership turn on the third sector's relationship with the state. The next section considers how the engagement in local governance has impacted on internal relationships within the sector.

7.3 Restructuring the TSI's internal relationships

> Since the TSI model was put in place, local organisations might think, 'We didn't have any hand in creating this organisation, do they really represent us?'
> *Director, national specialist third sector organisation (N7)*

In this section the impact of the civil servant construct on third sector relationships is considered. The first part considers the TSIP's relationship with the broader third sector, and the second, relationships within the community of TSIs across Scotland.

7.3.1 TSI relationships with the third sector

The instrumental nature of the TSIs' creation has had significant consequences on the TSIP's relationships with the broader third sector community. As noted in the quote above, the fact that the TSIs were imposed by the state has consequences on the legitimacy of the organisation in the community. Given that part of the role of the TSI was to build the third sector relationship in community planning, the ability to be a legitimate voice from the perspective of the third sector is of great significance. Through the field work a number of other issues were identified: the impact of the model on the activities of the TSIP, the impact of the TSIP's involvement in statutory decision-making, and the TSIP's

access to funding. These issues are explored further in this section, and build upon the issues highlighted in the previous chapter that associated the governance turn with bringing the third sector closer to the state.

The managerial nature of the third sector's relationship with the state has consequences for the work on the ground, in the third sector. In part this shift is about resources; participating in community planning requires attendance at numerous meetings, redirecting energy from work at the front line. The consequences of the shift are highlighted by the deputy director of a national third sector intermediary body:

> On the upside community planning process, legislation requires the third sector to be involved, whereas we weren't in many places. A downside of it is it's required to be involved in, only in a certain way through this particular, you know, structure and that that, and that unbalances the role of the organisation at a local level. Where it's done well, there is that balance, but it can be skewed … all the time and resources of the organisation is taken by attending subgroups of committees of, you know, bits of community planning processes, and much less about being out in communities helping people get active and get involved (N9).

He commented further that the shift from the CVS model to the TSI has meant, in many places, a shift away from the traditional community development work in favour of the sector's involvement in community planning which he described as the "flavour of the institutional day" (N9). From a third sector perspective, the TSI's redirection of energy has the potential of removing important resources from more community facing work. In a similar vein, the imposition of the TSI model and the requirement that TSIs deliver on four priorities has resulted in organisations providing services in areas where they had no or limited expertise. The director of a national third sector development organisation recounted a number of instances where TSIs had provided incorrect information to community groups, leading to a lack of confidence in the TSIs both by community groups and other third sector organisations. He suggested that the TSIs push back:

> I think increasingly that's what communities need is that, kind of, really quite specialist knowledge. So, I think we've got to work at that, the interface, I think the TSIs have got to be much more strategic in what they do, and I think they've also got to, at times, stand up to the Scottish Government and say, 'Actually, that's not what we're particularly good at' (N8).

The issue about specialist knowledge is echoed by the director of a national specialist network; the following quote suggests that TSIs generally do not contact specialist organisations for advice, and end up providing incorrect information to local groups:

> They [the specialist organisation] get no referrals or virtually none, and in fact they have to undo work that these TSIs have done, you know, so they advise the group to set up in a certain way legally and that's the wrong legal form. So, [officer in a specialist organisation] has had to undo work that the TSIs have done because they haven't bothered to speak to him. So, there's a weird, kind of, wall between us (N5).

Another area of contention that has impacted on the TSIP's relationships with the third sector is the statutory decision-making that they are implicated in. The manager of a local community development organisation recounted a specific example that eroded the sector's confidence in the TSIP:

> The wee groups just see that the TSI's out to get them because, and by default, by sitting round the procurement planning tables and agreeing to have tendering for drugs and alcohol it's meant that the [name of organisation] and various other small drugs and alcohol projects, been going 20, 30 years all went down the tubes. So that should've been, they should've been sticking up for them, they were member organisations of the TSI. Why, how can you be round a table and vote for tendering for a contract for something that's going to do away with your membership? That is, so that is how people haven't got confidence in them (S8).

The issues raised by this individual echo the issues outlined in the previous chapter (specifically, the price of sharing decision-making). These examples highlight how the TSIP's close engagement with the state compromises its relationships in the third sector. Another area of contention within the third sector community is the perception that the TSI benefits from its position with the state financially. A development worker in a local youth network commented that amongst the community the perception is that "The TSI is in it for their own ends" (S14), and the manager of a local community development organisation described the TSIP as an "agency that seems to be hoovering up funds" (S8). The tensions created by the imposition of the TSI model were not limited to the broader third sector community; they were also ignited within the TSI community, a theme that is explored in the next section.

7.3.2 TSI relationships with the TSI community

An interesting dynamic that has been created through the development of the TSIs is in the relationships amongst the TSIs. There are currently 22 single-entity organisations and 10 partnerships; the partnerships generally reflect urban areas (such as Glasgow and Edinburgh) and large rural areas (such as the Highlands). An ongoing tension exists amongst the TSIs about structure; some of the single-entity TSIs felt strongly, almost vehemently, that the partnership-based TSIs should be compelled to become single-entity organisations. The crux of the issue appears to be that the partnership-based TSIs receive more funding and have more representatives in various public sector and third sector partnerships.

There is a deep and fractious history within what is now the TSI community, but was originally the CVS and volunteer centre community. There are historical issues particularly in terms of how funding has been allocated amongst the CVSs. A Scottish Government civil servant close to the model's development described the situation:

> The CVSs had a historic track for each one, so there was no rhyme or reason to how we funded them, we just gave them what they had last year plus a bit, or not plus a bit. So, there was, so some were way out of kilter (N6).

In its original implementation, the TSI model did not address these issues. It appears to be the historical inequities in funding which have fuelled the debates amongst the TSIs about whether organisations should be compelled to be a single entity. In a few of the interviews with established sector leaders there was an interesting contradiction between promoting the independence of the sector and calling for heavier handed state intervention. This is reflected in the words of the deputy director of a national third sector intermediary body who, in speaking about the original development of the model, stated:

> I come back to my point which I think was the particular formalisation of the third sector interface with the four headings of things that it's supposed to do was a half-finished job. It was heading in the right direction but it was a, it was a compromise that the relevant civil servant … made at the time to keep everybody on-board to the idea of bringing together. As was the commission to not form a single organisation. So, where you've got these contrivances of, you know, four or even six, different organisations officially in a partnership to be the TSI, whereas in practice that's not what they are at all. It's a bit of a fudge (N9).

Another third sector leader who had been a chief executive of a CVS organisation at the time of the model's introduction was critical of the Scottish Government's interventionist approach and resisted, successfully, the direction that his organisation merge with another; he stated:

> I'll take your money but don't actually tell us how to do it because it's working really well. And actually what we're doing is, is more important than you sitting down here defining what we should do (S4).

While at the same time he suggested that the government should have been more hard-line with their approach; referring to the development of the TSI model he said:

> Actually it was the wrong thing to do. What they should have done is go round every CVS and volunteer centre and said, 'You're flipping useless, we're not giving you anymore money, and here's £100,000 somebody go away and set up something (S4).

These tensions and contradictions within the third sector undermine the TSI's power and its ability to be a voice for civil society. The sense of historical inequalities in state funding and the fallout from the imposition of the TSI model have diverted the energy of the TSIs. Rather than focusing on their collective relationship with the state, energy is fuelled into internal tensions. Again, this can be viewed as a form of invisible power shaping the actions of third sector actors.

7.4 Conclusion

This chapter has presented the development of the TSI model as a civil servant construct, and considered how this has impacted on the third sector relationship with the state, on internal relations across the third sector, and within the TSI community. The voices from the field raise some fundamental questions about the effectiveness of the model created for, by, and in the image of the state; they also raise questions about the independence of the third sector from the state. The state has a dominant relationship with the TSIs, fundamentally undermining their independence of purpose. Further, the model has exacerbated infighting within the sector, weakening the TSI's role as a voice of the sector.

The development of the TSI model took place over a decade ago, before the release of the *Christie Commission (2011)* and before the advent of the *Community Empowerment Act (2015)*. It could be argued, and it was certainly highlighted through the interviews with

civil servants from the Scottish Government, that the context has changed. There is a strong commitment to democratic governance as evidenced by the SNP's approach to public service reform, and the investment in a number of democratic initiatives such as participatory budgeting, the local governance review, and the introduction of a citizens' assembly. However, the question remains as to the approach that is used for participation and whether this approach can be democratic in nature as opposed to managerial and top-down. A civil servant in the Scottish Government comments on the direction of community planning and the role of the third sector:

> As we move forward we need to make sure that the strategic objectives that we've got for democratic renewal, for community empowerment, for equalities, or you know, for the Community Empowerment Act, health and social care integration, is considered and taken into account when we are developing and, you know, with the network and with the third sector and local authority, you know, a revised, improved model for the TS…, for the infra…, I won't say TSIs but whatever it is that we end up with, *whatever the sausage maker is at the end of the day*, that this new structure, and it might be, you know, it might just be tweaked we don't know yet, but it needs to take account of the more strategic context, you know, because the strategic context has moved on anyway (N11a, emphasis added).

This comment was made prior to the release of the report into the TSI and VAS model (Scottish Government, 2016); at this point there was speculation as to what the future would hold. The reference to the third sector body that would take forward the government's agenda as "the sausage maker" is deeply concerning and suggests that, despite the deepening of the democratic governance agenda, the approach to engaging civic society has not changed. Civic society organisations are still perceived as a convenient vehicle for the state.

The implications for the third sector of an interventionist state are particularly salient for its role as a voice of the sector. The following chapter explores this theme further.

8 Representing voice

> It's fraught with tension that any one interface or body or whatever you want to call it will be representative of a community or of a sector.
>
> *Director, national third sector specialist body (N4)*

The notion of voice is central to this research. My study set out to explore how TSIs give voice to the third sector in community planning and the resulting impact on the third sector's relationship with the state. One of the Scottish Government's four stated aims in creating the TSIs was to "build the third sector relationship with community planning" (Pearson, 2010). In practical terms this resulted in a representative from the TSI, typically the chief executive of the organisation, sitting on local governance networks like the community planning partnership (CPP) and the integration joint board (IJB). The TSI "represents" the voice of the third sector.

The concepts of representation and voice are complex. As referenced in chapter three, Pitkin's (1967) seminal work established four different forms of representation (substantive, symbolic, formal, and descriptive). Substantive (the what and how of representation) and symbolic forms of representation (the who) are helpful in understanding the role of the third sector in governance networks, and are fundamental to establishing the organisation's legitimacy with its stakeholders (Metelsky et al., 2019). Guo and Musso (2007) build on Pitkin's framework adding participatory representation as a particular feature of third sector organisations, relating to the opportunities for constituents to engage in and influence an organisation. The work of Hirschman (1970), described in chapter three is also of relevance; he developed the concepts of exit, voice, and loyalty to characterise how people express their views about an organisation. People can exit when they are dissatisfied or can voice feelings; loyalty reflects the commitment that people have to an organisation. I draw on Pitkin's and Hirschman's concepts in this chapter in order to analyse my fieldwork findings.

The previous chapter described the creation of the TSIs by the civil service; the TSIs were designed as an efficient and effective model for the state. For community planning, the inclusion of the TSIs created a single pathway between CPP partners made up primarily of statutory bodies, and the third sector representing literally thousands of diverse organisations. This chapter presents the findings from the field in relation to the representation of voice, highlighting the complexity of representation, exploring the impacts on the third sector, and considering the model of representation employed. Four

major themes are identified: the problematic of representation in 8.1, third sector distrust in 8.2, the single voice model in 8.3, and navigating a liminal space in 8.4. These themes, particularly third sector distrust and the single voice model, echo and build on findings highlighted in the previous two chapters. This chapter concludes with a consideration of the importance of the issues raised with respect to voice and links to the idea of "managed talk" which is explored in the next chapter. It also echoes the earlier analysis about the link between the TSIP's representation role and the larger question of the third sector's independence from the state.

8.1 The problematic of representation

> Now here's the ultimate Holy Grail if you like for the TSI anywhere in Scotland, there is no such thing as a singular view from the sector… you're not a voice of the sector.
>
> *Chief executive, national third sector network body (N3)*

The quote above powerfully articulates the problematic of representation. It is simply not possible for an individual within an organisation to represent a whole sector, particularly one that is as diverse and fragmented as the third sector. This section explores the problematic of representation and critiques the position that TSIs have been put in through their participation in local governance networks. Section 8.1.1, drawing on the perspectives from a range of stakeholders, argues that the notion of representation is flawed and reflects on the sympathy that was repeatedly expressed for the difficult role that TSIs play in attempting to represent the sector. Section 8.1.2 considers the legitimacy of the TSIP voice with specific critiques about mechanisms used to enlist voice, the transparency of communication, and the capacity of the TSIP.

8.1.1 Notion of representation flawed

A strong theme to emerge throughout the interviews was the acknowledged difficulty, perhaps impossibility, of the TSI trying to represent an entire sector. Although statutory partners recognised it as a challenging role, they were more likely to be positive about the idea of one representative speaking on behalf of the sector. Conversely, local third sector organisations were more likely to be frustrated, and in some cases, angry with the representation model. Within the TSIP community, exasperation was expressed about being asked to be the third sector voice as reflected in the following quote from the chief officer of one of the TSIP partner organisations:

I don't think a TSI can represent the third sector, I think a TSI can act as a conduit, that is all. Someone round the (community planning) table actually said, 'You of course are here to represent the third sector,' and I said, 'I most certainly am not here to represent the third sector.' I said, 'How would you like one man to represent 3,000 organisations … all of whom are completely and utterly diverse, and that's before we start to look at the community groups?' I said, 'How am I meant to be representative of that?' I said, 'No, what we do is we try to take the information you're giving us and feed it back through structures … to have, a, sort of, information highway going like that,' in an ideal world that's what it should be (S2).

This quote conveys the untenable position that the interface bodies are in and is also an example of how third sector leaders push back against the idea that they can represent an entire sector. Across the interviews, everyone expressed empathy about the difficult role the TSIs are put in, regardless of their opinion about the TSIs' effectiveness. The director of a national third sector development organisation stated:

So, the question is, 'Well, how does the third sector interface with that [community planning]?' and the idea that a person or an organisation can represent, is just a complete nonsense really, and, again, I think just puts people in TSIs in a completely impossible position (N8).

At the local level, the manager of a local community development organisation who is one of TSIP's harshest critics expressed compassion:

You know, they've got their jobs to do as well, it's really difficult for them, but I think, they're in a really hard, rock and hard place situation really, but it's easy for us to criticise 'cos I wouldn't like to be them trying to sort it but, you know, very challenging (S8).

Interview participants gave recognition to the enormous mandate held by the TSI and an appreciation that despite having staff, there was not the capacity to effectively fulfil the amount of work necessary to do justice to the representation mandate. Local governance networks require an enormous time commitment; there are many meetings and significant preparation is required. The meeting papers of the board form a hefty document; for example, the Wychwood Partnership Board package for June 2019 was 49 pages long and the IJB board package for the same month was 222 pages long. Creating mutual feedback mechanisms with third sector partners is an ongoing struggle, both because of the amount of information that needs to be fed back and the number and diversity of third sector organisations that need to be involved. A board member of a local third sector organisation, who was also a carer's representative on the IJB, reflected positively on the

work of the TSIP stating, "I think for the way it's resourced and staffed it has a significant voice at the table" but also acknowledged that because of the resourcing their ability to represent effectively was "very patchy, they're very stretched" (S18).

Attempting to represent the range, in depth and breadth, of the sector puts the TSIs in an untenable position (Escobar, 2005; Gaventa, 2004; Osborne, 2000; Sinclair, 2008; Taylor 2004a, 2011). Taylor states, "Trying to represent the diverse and often fragmented interests in many communities is an extremely difficult business, if not impossible" (2011, p.250). In her research, government representatives identified a preference for the sector to speak with one voice, expressing impatience about speaking to many groups on similar issues. This brings with it risks; she cautions, "But too often the 'single voice' means that other voices are being suppressed" (Taylor, 2004a, p.73). While the particular interface organisation (TSIP) studied for this research was extremely careful about language used, describing their role as "representing third sector interests" rather than representing *the* third sector, this subtlety of language generally went unnoticed by statutory and state partners.

Pitkin (1967) describes one of the forms of representation as symbolic; what is important is what representatives "stand for" (1967, p.92). Symbolic representation is evident when constituents believe in their representatives and what they stand for, regardless of whether or not constituents' interests are actually taken care of. People become symbols; they embody what their referents believe in. For Pitkin the key question is "is the representative believed in?" (1970, p.102). While third sector organisations are the TSIs' primary constituency, the partners in local governance networks are another significant constituency of the TSIs'. The notion of the single voice is seen by the sector as fundamentally flawed, but not by state and statutory partners; my findings suggest that the TSIs provide a form of symbolic representation for the state and statutory partners, while not fulfilling this role for many in the third sector because there is little belief that the TSIP truly represents their concerns. A related theme is that of legitimacy which is explored in the next section.

8.1.2 Legitimacy

The need for legitimacy in representing the sector was a strong theme throughout the interviews. A number of participants, national and local, made reference to TSIs not being at the coalface and therefore being distant from what was happening on the ground. A

number of the local third sector organisations felt that the TSIP was distant from the sector in terms of accountability. Participants spoke about the need for mutual feedback mechanisms to ensure the flow of ideas and information from third sector groups into the community planning process, and the importance of transparency and clear communication in how the TSIP fed back to the third sector.

Pitkin describes another form of representation as "acting for" constituents (1970, p.112); Guo and Musso have termed this particular aspect of Pitkin's model substantive representation (2007, p.311). Pitkin describes acting for as "acting in the interest of the represented, in a manner responsive to them" (1970, p.209). In relation to representation in the third sector, substantive representation would require enough robust mechanisms, as a starting point, to ensure fulsome discussion, debate and sharing of information amongst third sector groups (a point echoed by Sinclair, 2008). In the case study area, there are many mechanisms that, on the face of it, ensure a good flow of information and ideas. At the grassroots level there are locality-based forums for third sector groups; there are many thematic networks, some of which are convened by the TSIP; chairs of the locality-based forums and thematic networks sit on a strategic strategy group, and one of the co-chairs of the strategy group sits on the Wychwood Partnership Board in an advisory capacity (see section 5.2.3 for a detailed account). There is also a partnership group made up of third sector and public sector representatives that feeds into the partnership board. Ostensibly these mechanisms appear to provide a route from the very local to the strategic, however, the mechanisms are complicated and not well understood, even by people involved in the local forums. Those mechanisms nearest to grassroots levels, the local forums, are seen as belonging to the TSIP rather than community because the TSIP provides the secretariat support.

Despite all these measures, an individual involved in one of the local forums, and therefore involved in the existing mechanisms, expressed concern about how information was fed back to the sector; in this quote she was referring to the senior leadership of the TSIP:

> It seems that our leaders are going to be meeting wae council people and yet there's nae way of knowing how that is going to get fed back to the wider third sector, you know. It's almost, it's not elitist at all, but it's like working in a silo if you like, and that information, how, there's nae obvious way that that information is going to get transmitted to the wider third sector, there's a question of whether they would want to know about it but I think we should know about it if we're actually being used as a cipher if you like or a sounding board for what the third sector thinks and what our views are on certain things, it would be nice if it was actually fed back what the outcomes were. Now, they

might find a mechanism for doing that, I'm no sure what it'll be but I think they'll have to make that effort otherwise then people like [names another forum chair] will decide I'm gonna just walk away from this, and then it leaves the TSI without any credibility or legitimacy either, you cannae say that it speaks for the third sector if it patently doesn't so, so again it's a tightrope thing I think (S11).

The importance of mechanisms for transmitting diverse voices and also the consequences where these are not robust and understood is illustrated by this quote. However, the perspective of another local forum chair was quite different:

> So there is a structure there which I think's quite direct and robust to allow two-way dialogue, you get a view from the top, what's happening there, which can be transferred through the link to the [local forums] and the users, and vice versa, the input from there can feed into the top level of our leadership team (S3).

These two individuals, holding the same role in local forums, expressed very different perspectives on the legitimacy of the existing structures.

Pitkin (1967) describes formalistic representation as relating to the process of election (or authorisation) of a leadership; these are the accountability mechanisms of the process. There is an assumption in the literature that there is a correlation between formal mechanisms and substantive representation (Guo and Musso, 2007); if the right mechanisms and process are in place, constituents will have representatives that act for them "in a manner responsive to them" (Guo and Musso, 2007, p.312). Given that Pitkin's work predates the emergence of forms of participatory governance, Guo and Musso's extension of Pitkin's work to include participatory representation is particularly relevant. Participatory representation relates to the ways that constituents are involved in an organisation; they argue that "participatory mechanisms can be viewed as a continuum with respect to the degree to which constituents and community have the real power" (2007, p.315). They draw on research that suggests a link between effective participatory arrangements and an organisation's substantive representation.

Relating these representational concepts to the TSIP, there are a number of levels through which power needs to be considered. The first relates to the decision that a TSI would act for the third sector as the channel in local governance networks; this was a high-level decision made by the Scottish government. Neither the TSI nor the local third sector community participated in this fundamental decision about representation. The

governance of the TSIP is another level of decision-making; here third sector organisations who are members of the TSIP have the opportunity to vote for members of the board. Drawing on Pitkin's model, this is an example of formalistic representation, relating to the mechanisms through which the organisational leadership is selected. An important political consideration, however, is that it is the senior leaders of the TSIP who sit on local governance networks, not the elected board so that third sector organisations do not have any voice in who the actual representative will be. The remaining level of influence for third sector organisations is through participation in the previously described mechanisms that feed into local governance networks; these mechanisms are participatory rather than formalistic. While there are a number of these participatory mechanisms in place, many third sector groups were critical about the TSIP's lack of communication. Mechanisms for participation can only be effective if they have the sector's participation and endorsement. Guo and Musso argue that formal mechanisms of representation do not "safeguard substantive representation if these mechanisms do not function effectively" (2007, p.314); the same argument can be made for participatory representation.

The importance of the relationship the interface has with its third sector constituents was aptly articulated by a former MSP:

> I suppose the key thing is not, it's not so much the structural bit of all of that, it's about how well do people explain to their membership what are the current issues. How well do they seek the engagement? How open are they? How transparent are they? How do they, how are they open and honest about the differences that exist between the members and how do they seek to reconcile all of that? So, it seems to me I would be much less hung up on any particular structure but more how it functions and how it engages with its own membership and how it genuinely seeks to engage in a way that helps reconcile differences and begin to sort out priorities. Now, none of that is easy. But all of that has to be done otherwise the sector will turn its back on whoever is supposedly representing them (N10).

Most of the local third sector groups in Wychwood expressed dissatisfaction with the TSIP's ability to engage effectively, as a local community member who was also a chair of one of the local forums stated:

> I mean it's no gonna be life changing stuff but these people speak for you and they speak on behalf of thousands of people across Wychwood and you don't know what they're saying. So, I mean maybe even once a year that the people who represent us as the third sector interface should maybe have an annual meeting and actually talk about what they do, what their plans are for maybe the next twelve months and actually get the idea, I mean is this the way that

they should be operating, should they maybe function in a different way? (S11).

Hirschman's concepts of exit, loyalty, and voice are informative here. The legitimacy of the TSIP is dependent upon the loyalty of third sector organisations and their ability to express their voices; without loyalty and voice, exit is a very real concern. The exit option is suggested in the words of a chair of one of the local forums who talked about frustrations with the TSIP's lack of action on a particular issue:

> For the TSIP and for us as a [local forum] to be seen as relevant we've got to be seen to be doing something aboot that because these are concerns for community activists… It does create a problem, it does get, I mean, and, aye you do, you wonder well what is the rele…, I mean, should we be going through the TSI or should we just try and do this ourselves (S11).

The ability of the TSIP to provide substantive representation to the sector is hindered by the complexity of the undertaking and the ineffectiveness of the processes in place to legitimise the TSIP's voice. Flowing from the problematic of representation is the generalised distrust that is expressed by local third sector organisations towards the TSIP because of its closeness to the state. This is explored in the next section.

8.2 Third sector distrust

> I'd say that the TSI's definitely presenting a face to the council that's not the reality in the field … there's quite a wide range of groups are not happy bunnies with them at the moment.
> *Manager, local community development organisation, Wychwood (S8)*

Throughout the interviews with local third sector organisations, distrust was expressed about the TSIP's role and actions in local governance networks. This section considers the manifestation of distrust in two areas: 8.2.1 focuses on the perceived closeness of the TSIP to the state, section 8.2.2 on conflicts of interest arising from the TSIP's position with the state. Some of the issues raised in this section build on themes identified in the previous two data chapters.

8.2.1 Closeness of the TSIP to the state

At the local level I interviewed a range of third sector representatives, in different types of organisations, with varying degrees of engagement with the TSIP from very active to inactive. Stakeholders who were closely associated with the TSIP, either as a partner in

the TSIP or as a board member, tended to be less critical. A common concern expressed, although with different levels of intensity, was that the TSIP was associated with the state rather with the third sector. This sentiment was reflected by a health and social care manager's recalling of a meeting:

> At one meeting [the TSI] was accused of being the long arm of the council's procurement … there becomes distrust about them being too cosy with the council – what is their relationship? (S16).

This same individual used the analogy of "poacher turned gamekeeper" (S16) to describe the reputational risk inherent in the TSIP's close working relationship with the council.

The procurement practices of the council were referenced by a number of participants as they had caused much discontent within the sector; frustration was expressed that the TSIP had not been more activist in challenging the council on its decisions, some of which had resulted in the closure of long-standing community organisations. The chief executive of a local third sector network commented on an event that was co-hosted jointly by the council and the TSIP on procurement:

> Some very, very harsh things [had been] said and it was summed up by [the TSIP chief executive] at the end who said, 'Well from all of this we can, and what we need, we just need to trust each other more,' and I've never heard so much bollocks in my life, you know, it's just, after a whole day of talking of what the issues are it has nothing to do with trust, it is all to do with scrutiny, it is all to do with holding people to account… So it was, in those, that was the sort of situation where the TSI was really seen, not just by me by the way, by lots of others as being ineffective and almost an embarrassment to our third sector organisations because we all share the same issues and we didn't need people walking round pandering to the authority (S19).

This is a stark example of the TSIP being viewed as too close to the state and too far from the sector. This particular individual chose to keep a distance from the TSIP. To draw on Hirschman's (1970) framework, he chose the exit option and pursued other strategies for the expression of voice. The pursuit of other channels for the expression of voice is indicative of the breakdown of the TSIP's legitimacy.

Another contributing factor to the perceived closeness of the TSIP to the state is the authority over the sector that is located with the TSIP through some of its partnership work. For example, the TSIP was part of a core statutory group that worked together to design substance misuse services; this work included making decisions about cuts to third

sector organisations (as discussed in chapter six, section 6.2.2.3). These examples demonstrate the TSIP's closeness to the state and suggest that for some in the third sector this leads to distrust, which in turn weakens the legitimacy of the TSIP being a voice of the sector. The TSIP's closeness to the state also creates situations that are seen by the sector to be conflicts of interest; these are explored further in the next section.

8.2.2 Conflicts of interest

One of the critiques of the TSIP's closeness with the state is the advantageous position it facilitates in terms of information and relationships with key decision makers; this was expressed by a third sector community organisation in response to a question about whether his organisation engaged in community planning:

> The only people that are better off as a consequence of it [community planning] are the large third sector agencies who engage, who get money off it and don't communicate with us, don't tell us what's going on and they just hoover up all the funding... They're paid, they get paid, they get huge amounts of funding to, to, and they also have first access to all the powers that be to what they're offering or what might be around so they basically mystically get lots of money (S8).

The claim that the TSIP has "first access to all the powers that be to know what they're offering" was evidenced by a civil servant who acknowledged that at times they put the TSIP in a difficult position by contracting work directly to them (S16). This conflict of interest is compounded when the work that the TSIP takes on is viewed to be 'service delivery' which is the purview of its member organisations. The health and social care manager in question reflected:

> There have been challenges for the TSI, we don't always help… we've put pressure on them to do or asked them to do things that have made it hard for them, does it tip them into being a provider? … we wanted to put in community navigators and asked the TSI to manage them, once they agreed to do it some of the other third sector organisations that were doing that kind of work made life very difficult for them (S16).

This situation was referenced by two participants. The potential for conflicts of interest for organisations in a representative role was also identified by a Scottish Government civil servant:

> You know, the representation/participation has, is got conflicts with the delivery of services. So, where I say that is, for example, if you've got an

organisation's delivering services for, like, volunteering or the support for the sector, where it's actually delivering services themselves and that same organisation, whether it be a partnership or a single organisation is then sitting at the local authority table and the CPP table there are conflicts. The conflict can sometimes be about anti-competitive practices. So, it comes down to things like how can the third sector locally trust an organisation that is, in some ways, having some influence over their funding, some influence over how the outcomes are determined? (N11a).

The engagement of interface bodies in what is deemed service delivery work contributes to distrust amongst the membership and weakens the legitimacy of the interface body. This dynamic is a common tension between interface organisations and the third sector organisations they represent (Cullingworth and Escobar, 2019; Osborne, 2000). This example further demonstrates that the participatory mechanisms of the TSIP do not themselves guarantee substantive representation; the legitimacy of representation is undermined by the TSIP's conflicts of interest that emerge from its relationship with the state. This raises fundamental questions about a model that aims to bring a third sector voice into local governance networks, but then compromises sector relationships as a result of that participation, weakening the legitimacy of the third sector voice.

The risk to interface bodies was identified by the director of a local organisation in Wychwood who, despite being highly critical of the organisation, nevertheless saw the importance of a third sector voice. He stated:

I think we're at a tipping point here, that we either really realise that we're at a tipping point and actually how closely we all have to work together, and the TSI as a third sector organisation as well, if we don't use them, if we don't use them effectively, if we don't support them effectively, we will lose them (S10).

This quote highlights the risks that interface bodies face in their active engagement with the state, and also illustrates the importance of Hirschman's concept of loyalty. This individual had raised his voice in protest while also recognising the risk of a full exit of his organisation from the TSIP. This exemplifies Hirschman's argument that "loyalty holds exit at bay and activates voice" (1970, p.78).

While not a conflict of interest per se, the closeness of the TSIP to and good working relationships with statutory partners led to some other revealing dynamics. The deputy director of the TSIP recounted an example where a statutory partner, limited in their ability to pursue an issue, asked the deputy director to "go and find out about this, we can't" (TSIP11). She cited another example that demonstrates the level of trust held by statutory

partners in the TSIP stating "[it is a] useful thing when senior people come to us and start dropping hints, you need to ask questions about X – it happens" (TSIP11). Another staff person in the organisation also recalled a situation where two NHS staff had expressed concern to her privately about a situation, saying they were constrained working in public office (TSIP10). What is interesting about these examples is the closeness and trust in the working relationships between the TSIP and statutory partners; this is in contrast to much of the sentiment expressed in the third sector community about the TSIP. This suggests that the TSIP has developed significant legitimacy within the statutory community but apparently to the detriment of that in the third sector community.

This section has explored the impact of the TSIP's closeness with the state on its legitimacy within the third sector. Its close relationship with the state and statutory partners creates a number of conflicts of interest which can undermine its ability to be a voice for the sector. The following section looks at the 'single voice model' that is commonly used as a proxy for the third sector in local governance networks.

8.3 The single voice model

> We are a sector, not an organisation, we don't have a single policy. In fact we probably have hundreds. So we don't generate a singular view. But they always want to generate a single view because that makes their life easier.
> *Chief executive, national third sector network body (N3)*

The growth of democratic governance has created substantial opportunities for the third sector and communities to participate in local governance. As previously noted, the approach to bringing in society has been dictated by state actors rather than in consultation with civil society (Cornwall, 2004a; Taylor, 2004a). The model of having a single voice representing the third sector is a convenient shortcut for the state, replicating traditional models of representative democracy in which an individual represents his or her constituents. Throughout the fieldwork the single voice model emerged as a theme, although it was not referred to in this way. This section explores the single voice model, a model that channels the diversity and complexity of an entire sector through one individual. While much of the critique was from within the third sector, there were some critical voices from state actors. This section is in three parts: section 8.3.1 explores the efficiency of the single voice model; 8.3.2 considers the perceived effectiveness of the model; 8.3.3 critiques the single voice model from the perspective of the third sector and the state and also considers the risk of the third sector being used as a shortcut to representation of communities.

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8.3.1 Efficiency of the single voice model

The TSI model creates a tidy and efficient way of having a third sector voice at the community planning and IJB tables; one individual speaks for the third sector. The diversity and messiness of the sector is distilled into a single person. It is a model that makes sense from a utilitarian point of view; the complexity of dealing with an entire sector is removed. It is understandable that the state struggles with engaging with the sector; it is no easy feat to engage with its diversity and breadth. The channelling of this complexity through the TSI relieves the state of the responsibility for this challenge and makes it the responsibility of the TSI and/or sector. The difficulty for the state was articulated by the council's local planning manager:

> I always ask is what else would you put in its place if that didn't exist, because if you didn't have TSIs I think it would be quite difficult, it would be awfully messy actually. It would be a lot more inefficient for public services, particularly councils, to engage if you didn't have TSIs. You kind of need that single point of contact to then open it up to a lot, a lot wider constituency (S6).

While people recognise that it is not realistic to think an individual can represent a sector, in general the statutory approach is to treat the individual as a representative.

8.3.2 Effectiveness of the single voice model

Many of the participants from the statutory sector spoke about the effectiveness of having the TSIP at the table. In this particular context, the TSIP reps were highly regarded (specifically by Scottish Government, two representatives from the local council, and the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service) both in their manner of engagement and in the influence they had on the work. This is articulated by a community planning representative from the Scottish Government:

> I've been really pleasantly surprised actually with both the contribution that the third sector has been able to make and impact that they've been able to have on poverty and inequality, … actually almost anything that comes to the community partnership I can, I will see a strong third sector contribution already evidenced in the material that we're seeing and then strong third sector contributions, you know, at the partnership meetings as well, and beyond that I also see the third sector taking a strong leadership role as well (S12).

There was also recognition of the effectiveness of the model from within by the third sector, though this was less evident than in the statutory sector. The benefit was seen as

the TSIP's ability to move in strategic circles; the manager of a local carers' organisation commented:

> And we need something like the TSI …I just think in order for that landscape to survive you need to have somebody that's painting the picture and fighting your corner at that level because you're not going to be able to do it yourself (S5).

Third sector organisations have limited capacity to keep up with and engage with all the key strategic issues. A board member of a local third sector organisation and carer's representative on the IJB stated:

> They are doing the right things, they are having inclusive conversations, they are representing the feeling of the third sector to the public sector, they have long experience of doing that … that's all valuable (S18).

8.3.3 Critique of the single voice model

This section considers the critiques of the single voice model, from the perspective of the sector, the community, and the state. There was wide dissatisfaction with the single voice model across the third sector, but there was also some frustration with the model from within the state. There are also implications for communities of the model. These are considered in turn.

8.3.3.1 The third sector

The third sector experiences deep frustration that the single voice model treats the sector in a statutory manner; it treats the sector like an organisation. The single voice model reflects a lack of innovation in democratic governance that has brought the third sector into decision-making bodies with the state, but has brought them in on the state's terms. Taylor notes that in regard to new spaces for voluntary sector engagement in governance "the rules of engagement are still dictated by state actors, who determine the rules of the game" (2011, p.70). Hence the third sector has to participate in the same way as other stakeholders - that is one person, one voice. The same individual quoted at the beginning of this section, the chief executive of a national third network body, expressed the fundamental distinction between the state and third sector:

> I have this conversation occasionally with local authority people and I say, 'You, you know, local authorities, you are multi-million pound organisations, you have within your staff team not just the ability, but you do it, you form one

stance, you have a policy statement on everything and you back that policy statement up with sets of procedures, and that, those can stretch across education, social work, housing, leisure, but you still have one policy' (N3).

Most of the partners around the community planning table are representing statutory bodies or non-departmental public bodies such as the NHS and the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service; local councillors participate in their elected capacity. The individuals representing statutory or public bodies have institutional parameters to work within. The parameters are very blurred for third sector representatives. It is impossible to even describe the third sector, the "loose and baggy monster" (Kendall and Knapp, 1994), let alone attempt to represent it. The channelling of the sector into the single voice model obscures its diversity. The chief executive of a local third sector network in Wychwood was highly critical:

> I mean for all the, the third sector they're not sufficiently resourced, weren't then and aren't now to do justice to all of it. So a part of it is structural and part of it is deliberate, it's about power, it's about exercising power. The third sector interface was in some way an admission that government can't deal with diversity and can't find ways of bringing diversity in a meaningful way into the, all the processes. This is what bureaucrats do best, they try and bring it down in one line, into one spreadsheet, into one policy document … and the common sense of purpose of a society on drawing on its diversity, it's the other way round, it's trying to force it all into one scheme (S19).

The manager of a local community development organisation was also critical of the model stating:

> Yeah, I mean I think what's happened is they've made, they've added a layer of complexity to use having a relationship with the local state... They've added a layer of complexity to the, and a barrier, further barrier for us to have an interface with the local state in terms of local authority and NHS, which I don't think they intended to do... I don't think it's helping anyone, I think it's just frustrating everyone at the end of the day, you know, but who it's helping is the council cos they only need one person to sit at the table and they've ticked a box (S8).

For the purpose of clarity, it is important to state that in the particular CPP partnership board studied, the TSIP was not the exclusive third sector voice. As noted, the chair of the strategy group hosted by the TSIP sits on the partnership board as an adviser. This particular partnership board also had a position for an equalities network; this network works with third sector groups, community groups and individuals. In this specific case, however, both individuals were closely associated with the TSIP.

While some third sector organisations were happy to have a representative engaged in local governance networks, in general there was dissatisfaction with the actual model. Concerns with the model were not limited to the third sector; the next section considers critique from within the state and statutory bodies.

8.3.3.2 The state

There were two examples provided by civil servants, one at a local level and one at national level, that conveyed frustration with the single voice model. At the local level the issue was identified by a civil servant with regard to the TSIP's involvement in the Public Service Partnership. The individual who was involved in the Wychwood PSP felt that the TSIP had become a barrier to more co-productive engagement with the third sector; he stated:

> When as part of a PSP we want to build relationships between the organisations, we want the organisations to be building relationships, as well as the statutory building relationships, so to have a middle, an interface doesn't help, I'm just being honest here, I think it breaks down that natural linkage. I think maybe they have their own kind of agenda about where they see themselves and what they can provide in the future, I don't know if they bring to the table all the values and ethos that we would bring to the table as an open collaborator (S17).

This PSP had been a particular issue of contention within the third sector community, with the TSIP representative playing a key role in bringing forward the concerns of the third sector, a situation which was referenced in chapter six (section 6.2.2.1). One of the striking aspects of third sector voice in the PSP was the clear reluctance of third sector organisations to speak out, even though behind closed doors they were extremely critical about the PSP process. In response to a question about why organisations were leaving it up to the TSIP to voice the sector's concerns, the director of a local organisation stated, "I think in some respects that's fair enough but then you've got to give the ammunition [to the TSIP] to be able to put their head above the parapet" (S10). This resulted in a difficult situation for the TSIP; it became the *only* voice of the sector in relation to the PSP, and as a result of this was seen as representing its own interests rather than the sector's.

Two Scottish Government civil servants involved in the TSIs offered another critique. Questions were raised about the accountability of the individuals involved the interfaces:

And then to look at the participation with community planning, connection with community planning, how democratic is it if, where are the connections with the other community bodies such as the community councils and other, you know the development trusts, and how, how is this body, or the people who are sitting on this body, how are they, what's their mandate, how do, how can you trust them to make decisions or to represent them on our behalf? How, in terms of its structure, how do we ensure that it's not the same people all the time that are sitting on these bodies for such a long time? How do we make sure that, you know, that there's a constant refresh and that there's some sort of accountability for this body? … they see themselves as the voice of the third sector and, you know, they, they really are quite challenging with other bodies about, you know, about the fact that they've got a fundamental right to be there. You know, it's like, and in many ways we've placed them in that position… I hear quite a lot about, you know, everything should be rooted through us (N11a).

There is a high degree of irony in this sentiment given that the TSI was set up by the Scottish Government to be the representative of the third sector; this is acknowledged by the civil servant in her comment that "*in many ways we've placed them in that position*" (N11a). This quote highlights questions about the democratic credentials of the TSIs, and echoes the debates in the literature about whether democratic governance strengthens or hinders representative democracy (Rhodes, 1996; Sørensen, 2002; Swyngedouw, 2005). Taylor (2004a) similarly identifies the tension between leadership and participation; she argues that it is not uncommon for statutory representatives to question the representative nature of third sector voices, particularly when third sector voices are critical of government.

The quote is also interesting in reference to who the TSI is actually representing; the civil servant states, "how can you trust them to make decisions *or to represent them on our behalf*?" (N11a). It suggests the civil servant view is that the TSI is representing the third sector on behalf of the Scottish Government, though the language makes it difficult to be conclusive. While these civil servants were critical of the way the TSI model had been developed, the language used still reflects an instrumental approach to the third sector.

Since the completion of the fieldwork, Voluntary Action Scotland (VAS), the umbrella group for the TSIs has had its funding cut by the Scottish Government. A report reviewing the TSI model and VAS was highly critical of the umbrella group; it has not been replaced by any new body (Scottish Government, 2016). Consequently, the Third Sector Unit of the Scottish Government, the unit that oversees third sector policy and relations, maintains direct contact with all 32 TSIs. It is rather ironic that the unit that created the TSI model to create an effective and efficient route for third sector representation has decided to work

directly with all the TSIs rather than having the TSI voice channelled through one organisation. The one voice model has implications for communities which are considered in the next section.

8.3.3.3 Community

There is a lack of clarity about whether the TSIs' remit includes working with and representing local community organisations like tenants' associations or other informal groups. The Scottish government co-produced an outcomes framework with TSIs; this framework refers to TSIs as "a key point of intelligence about local third sector organisations and volunteering", but also states, the "TSI's role is to act as brokers for local third sector perspectives *and community needs*" (Scottish Government, 2019, p.7, emphasis added). The deputy director of the TSIP in Wychwood described their remit as working "with organisations that do things, not communities" (TSIP1). As previously noted, some TSIs are careful in the language they use, emphasising that they represent third sector organisations rather than small local community groups. For other TSIs, the language is less explicit, and many TSIs have a history of community development work in communities. The confusion about who the TSIs serve and represent contributes to the risk that the third sector, and the TSI in particular, are seen as a shortcut to communities. This risk is highlighted by a former MSP who stated:

> And, so, I'm not sure that many of the third sector organisations themselves can say that they represent community so I'm not clear how the third sector interface could say that. Now, I think from a public sector organisational managerial point of view, that is maybe a convenience for them to say that we think the third sector interface represents community because it means we can stop there and don't have to worry about it but actually it's part of the joint work that they're doing that they engage with the community beyond all of the organisations themselves that is a major challenge and some of the work that COSLA was doing around reinventing democracy was about those challenges (N10).

The distinction between informal community initiatives and third sector organisations was made by the director of a national third sector specialist body:

> I think there's a school of thought in some areas of the third sector that the third sector is all-encompassing, that just naturally everybody would identify themselves, if they were doing community-related activity or they were part of a small local organisation, that they were the third sector, right. Now, that's debatable for me. I think it's true to an extent, but historically the TSIs and the, likes of the, kind of, national voluntary sector organisations have really supported an organised third sector. So, people becoming organised into, kind

of, specific themed groups because they want to take forward particular issues, right. The community sector if you like, I think that encompasses a lot of, kind of, smaller, sometimes not particularly long-lasting initiatives, there might be local action around a particular local issue. It might be around, you know, sort of, looking at the, kind of, broader participation of people in things like tenants and residents forum, for example, that might, or community trusts that, again, might not normally affiliate or recognise themselves as part of this, kind of, like, you know, third sector (N4).

In Wychwood there was a strong history of funding towards community organisations in areas of multiple deprivation; a long-standing local third sector leader recalled that in the past when these communities became too outspoken, the funding was cut. He stated:

I have to say that the public sector then started to try and shut them down because their voices were too loud and, you know, the relationship had gone sour, so the community had to build up its voice and the council saw that the way to do that would be through the Compact and the third sector, well actually no the community's got to have its own voice... (S4).

Based on this history, the TSIP has been very careful to ensure that they not be seen as a shortcut for representation of the community.

This section has explored the single voice model, considering the efficiency and effectiveness of the model, providing a critique from the perspective of the third sector and the state, and highlighting the risk that the single voice model can sweep communities into the third sector. The last section of this chapter explores the concept of liminality in relation to the TSIP's representation role.

8.4 Navigating a liminal space

So oftentimes as workers within the interface what we have to do is be able to look both ways without going slightly bonkers, because it is very difficult to try to mediate on both sides the aspirations of various different people.
TSIP deputy director, Wychwood (TSI1)

Throughout my time in the field I was struck by the uniqueness of the space that the TSIs occupy. While they are third sector organisations, their role is in building a bridge between the third sector and the state. In building that bridge, they sit not in the third sector but on the bridge. For the third sector, the TSI's position on the bridge results in a distancing from the sector. For statutory partners, the TSI's position brings it conveniently and efficiently into statutory relationships and spaces. I went into the research thinking of

the TSIs as third sector bodies with a third sector interest, however their role is more nuanced. The TSIs exist in what I am describing as a liminal space. While this term was not used by anyone in my interviews, I felt it described the in-between space the TSIs occupy. A number of participants described the liminal space, but in different language. When I discussed the concept of liminality with the senior leadership of the TSIP, it resonated for them. The deputy director responded with "Yes, completely right, completely agree with that" and "that facing both ways element is both unavoidable and really hard – yeah, I think you're absolutely right" (TSIP11). This section explores the idea that the TSIs navigate a liminal space in their representation role.

The concept of liminality was coined by Arnold van Gennep, an anthropologist in the late 1800s to describe rites of passage. The liminal period describes the period between the rights of separation and the rites of incorporation when someone is in-between two worlds (Gennep, 1960/1909, p.11). The TSIs appear to be in a state of liminality; they are neither of the third sector nor of the state since they are in a permanent kind of in-between space, navigating their representation of the third sector in governance networks, and in turn of the representation of the state to the third sector. The TSI's liminal existence undermines their membership as part of the third sector, they are seen as betraying trust as they are more associated with the state. They are drawn into the state, to where power lies; they benefit from their access and involvement in power, but this weakens their legitimacy in the third sector.

The TSIs risk being seen as too close to the state by the third sector; conversely, they risk being seen as too close to the third sector by the state. A past-chair of a national intermediary body explained this dilemma stating, "It's very difficult because if we're too close to government we're not helping our members. If we're not close enough to government we're not helping our members" (N1). Interview participants from within and beyond the third sector noted the tension in the space that intermediary bodies occupy.

The complexity of the role is reflected in this excerpt from an initial interview with staff from the TSI; two individuals are speaking: the deputy director (a) and a development officer (b):

> 1b: So, at different times you'll have [statutory] people having a conversation
> with you in a corridor about something that they want to happen which you
> fully, you know full well that would not go well with providers, for example,
> and likewise providers may want to

1a: Bang the table.

1b: Bang the table about something.

1a: Shout about councils.

1b: But sometimes that isn't the time for that, and so it's oftentimes really important that we're in the way, to be able to be the whipping boy,

1a: But my joke is that our strapline should be 'For xx years we've been upsetting everybody equally' by facing both ways (TSIP1).[17]

The chief executive of the TSIP characterised the space they sit in – "the middle space" in this way:

> Quite often some of these forums we're representing or articulating, probably better than representing, articulating the collective intelligence from the sector which is about people's needs, so that's also slightly different – so representing the interests of the third sector sounds as though we're consistently only ever seeing things from a TS perspective but when we sit in some of these strategic meetings we have to think about it in the whole, this doesn't necessarily mean that the TS might actually be the best to deliver the service, or ready to deliver that service or actually be able to provide the information that would form the service – so we find ourselves in that middle space quite often (TSIP9).

An officer in a local government support organisation reflected the challenge for the TSI in working closely to the state and the third sector, stating, "The TSIs are Janus-faced… caught in between" (N2). Janus was the Roman God of beginnings, transitions, duality; he is depicted as facing the future and the past. However, the term Janus-faced also means duplicitous or deceitful; while neither of these words were used by participants to describe the TSIP, the distrust felt by the sector towards the organisation does suggest that the TSIP is seen as facing both ways. A health and social care manager articulated the challenge for the TSIP stating, "they're neither fish nor fowl, and they have to tread a very careful line (S16).

This is the fundamental challenge for the TSI: trying to face both ways. The trade-off is articulated in the following quote from a former MSP who, in this quote, is responding to a question about the TSIs' ability to maintain their independence from state:

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[17] The actual number of years is not provided in order to maintain the anonymity of the organisation.

Well, I think there's a bit of a fundamental dilemma here because if you want to be at that table, and I would have thought for perfectly good reasons most third sector organisations do want to be at that table, far better than not being at that table because then things are happening beyond you that you've got no opportunity to influence, so you have to get your hands dirty and, at some point, you have to get in there and make your case and make your argument and be heard… Does that compromise your independence? I don't think it does necessarily. I think you have to have a clear way of coming back to your constituency of interests and saying to them, 'Well, these are the arguments that we advanced, here's why we advanced them,' and being honest about the extent to which they are accepted or not accepted, but you can't have it both ways (N10).

The dilemma of this representation role is highlighted by Taylor who speaks about community representatives finding themselves "in an impossible 'pig in the middle' situation, expected by their constituents to represent community views to partnerships and by official partners to bear the brunt of representing the partnership back to communities and 'selling' its decisions, even when the community view has prevailed" (Taylor, 2000, p.73). Throughout the fieldwork, stakeholders provided examples that illustrated the difficult situation for TSIP representatives in their active relationship with the state. The TSIP's position is challenging and it has to make compromises. In this and the previous chapters, numerous examples illustrate the TSIP's experience of conflicts of interest, conflicts which have arisen because of the liminal space it occupies. In this liminal space, choices have to be made, with the risk that its primary constituency, third sector organisations, lose confidence in the interface organisation's ability to "represent" them; this again draws on the Hirschman argument of exit, voice, and loyalty. The TSIs (and other types of infrastructure bodies) navigate a liminal space in their relationships with the third sector and the state. In this in-between space they move away from being rooted in the third sector to being suspended in liminality.

8.5 Conclusion

This chapter has considered the issues and complexities of representing voice. The TSIP is charged with bringing the voice of the third sector into local governance networks; it is viewed as *the* voice of the sector by the state and statutory organisations. This is an untenable situation given the size, diversity, and fragmentation of the third sector. While the TSIP has developed a number of participatory mechanisms to create mutual feedback between the TSIP and the broader third sector, these are neither sufficient nor effective enough to engender legitimacy in its representation role. The TSIP was perceived by many of the local third sector organisations I interviewed as being too close to the state, resulting

in a number of conflicts of interest. Third sector organisations expressed frustration that the needs of the sector had not been more actively championed by the TSIP, leading to distrust towards the TSIP. This distrust undermines the legitimacy of the TSIP, but is contrasted with the significant trust in the TSIP expressed by state actors.

Beyond the particular TSIP studied, there is significant critique of the single voice model that established attempts to channel civil society voices through one individual, replicating a traditional model of representative democracy (but without the robust mechanisms of accountability). The critique of this model was expressed across the third sector but was also articulated by some state actors. The single voice model pulls interface organisations into a liminal space where they walk a tightrope between the third sector and state. The issues that I encountered in the field reflect and reinforce those identified in the literature (Escobar, 2005; Gaventa, 2004; Osborne, 2000; Sinclair, 2008; Taylor 2004b, 2011). While third sector intermediary bodies have always played a difficult role in trying to represent the third sector, I contend that it is through the particular state-designed framework of governance networks, with its underlying assumption of consensus, that TSIs experience a permanent liminality. The following chapter focuses on the communication amongst partners in local governance networks, exploring the particular discourse and culture associated with them.

9 Managed talk

> I mean there's nothing local about localities. It's, I mean, sometimes the use,
> the use of the language is everything, ae.
> *Local forum chair and community member, Wychwood (S11)*

The previous chapter explored the relationship between the TSIP and the third sector community and argued that the channelling of a diverse and fragmented third sector through one individual is not only fundamentally flawed but also undermines the relationship between the TSIP and the broader sector. Further, the TSIP has to navigate a liminal space between its participation in state-initiated governance networks and the sector to which it is accountable. This chapter considers what happens between state and nonstate actors in governance networks, with a focus on the language used within these spaces.

The term "managed talk" was used by a participant to describe the type of talk that happens within governance networks such as the CPPs and IJBs. The talk is constructive, professional, careful; it is generally not challenging or controversial. Managed talk is a characteristic of the underlying assumption that partnerships are consensus based. The roots of consensus can be traced back to the reflexive modernity thesis, presented in chapter two, and the third way approach of New Labour promoting dialogic spaces based on consensus rather than conflict (Giddens, 1994). This chapter explores the idea that state-initiated governance networks are predicated on consensus and that this, in turn, shapes not only *what* conversations happen within them but also *how* these conversations happen. This space and its ways of working have an impact on the nature of the third sector's participation, with broader implications for its legitimacy in the broader third sector community.

Three major themes are identified in this chapter: pleasant partnerships, doublespeak, and the place of the third sector. The first considers the assumption of consensus that underpins partnership working; the second explores the use of language; and the third considers issues of power for the TSIP. This chapter draws on the concepts of space, power, and liminality as a framework for analysis.

9.1 Pleasant partnerships

> You know, things are not moving because all that this consensus model
> operates is maintaining the status quo at best. It doesn't actually challenge if

> the status quo is good enough and if it's not what we should actually be doing to have a construct of change happening.
>
> *Manager, local community development organisation, Wychwood (S8)*

This section explores the role of consensus in partnership working within governance networks. Consensus is described in the Cambridge dictionary as "a generally accepted opinion or decision among a group of people" (Cambridge Dictionary, 2019a). Amongst third sector organisations there was a high degree of cynicism expressed about the partnership spaces where the sector engages with the state and its statutory agencies. While there were people who felt that partnership working was effective and that the third sector was helping to shape an agenda, this was a minority view. Amongst the majority of community-based third sector organisations interviewed, including those who participate in partnership working, there was a high degree of scepticism about the partnership spaces, the way they operate, and the time they consume. In contrast, the perspective of statutory stakeholders within the partnership was much more positive.

The manager quoted at the beginning of this section identifies the partnership approach as a "consensus model". The theme of consensus was identified by a number of participants in the third sector, including from individuals who participate in governance networks. Through extensive observation in the field, I experienced the many partnership spaces as constructive, well-behaved and polite spaces; while individuals did challenge decisions and processes, the manner in which dissent was expressed was professional and carefully managed accordingly to protocols and procedures. The talk was managed.

In this section, four themes are explored: how consensus shapes the agenda of governance networks, how consensus and managed talk shape the debate, how managed talk in governance spaces minimises conflict, and how managed talk has implications on the third sector's engagement in these fields.

9.1.1 Consensus shapes the agenda

As reflected in the quote at the beginning of this section, there is concern that consensus models shape the agenda and that the agenda is limited to maintaining the status quo. Two examples from the field demonstrate how the work of partnerships is framed around what is achievable. A community planning representative from the Scottish Government made this point:

> You do inevitably focus on the things that you're able to do together, so you're focusing on, in all of this complexity what the art of the possible is and there are other places and other spaces to have a, you know, a stooshie with somebody. So if I've got a problem or there's something that's concerning me about what the Health Board are doing and the council or the police I will take that off, I won't bring that to a partnership board (S12).

This quote suggests that problems are not addressed at the partnership table, rather they are dealt with privately; it is an example of the power of consensus, acting as a form of invisible power shaping what issues are dealt with by the partnership. The avoidance of conflict is considered in a section 9.1.3 entitled *consensus stifles dissent*. At a grassroots level, concern was expressed specifically with what was on and off the agenda in local neighbourhood partnerships; a local forum chair and community member stated:

> Maybe partnerships were set up that things would be done by consensus and it was a new way of working and stuff like that, now that was true to an extent when you were dealing with things like, like dog shit basically which most everybody agreed on and stuff like that, but what the neighbourhood partnerships never did was actually deal with, sort of, overtly political issues - they never, I mean here there were a raft of school closures in this area, and that was never touched, werenae allowed to raise these issues at neighbourhood partnerships, they were reserved for the education committee at the time (S11).

Again, this quote also reveals that contentious issues are avoided. In contrast to this view, the chief executive of the TSIP spoke very positively about the influence that the third sector has had on actually shaping the CPP partnership board agenda, citing the focus on inequalities as a key achievement. This was also confirmed by a senior civil servant who paid tribute to the accomplishments and role of the third sector engagement in the CPP partnership board. In the case of the partnership board, the chief executive of the TSIP was the vice chair and therefore in a powerful position to directly shape the agenda.

Across the third sector, there was common concern about how the managed talk shaped the actual debate. This is explored in the next section.

9.1.2 Consensus shapes the debate

The culture of local governance spaces and processes was another theme that wove its way through the field work. The collective governance space of the CPP and the IJB is one that reflects state ways of working; these approaches are rooted in a more hierarchical style (Cornwall, 2004b). As previously argued power relations are inscribed into the creation of participatory spaces; the architects of these spaces are more likely to hold power (Gaventa,

2006). The statutory culture is alienating to non-state actors, framing the way that discussions take place and shaping what is expected in terms of professionalism, issues that were explored in chapter seven. As noted, this style was described by a community representative as "managed talk". It was clear from my observations that there were expectations about the kind of language, leadership and skills required to sit at the partnership tables. This polite engagement is one that reflects Barnes, Newman and Sullivan's term "dispassionate argumentation" (2007, p.204).

From a community perspective there was little confidence that meaningful conversations, let alone debates, were happening around high-level partnership tables. A community worker identified the role of consensus in obscuring real debate:

> And it's, it's a farce, and it is absolutely, what it does is consensus is a great, another barrier I suppose to actually having honest discussions about real problems (S8).

A local forum chair and community member expressed a similar perspective:

> I think we get to that level, it is fairly genteel, and business-like, and I dinnae think there's a lot of debate or discussion at a level like that (S11).

The partnership culture is framed by a statutory mindset (reflected in its norms); the actual processes are rooted in bureaucratic procedures that determine how conversations happen (reflected in its roles). Significant to how consensus shapes the debate is how it minimises conflict; this is explored in the next section.

9.1.3 Consensus stifles dissent

In this case study the resistance to conflict was evident not only in the lack of conflict observed, but also in how conflict was regarded. In particular, the relief at avoiding a deputation at the IJB or the council meeting was referenced a number of times by civil servants. In part it was the assumption of consensus that created a culture in which conflict was not welcomed. Within this space, opposition is raised in a managed, careful way.

An NHS senior manager demonstrated the negativity with which resistance was viewed, recounting a situation at an IJB meeting where she was challenged by a carer's representative; another member of the IJB said to her, "too bad you took a kicking". She stated:

I never felt the kicking, I understand where she was coming from, it's part of the healthy process. People who try to sanitise the IJB into this amicable numbness… how can you do it? (S13).

This same individual spoke about the importance of "grit" in partnership working:

I don't think partnerships are about amicable numbness, I think partnerships are about that absolute grit if we're going to get to the bottom of human lives and the human experience and making improvements, we need grit in the system (S13).

This comment is particularly interesting as this individual actively avoided revealing challenges in the PSP process during her delivery of a report about the PSP to the IJB; this is explored further in the next section on *doublespeak*. There were different perspectives on whether the partnership spaces were places where dissent was welcomed. Statutory partners were more likely to feel dissent was seen as acceptable; for example, a representative from the Scottish Fire and Rescue felt that people were able to speak their mind and to raise issues in a healthy way (S15). The partnership space was experienced differently depending on individuals' positions and perspectives.

The role of funding is also an important consideration affecting the third sector's behaviour and its capacity for dissent. While TSIs received core funding from the Scottish government, many were also funded through the local authority. The Wychwood TSIP received the majority of its funding from the local authority. There is reluctance at speaking out, at biting the hand that feeds you. An example in the field demonstrates this reluctance: at a CPP partnership board meeting a senior officer was discussing an issue related to the third sector and made some contentious remarks. In recounting this, a local third sector leader referred to a conversation she had with a colleague, also in attendance:

I talked to [name of colleague], sort of saying, why didn't you say anything when [name of senior officer] was misbehaving and she said, you know, well, don't want to bite the hand that feeds me. And you kind of go, but in that situation, we have to, one, but also we are not there to protect our organisational interests and I think, my opinion is always our organisation interest is much better protected by dealing with the issues than it ever is by not dealing with them (S7).

This quote clearly demonstrates the fear of speaking out, but also identifies the challenge of being a representative speaking on behalf of the sector, while also being identified as an individual organisation. The connection between funding and conflict avoidance was

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articulated by the chief executive of a third sector network in Wychwood who, while critical of the TSIP, acknowledged the difficulty inherent in being funded by the state:

> This is something where the third sector interface and the third sector organisations, because money plays, you know, funding plays such a role you cannot afford to be seen to be controversial when everybody says, well it's all about consensus and we need to work on, to a common aim and so on, and that's where people become, collaborate with a system where really they should be taking a much more firm position on some of these things. And it's difficult for organisations in the third sector (S19).

The curtailing of dissent as a result of funding is well evidenced in the literature (Milbourne and Murray, 2017; Rees et al., 2017; Rochester, 2013; Wolch, 1990). The avoidance of conflict which dominates governance networks is detrimental to the fundamental purpose of bringing together a diversity of stakeholders to collectively grapple with complex issues. Conflict is not welcomed in state-initiated governance networks (Taylor, 2004a). Hastings et al. (1996) argue that resistance from community representatives in partnership working was viewed as obstruction. White (1996) identifies a lack of conflict in participatory spaces as one that should raise suspicion, and similarly Taylor (2011) makes the case that conflict is a sign that a partnership is working. Conflict is a healthy part of partnership working. Mouffe argues that consensus has "… put democratic thinking on the wrong track" (2005a, p.3), and she argues for an agonistic approach that embraces conflict, where people treat each other as adversaries, not enemies. This does not mean that consensus cannot be reached, but rather secures the fundamental role of dissensus. The absence of conflict undermines the potential for innovative partnership working, and the ability to capitalize on the strength of diverse interests and ideas.

Another factor in partnership working is the closeness of the relationships between the TSIP and stakeholders; this depth can make conflict and criticism more difficult. These relationships are long-standing, built on genuine mutual respect. Through my observation of many community planning related meetings, it was evident that the TSIP and other third sector representatives were well respected by civil servants from a range of state and statutory bodies. The active engagement of the third sector in public service planning in Wychwood has a long history, pre-dating community planning. The deputy director talked about how long-standing partnership working had changed the perspective about the third sector amongst stakeholders. She stated:

> Yes, it's just time. It's relationships and time. The stalactites will eventually meet the stalagmites. Yeah. That's all it is (deputy director, TSIP8).

All the civil servants that I interviewed spoke highly about the TSIP and its engagement in different governance networks. Challenges were seen as welcome and constructive. Research has shown that when people engage in local governance they develop strong relationships with state actors (Teles, 2013), however, there is a risk that the depth of these relationships can make it difficult to be challenging and adopt controversial positions.

Consensus as a characteristic of partnerships is well documented in the literature (Davies, 2011; Hastings et al., 1996; Mouffe, 2005b; Rancière, 2000; Taylor, 2011; Swynegedouw, 2014). Consensus is a tool of power. Cleaver argues that "respectful attitudes, conflict avoidance and consensus decision-making can all serve to reinforce inequality despite securing functional outcomes" (2004, p.272). Barnes et al. make a distinction between institutional rules and norms; they define rules as the "formal expression of regulation" and norms as the "informal expression of 'appropriate' behaviour" (2004, p.64). They argue that the informal expression of appropriate behaviour interacts with the formal rules in a manner that guides the conduct of participants in partnership working. One of the dominant norms is that of consensus. Consensus is an example of invisible power, working at the individual level and shaping behaviour.

The power imbued in partnership spaces shapes the third sector's engagement within it, with significant implications for its relationship with the broader third sector. The next section considers how managed talk shapes the third sector's engagement.

9.1.4 Managed talk shapes the third sector's engagement

As previously argued, the third sector engages in a space that is shaped by the culture and practices of the state. To participate, the third sector has to play by the state's rules of the game, and participate in a way that is culturally acceptable, reflecting the institutional norms. This does not mean that third sector organisations do not disagree or dissent; however, the nature of the dissent, its frequency, and its intensity has to be acceptable.

The chief executive of a local third sector network in Wychwood described in stark terms the nature of the space and the issues for third sector engagement:

It's another form of sort of trying a hegemony where you win people over to a certain process which takes away content and this basic baseline of who do we represent and whose interests and so on. It overemphasises process and makes everything pending on process. So something is only good if the process is amicable and you're sitting round the same table and people become part of something that is like … managed voices (S19).

This individual suggested that the partnership space with its managed voices was actually part of a wider strategy of making the third sector complicit. The reference to hegemony legitimates the argument of invisible power; the invisible power of the process and expectations of process "win people over". Participation comes at a cost; this was expressed by a development worker in a local youth network in Wychwood:

We're all in this together, consensus means we all agree – but do we all follow the big boys? (S14).

This individual's quote speaks to the differential in power around the partnership tables; consensus is in fact away of shaping the debate according to the "big boys".

The TSIP was viewed differently by statutory stakeholders than by its constituents in the third sector. Statutory organisations viewed third sector representatives as partners, whereas third sector organisations saw representatives as their advocates; where the legitimacy of the TSIP broke down, it was viewed as an agent of the state. A carer's representative on the IJB, who was also a board member at a local third sector organisation, stated that they and third sector people were given a certain amount of respect for holding their own (S18). In the observations I undertook in the field I witnessed many occasions where third sector and community representatives challenged decisions; however, this was always done in a careful, constructive and conciliatory manner.

The view from the ground about the third sector's engagement in these spaces was not conciliatory. Amongst many of the third sector organisations interviewed in Wychwood there was concern about how the third sector was represented and a strong feeling that the TSIP in particular was too closely aligned with the state. These concerns about the position of the TSIP compound the issues raised in the previous chapter. This raises a fundamental question of the third sector's engagement in governance networks: can it effect change from the inside and at what cost to its relationships with those it represents, on the outside?

State-initiated governance networks are invited spaces (Cornwall, 2004a, b), though as I have argued in previous chapters these spaces would more accurately be described as compelled spaces; there would be funding and reputational consequences for the TSIP if it did not participate. The space is constructed by the state and is constitutive of power relations. Talk is shaped by the inviters, not by the invited. The TSIP is there to represent the third sector but engages in a statutory environment in a way that reflects the institutional logics of a bureaucratic culture. The idea that governance networks are level playing fields disguises the asymmetrical power and resources held by state and statutory actors (Gaventa, 2006); rather governance networks are more likely to be spaces where inequalities are reinforced, and this was the case in Wychwood. Teles characterises the belief that political authorities are neutral in steering networks as an "illusory mechanism" (2013, p.789).

In the next section the idea of managed talk is investigated further with a particular focus on the way that language masks reality in pleasant partnerships.

9.2 Doublespeak

> It's always quite neatly packaged into something which actually it's quite difficult to get under the skin of.
>
> *Local third sector leader, Wychwood (S7)*

This section explores more deeply the language that is used in partnership working and demonstrates how language can be manipulated to paint a picture of consensus and harmony. Doublespeak is defined by the Cambridge Dictionary as "language that has no real meaning or has more than one meaning and is intended to hide the truth" (Cambridge Dictionary, 2019b). The theme of doublespeak, although not referenced in this way, was raised by a number of people in the third sector and was particularly highlighted by two individuals who were active in local governance networks: one participated in the CPP partnership board as a representative of the third sector, another was a TSIP staff member who participated in the PSP. Both critiqued the distance between what was said and what was actually happening. As an observer of local governance processes in action I witnessed first-hand the disconnection, and in some cases misrepresentation, between how situations were described and how they were experienced in practice. I also experienced a degree of doublespeak from some interview participants.

This section explores the distance between language and lived experience through five themes: the use of empowering language, the use of positive packaging, issues of misrepresentation, the use of doublespeak by the third sector, and lastly, strategic make-believe.

9.2.1 Empowering language

There were a number of examples where language was used in a way that sounded empowering but actually represented something quite different. A local forum chair and community member recounted how the move to locality working was playing out in her community:

> I mean it was quite refreshing to hear council officers talking about doing things with communities and not to them, I thought well this is, they're speaking just the same language, like but the actuality at the moment it's no there, it's no there, even the way the locality leadership meetings are set up, the community's almost an afterthought (S11).

This example shows how easy it is to use language in a way that suggests a participatory approach, while resorting to a traditional top-down style. Another example of the use of empowering language was how the evolution of the TSI model was framed by a Scottish Government civil servant, who stated:

> There wasn't a cohesive voice, and so the intention at that point was to work with them [third sector organisations] at local level and get them to do a bit of a self-organisation to make them much more effective, much more of an impact, and have a strong voice at that table (N11a).

While this statement is consistent with the historical record, the framing suggests that this was a positive process. The goal was a strong voice at the table to enable the third sector to be a presence. However, the process that was undertaken in order for this model to be put in place was extremely top-down and far from empowering. The "self-organisation" that was required resulted in the fundamental restructuring of the sector that saw the merger and closure of many organisations; few in the sector felt empowered. Gaventa argues that confusion results from the blurring of who holds power when powerful actors use the "discourse of participation and inclusion" (2006, p.23). Bourdieu also highlights the power of language stating, "… words to a great extent make things and that changing words, and more generally representations… is already a way of changing things (1990, cited in Taylor, 2011, p.117). Language is an invisible form of power, working at the level

of the individual, shaping what is acceptable and what appears real. The use of empowering language is closely linked to the positive packaging of ideas which is explored in the next section.

9.2.2 Positive packaging

The issues being discussed in governance networks such as the CPP and the IJB reflect the harsh evidence of inequality across Scotland and the impact of the austerity agenda (Mazzei et al., 2019). The frontline issues are stark and often intractable. However, at times the framing of these issues and the attempts to address them are packaged in such a positive light that it obscures their severity. This local third sector leader involved in the CPP partnership board critiqued the use of the traffic light (red, amber, green) performance ratings:

> It's actually such a huge lack of honesty and that lack of honesty becomes greater the more packaged things become. So there was a whole report at the end of the meeting again where all the performance, every single performance indicator, green, green, green, green, green (S7).

This individual suggested that the conversations that need to be happening were just too difficult; she critiqued the role of the third sector in this space:

> Those conversations are too hard to manage … those are the conversations we need to have because if we don't have those kind of conversations, which actually sort of says, life is really crap for people and actually as, as a third sector we don't push hard enough to make that difference because our, very often our relationships with the public sector are compromised because they have been contractualised (S7).

The sector's reluctance to push harder to have these conversations is a constant consequence of the often contractualised relationships; this can contribute to the consensus-based space (Baring, 2015; Milbourne, 2013). The language used and the packaging of the issues creates a distance between the partnership spaces in which collective solutions are to be found and people's lived experiences. In another example, a civil servant from the Health and Social Care Partnership wrote an annual performance report that was deemed to be too positive by the IJB. In this particular jurisdiction the council had received a poor evaluation of some of its services. The IJB challenged the report believing that it did not accurately reflect the state of play. This raises a question about whether there is pressure brought to bear on civil servants to present positive

outcomes despite some evidence to the contrary. The next section considers how, at times, actions and perspectives are misrepresented.

9.2.3 Misrepresentation

At times the empowering language and positive packaging tipped over into the realm of misrepresentation. During my fieldwork I spent a significant amount of time observing meetings related to a Public Social Partnership. The process involved existing and potential service providers working with representatives from the NHS and the council to help shape a new model of service delivery. The TSIP was represented on the Implementation Monitoring and Evaluation Group (IME), along with a carer's representative and an advocate. The process involved consultation events with service providers and service users and was extremely labour-intensive. There were many issues identified from within the community of service providers that the TSIP representative tried to address within the IME group. I attended a consultation event, an IME group, a service providers' meeting, an interview with a service provider, and a number of interviews with the TSIP representative; from this, I felt that I had a good understanding of the issues from a third sector perspective. There was also a history to this particular process as there had been previous PSPs that were, from the perspective of the third sector community, flawed and lacking in transparency.

There were two issues raised consistently through the fieldwork. One was a concern from the service provider community that potential refunding was contingent upon their active participation in the process, a commitment that necessitated hours and hours of work. Organisations felt pressure to attend all the meetings and consultations (of which there were many) and feared that lack of participation could result in not being selected for funding. The second was that the lead person in the PSP characterised the process as one in which there had been no criticism. In an interview, an individual supporting the PSP process denied participation in the PSP process was linked to funding; however, when asked about the requirement for regular participation his statement was full of mixed messages:

> No, that wasn't anything that would have went out, as part of the PSP we do
> expect engagement and so there is kind of a clear need however we would,
> with the information obtained we would not go against people but there is a
> need to attend and to be engaged within the PSP around about communication
> and relations and the want to collaborate and to be able to share the values and
> ethos of the PSP, so really there is a need for engagement, so nobody would

have been disqualified or anything, we would have probably treated people slightly, you know, in an informal way, just kind of, making sure people were engaged and that they hadn't fallen off the list, that there weren't barriers in the emails, technology, things like that, no I think, but people do need to engage though it's a natural process of building relationships and partnership working that you should be engaging with people (S17).

On the second point, despite a letter of complaint having been received by the PSP from a respected local organisation, this individual stated *"we do feel that we have been transparent and we haven't had any criticism"* (S17). I interviewed the organisation that had sent the letter; they had put in writing their concern about how much time the PSP process was taking of their manager's time, creating service delivery challenges. Despite this clear concern, I heard the PSP manager state that he had received positive feedback about the PSP process. This misrepresentation was chilling. In relation to speaking out, the director of the local organisation stated:

So that, if that's what you're dealing with, if that's what your knowledge is, if that's what your experience is why, how could I try and be challenging without worrying about what the future would hold? (S10).

This comment reflects the silencing effect that the PSP process had on speaking out.

The final piece of this story relates to the presentation at the IJB about the PSP, a meeting I attended. Despite dissent within the sector, the PSP was portrayed as a success by a senior NHS manager who had previously described the importance of "grit" in partnerships (see section 9.1.3). In her presentation she described the process as one that had "people involved" and would "de-clutter the landscape, get more for less, and do what works" (taken from observation notes, OB16). The IJB was given the impression that the PSP was an example of good partnership working; congratulations were expressed by the chair of the IJB and board members. This was not just empowering language or positive packaging; this was a blatant misrepresentation of the process and the challenges experienced and communicated by the sector. The TSIP representative was unable to attend this particular meeting, and because the IJB regulations do not allow for an alternate representative, the organisation was unable to challenge the official narrative. The actions of the individual in question were at odds with her earlier stated opinion that partnerships should include "grit" and avoid being spaces of "amicable numbness" (S13).

The ability to use empowering language to obscure what was actually happening, to positively package difficult issues into successful performance indicators, and to

misrepresent experiences and criticism is an example of powerful cultures in action. It demonstrates both visible and hidden forms of power (VeneKlasen and Miller, 2002). Visible power is reflected in the formal rules and structures at play in the IJB; this limited the presentation about the PSP to a relatively superficial report that was unable to be challenged by the appropriate third sector representative because the rules did not allow for a proxy to stand in his place. Hidden power is evidenced by the nature of the actual report which established the official record as one of success, despite contradictory evidence on the ground. Doublespeak is not limited to statutory partners; the next section looks at doublespeak in the third sector.

9.2.4 Doublespeak in the third sector

At times the third sector, too, is guilty of doublespeak. As an example, the TSIP had been maintaining a positive perspective about community planning progress in relation to locality working. I attended a meeting of the chairs of local networks, along with the leadership of the TSIP. After much discussion, there was an acknowledgement from the TSIP leadership that locality working was not working for the third sector and recognition that a challenging conversation needed to be held with the council's leadership. A local forum chair and community member commented on the chief executive's admission that things were not working:

> I actually felt, I felt a wee bit, felt good when [TSIP chief executive] said that but I thought, well it's what we've been saying for years and years and it's been denied and, I mean, if you can be that honest then maybe you should be honest with the other people who are so-called partners and either fix it or just dissolve it, dinnae be part of it (S11).

This quote highlights the difficulty for the TSIP of being in a liminal space; it is betwixt and between the third sector and the state. From the community worker's perspective, the choice is clear: you need to be honest, either make it work or walk away. Drawing on Hirschman's (1970) concepts, what this community worker suggests is that if the situation is such that participation (loyalty) cannot be justified, then exit is the right option. It is, however, very difficult for the TSIP to take such a drastic action because of the depth of its engagement with the state; the exit option would result in serious reputational and financial damage.

The next section considers the strategic level at which governance networks operate and considers the impact of these strategic spaces on third sector communities.

9.2.5 Strategic make-believe

> By its nature it's a world of make believe; the real stuff here, operations,
> carries on regardless of what the strategic plan says.
>
> *Deputy director, TSIP, Wychwood (TSIP11)*

Another theme, that emerged from interviews with third sector and community people and related to managed talk, was the distance between their experiences on the ground and the strategy making of the partnership planning tables. This section explores strategic make-believe, considering the disconnect between strategy and people's experiences, and the perspective of the third sector.

9.2.5.1 The disconnect between strategy and front-line experience

The idea of the disconnect between strategy and reality was something raised by third sector and community representatives; it was not raised by the wide range of civil servants involved in local planning issues. This is, in itself, interesting. Most civil servants are operating from a distance; the benefit of the third sector is in its position on the front-line. It is in part the role of the third sector to bring experience from the coalface into strategy. The disconnect between strategy and lived experience raises an important concern about the ability of strategy to address issues of concern at the front-line.

This was raised by a development officer at the TSIP who describes a situation where he was deputising for the Director at an IJB meeting. He stated:

> The system works really well, those meetings work in that no one wants the detail, they want the big headline everything's working… a high-level update, thanks very much … I feel a bit like the system allows this kind of to happen – everyone is aware that what's been said isn't necessarily representative, but as long as it's not a problem for them, they don't have to go there (TSIP10).

This raises a question about whether the work at the strategic level reflects what is happening on the ground. The example of the PSP report in the previous section on doublespeak is instructive here. This was picked up by the deputy director of the TSIP, talking about the organisation's participation in strategic planning which illustrated how well the two contexts are kept separate:

> The two worlds rarely collide – the real world versus the world of strategic…
> officers live in a bubble… a bubble that we are complicit in, what we're asked

to do and almost funded to do is such a disconnect with what affects people's lives (deputy director TSIP, TSIP11).

While few would argue against a partnership-based strategic planning table for public services, these perspectives raise questions about the effectiveness of strategy that does not appear to be rooted in discussions of the problems and experiences based locally.

The TSIP's deputy director spoke about the relationships between individuals around the community planning table as being positive; similarly, she felt that relationships between people on the front-line were also good. However, the concern expressed strongly was that the strategy at the top was not trickling down into how systems work at the coal face (TSIP8). Equally, as I observed from interview data and meetings, the stark experiences from the front line were not evident in strategy group discussions. This raises questions: if the strategy is not based in lived experience and the strategy is not filtering down through the systems to the coal face, what is the point of the strategy? Is it make-believe?

9.2.5.2 The view from the third sector

Through the field work I interviewed and spent time with four senior third sector leaders from three organisations (three directors and one deputy director) who were active in community planning. There were differing perspectives from these individuals about the effectiveness of community planning tables, some perspectives of which changed during the period of the field work. One was consistently cynical about the process, referring to community planning as "an industry" that was made up (S2). He referenced the distance between the conversations happening around the community planning table and people's lived experiences:

> It's so far removed off from the reality of what happens in people's lives and what is needed that there is a complete disconnect (S2).

The TSIP deputy director's quote at the beginning of section 9.2.5 reflects a rather cynical take on the process; at other times she, along with the director of the TSIP spoke very positively about the strides that had been made in community planning and the third sector's role within in. For example, the director stated:

> I would absolutely say we have done more than influence, we have actually made them think seriously about inequality in Wychwood (TSIP2).

This is not borne out by other views and observations from the field which suggest local difficulties and experiences are distanced from strategy concerns. The next section considers more fully the place of the third sector in community planning and considers the impact on those organisations of trying to represent the third sector.

9.3 The place of the TSIP in governance networks

> There's always a bit about however much we try to work in partnership – let's
> be honest, you've got the power because you've got the money
> *Health and social care manager, Wychwood (S16)*

This final section considers the place of the TSIP in state-initiated governance networks and considers how the TSIP navigates partnership fields where power is unequal. Specifically, this section explores how the TSIP chooses its battles in partnership working, explores the inequality of the third sector in governance networks, and considers whether there could be a different approach.

9.3.1 Choosing its battles in a liminal space

Within a managed talk environment, third sector actors have to carefully navigate the field. They are there to represent third sector interests and therefore must play a role in challenging decisions and ways of working. This is no easy feat; this is navigating a liminal space. The challenge of this role is expressed by the TSIP's deputy director; she stated:

> It wouldn't get us anywhere to behave as certain third sector groups would
> have us behave, because we wouldn't then be at the table at all… there's a
> price to pay for your behaviour because we are around the table by consent and
> occasionally by the regulations, so I think the TSI tries to play it very cool…
> on occasion we are able to fire those bullets, but we can't sit in meetings and
> attack and attack and attack (deputy director, TSIP11).

She expresses the difficulty in navigating a space where the expectation from the third sector, or some parts of it, is in stark contrast with the partnership expectations. This is where the delicate process of navigating the space is played out. The battles that the TSI chooses are, at times, out of step with broader third sector organisations, as illustrated by the example cited in chapter six (section 6.2.2) regarding Fairer Scotland where the TSIP instructed its front-line staff to cease working with the community organisations that were unhappy with the programme.

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Procurement was another example that my field work highlighted. This was an area that had caused much discontent amongst the third sector in Wychwood, and where there appeared to be consternation that the TSIP had not gone to battle on this issue. The manager of a local community development organisation was critical about the TSIP's lack of effective advocacy in relation to procurement; he stated:

> So despite telling the council and the community planners this is not something for health, you can buy photocopiers through procurement but social care services, they're a different construct and need to be treated differently, they haven't listened to anybody. Now that's the job of the TSI to be saying that and that, what have they, well, they go to the odd meeting but they've not been an effective voice and they've let all these third sector organisations hit the wall over the last four, five years and they're still sitting round the table of the council and accepting that that's all well, that's so be it. So, why would we have any confidence in them, and why would you feel that they're representative of anything but themselves, you know? (S8).

The issue of procurement practices was clearly of great importance to the sector, and exactly the kind of issue where having a third sector voice appeared essential; this particular stakeholder was critical about the ability of the TSIP to represent the sector, a concern that was borne out by other participants.

A report on a PSP process was a battle that the TSIP did take on (refer to section 6.2.2.1). In this particular case the TSIP was punished for 'speaking truth to power' (Unwin, 2004), an act that resulted in the termination of a funded contract. This highlights the vulnerability and lack of equality of the third sector in its relationships with statutory partners, especially because of its resource dependency, an inequality explored further in the next section.

9.3.2 Unequal partners

While statutory partners held the third sector's engagement in governance networks in a high degree of respect, the question of equity of status was a recurrent theme to emerge. A TSIP officer stated the following:

> I think very rarely does the third sector ever feel it's equal. However, sitting round in those meetings there's, the people that attend, there's a huge respect for the third sector, but that's at quite a high level and that's, you know, it's fine, I think sometimes it's very high, at a high strategic level that can be all very good but when it gets into an operational level life can get much trickier, much harder" (development officer, TSIP3).

This comment resonates with the previous section on strategic make-believe, exploring the difference between the strategic and the operational.

A further recurring theme from the fieldwork was the impact of money on power, and indeed on independence. The TSIP is funded to represent the third sector at governance networks. Where a funding relationship exists, there is always the potential that being too outspoken might undermine this funding (Milbourne and Murray, 2017; Rees et al., 2017; Rochester, 2013; Wolch, 1990), as illustrated above and in the previous chapter.

An interesting example was cited by a civil servant from the local council, where the TSIP had equal power. The *Reshaping Care for Older People* was a funding pot from the Scottish Government for prevention initiatives at the local level. In order for support to be given, the four partners (of which the third sector was one) had to jointly agree; this gave the third sector as much power as the other three, and is a rare example of the third sector holding equal power. Around most partnership tables there is not such equality. The third sector is generally a recipient of funds, not a contributor. Reflecting on a CPP partnership board meeting where a senior civil servant complained about third sector backlash due to cuts (in a different area), a local third sector leader commented:

> You've got to in a way say to him that's always going to happen, but that's also because you hold all the power and you're not actually wanting to give any of that power away (Third sector leader, S7).

This comment highlights the differential in power that is always evident in local governance networks from the perspective of the third sector.

9.3.3 A different approach?

The local third sector leader quoted above suggested that a different approach is needed to trying to tackle issues, to move away from managed talk and the embedded power relations that construct it. Referring to the chief executive of the council, she stated:

> We know what the problems here are, I also know that you don't know what the solutions are and actually solutions are staring you in the face, it's called the third sector, but you have to work with that differently than, than the way that you're doing, you have to accept that not everything's going to come off in a very controlled, beautifully green, amber, red kind of way. It's going to be messy right (Third sector leader, S7).

This suggests that a move away from the world of strategic make believe and managed talk might open up a space which is messy but innovative. Throughout the research alternative suggestions were made for the third sector's role in this governance networks. A strong case was made by a number of people that the sector's involvement needs to be guided by strong principles. The chief executive of a local third sector network and a critic of the TSIP suggested:

> Yeah, I'm all for reaching consensus but it's got to be on the basis of principled positions and then moving forward. I mean politics and everything is compromise, yeah, you find it in your family, I find it with my children, I mean everywhere you go it's, it's compromise, I have no issue with compromise, it's just got to be based on principled positions where you say, I can go so far and that, and, and those principled positions are no longer really valued in the same way as they once were (S19).

The ideas for a different kind of space are explored further in the final chapter.

9.4 Conclusion

This chapter has considered what happens between state and nonstate actors in governance networks, with a focus on the language used within these spaces. The language has been characterised as managed talk – a way of talking in state-initiated governance networks that is premised on consensus. Consensus is a form of invisible power that shapes the agenda and the debate; consensus limits the expression and nature of dissent. While different viewpoints are heard, they are carefully managed in a style of "dispassionate argumentation" (Barnes et al., 2004). The talk in invited spaces is constituted by institutional rules and norms that shape both the behaviour and the language used. Rose (1999, p.175) describes this aptly when he argues that the powerful have appropriated the language of community from "a language of resistance and transformed it into an expert discourse and professional location". The language of state and nonstate actors, can at times resemble doublespeak. This manifests in the use of empowering language which has little substance, in positive packaging that 'spins' wicked issues into acceptable forms, and in the misrepresentation of experiences. The TSIP itself was not immune from engaging in doublespeak.

These pleasant partnerships are spaces where doublespeak is an acceptable language. Managed talk contributes to a world of strategic make-believe where the work of strategy is far removed from the lived experience on the ground. Within this world, the third sector

has to choose its battles in how it represents the third sector. In these spaces of managed talk, the TSIP must navigate its liminal position. In order to do this, it has to pick its battles carefully. In this space, managed talk is, for the TSIP, the language of liminality. Yet no matter how expertly it navigates this tightrope, it will always be a junior partner in local governance (Owen, 1964, cited in Taylor, 2004, p.131).

Third sector leaders, critical of managed talk, suggested that there is potential to partner in different ways, to talk directly and honestly about difficult issues rooted in the everyday experience of people. They argued that the third sector's engagement in such a space needs to be a principled one, based in advocacy. The following chapter explores these ideas further.

10 Discussion and conclusion

The crisis of representative democracy has created an incentive to involve civil society, through organisations and citizens, in the governance of the state. The demands and expectations of citizens about their role in society have changed, and representative democracy is no longer sufficient to involve citizens in the governing institutions of the state (Barnes et al., 2007). Gaventa (2004) argues that there is an emerging consensus that society needs citizens to be more engaged and the state more responsive. The growth of participatory democracy is a global trend that has facilitated the active involvement of civil society as a way as complementing, rather than challenging, representative democracy. This study has researched one particular form of democratic governance, that is, state-initiated local governance networks in Scotland. These spaces of democratic governance have been created by the state which has invited civil society in, but as this study has demonstrated, the state has restructured some local third sector intermediary bodies in order to streamline that participation. There exists a fundamental power dynamic in the invitation as the state has the power to invite or uninvite; this power is compounded by the fact that the state typically funds the third sector organisations that participate in these spaces. This reshapes an invited space into a compelled space, further concentrating the state's power. Invited spaces are contested spaces, posing not only opportunities but also threats.

This chapter addresses the research questions and reflects on the findings from the field work, making recommendations in four areas. This chapter also identifies areas for future research, considers the study's contribution to knowledge, and reflects on the research process and study.

10.1 Addressing the research question

In this section I return to and address the research question that I set out to investigate. The research question was as follows:

> How does the third sector's participation in state-initiated governance networks through third sector interfaces (TSIs) impact on issues of the third sector's independence and representation in Scotland?

The research question was supported by two aims:

To explore whether and to what extent third sector engagement in community planning compromises the independence of the third sector

To explore how the third sector manages issues of representation in community planning

My thesis concludes that the independence of some third sector intermediary bodies is compromised and their representation role complicated by their participation in state-initiated governance networks. These networks are state-centric spaces that, through visible, hidden, and insidious forms of power, bring the third sector into state fields of influence. Institutional mechanisms, including norms and rules, shape the way that the third sector participates in these spaces. These spaces expect partnership working to be consensus-based, requiring dissent to be constructive and professionally expressed, serving to undermine its effectiveness. These are spaces of composed collaboration, not of activism. All of these expectations conspire to shape the nature of the third sector's participation. The role of invisible, or insidious, power is central, with third sector bodies managing their own conduct to comply with expectations. These processes move third sector intermediary bodies closer to the state and further away from the third sector. This movement undermines the independence of the third sector intermediary bodies, which, in turn erodes their legitimacy in speaking on behalf of the sector. The ability of a third sector intermediary body to represent the third sector is inextricably linked to its ability to maintain its independence from the state. In this particular study, the heavy-handed role of the state in imposing a top-down interface model, which restructured existing third sector organisations, further undermined the independence of third sector intermediary bodies.

In addition to the research question and aims, I had three research objectives:

To explore how TSIs advocate for third sector interests in community planning

To explore how TSIs represent the needs of a diverse third sector

To explore if and to what extent TSIs can represent the interests of communities as well as the third sector

The research findings suggest different perspectives on the question of how the TSIs advocate for third sector interests. The TSIP navigated a balancing act in representing the third sector, carefully choosing its battles. From the perspective of statutory partners, the TSIP was viewed as an effective voice for third sector interests and a 'comfortable'

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colleague. However, from the perspective of the broader third sector, the TSIP was seen as more closely aligned with the state than the sector. Interview participants were generally critical of the TSIP for not being stronger advocates; despite this criticism, participants were cognisant of, and sympathetic to, the difficult role that the TSIP played in trying to represent the sector.

Turning to the question about how the TSIs represent the needs of a diverse third sector, this study found that it was extremely difficult for the TSIP to fulfil this role, a finding that confirms and contributes to existing literature. The role is fundamentally flawed; an organisation, through one individual, cannot do justice to the diversity of third sector experiences. In part the challenge of trying to represent every part of the sector is one of sheer magnitude; the sector is large and diverse and is not monolithic in its needs. There is also complexity in understanding and navigating the *societal* issues that organisations are trying to address, such as poverty and violence, as well as the *sectoral* issues that organisations face, such as governance and sustainability. This challenging role is further complicated by the fact that the TSI also has its own organisational interests to protect, and in this respect is partly driven by self-preservation.

Finally, the research set out to explore whether TSIs could represent the interests of communities as well as the third sector. While there were many who felt that the state used TSIs as a shortcut to the community, the general feeling was that the TSIs could not and should not aim to represent the interests of communities as well as the third sector. Communities consist of multiple informal civil society projects, groups and neighbourhoods, some organised, some not. In contrast, the TSI is an organised, funded third sector body with corporate interests; it is very different organisationally and philosophically from grassroots communities. The imposition of the TSI model by the state has contributed to its distancing from communities and further weakened its legitimacy. While a TSI may be 'community facing', in its current form it is not in a position to claim to be a representative of communities.

The research question is further addressed in the next section which reflects on the study's findings.

10.2 Reflection on the findings, implications and recommendations

This section reflects on the data, drawing on the conceptual framework that I employed throughout the research study. Four key substantive areas are analysed each of which considers the implications of the findings and makes recommendations for policy and practice. The first considers spaces of democratic governance.

10.2.1 From invited spaces to co-created spaces

The governance turn has reshaped the way that society tackles its wicked problems; the language of partnership working is now an engrained practice across sectors. Local governance networks initiated by the state are examples of spaces where representative democracy meets participatory democracy; however, these spaces – like the CPP and particularly the IJB – are steeped in state ways of working. Spaces of democratic governance are inscribed with the power relations of their creators (Cornwall, 2004a). Scott makes the case that, "New forms of citizen participation may not just *reflect* changes in the public realm and a public itself but may be *constitutive* in their effects" (2001, p.65). In a similar vein, Barnes et al. (2007) argue that publics are constituted for public participation and drawn into new fields of power, an argument that is borne out by my findings in relation to the third sector. Fyfe (2005) makes the case that through its engagement with the state, the sector has been repositioned, reconfigured, and restructured. Sinclair (2008) in his research concludes "… in the CPP studied, the voluntary sector representative organisation effectively had to be reconstituted by the CPP to make it fit for the requirements of partnership" (p.88). My study has demonstrated how the imposition of the TSI model was a process of reconstituting third sector organisations to fit the requirements of the state. While the discourse of partnership may be embedded, egalitarian practice is not.

Institutional theory highlights the role of rules and norms in maintaining power and guiding the conduct of governance spaces (Barnes et al., 2004). Barnes et al. (2004) argue that rules are a "formal expression of regulation" and norms are an informal expression of "appropriate behaviour" (p.64). Scott (2001) contends that norms and rules play a role in maintaining existing hierarchies and patterns of decision-making; mechanisms such as "culture, role, systems, routinised practices and objects" are "carriers" that sustain institutions (p.61). While Scott (2001) suggests that norms and rules are not deterministic and that they can be challenged, he does conclude that participatory spaces are limited

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because the "institutional arrangements serve to perpetuate prevailing state-citizen relationships" (p.60). There are risks to the state in the creation of the spaces, and risks to the sector in participating in these spaces that reconstitute civil society in the image of the state. Brandsen et al. (2014) describe the process of "greedy governance" where state intervention changes civil society; they state, "This may easily destroy what [the state] wants to promote: a lively, self-governing civil society" (p.7). For civil society there is a risk that organisations will lose their identity, resembling agencies of the state (Brandsen et al., 2014; Tsukamoto and Nishimura, 2006), rather than independent bodies (Radu and Pop, 2014).

A fundamental question exists: how can relationships are that inherently top-down be constructed in a way that is bottom-up (Brandsen et al., 2014)? Is it possible that different models could be created for civil society participation, creating what Taylor (2011) refers to as a "social treasury" (p.260)? Through my fieldwork, a number of participants spoke about the need for a different approach to participatory governance in order to not only revitalise this space, but to also more fully benefit from it. Currently participatory governance spaces are created by and reflective of the state, but it does not need to continue in this way. A different approach could be developed through collaboration between the state and civil society, where spaces are designed collectively. Innovative and responsive approaches that are more reflective of civil society could emerge in order to bring the third sector and community perspectives into governance, with an explicit goal of *not* bringing civil society into state fields of power.

One of the themes to emerge repeatedly from the interviews was the importance of organic approaches, truly bottom-up ways of working. Third sector study participants stressed that the strength of civil society organisations is in their innovation and responsiveness; models of participation in governance that preserve the essence of civil society are essential. The death knell of innovation is the 'one size fits all' model that is the cornerstone of state approaches. The limitations of this approach are recognised by state actors; in the current *Local Governance Review* being undertaken by the Scottish Government in partnership with COSLA there is explicit recognition that in trying to encourage participatory democracy a 'one size fits all' model does not work (Scottish Government, 2019b). While attempts to create collaborative models between the state and civil society still do not address the fundamental issue of asymmetrical power, there is potential that participatory spaces could more effectively engage civil society and the third sector, changing the

dynamic from an invited space to a co-created space. The next section focuses on the state's relationship with the sector.

10.2.2   Don't kill the golden goose

This section builds on the last one and reflects on the state's approach to working with the sector. In an article about the governance of contracting relationships, Smith and Smyth (2010) use the analogy of the state 'killing the golden goose' in its relationship with the third sector (p.270). Echoing a point made above, the engagement of local third sector intermediary bodies has led to their reconstitution in order to fit the state's requirements, and in so doing has fundamentally altered what it was about these sector organisations that was appealing in the first place. In other words, the state has killed the golden goose.

The partnership between the state and the sector is not one of equals. Corroborating earlier literature, it was evident from my study that the state will always hold more power because of the sector's financial dependence on it (Kelly, 2007; Lewis, 2005; McQuaid, 2010). Like Johnston (2015), I would argue that in order for there to be collaborative governance, the state needs to "relinquish its hegemonic role" but that this is currently "unlikely given financial and performance accountabilities and the politics of public services" (p.21). In the case of the TSIs, the approach to engaging the third sector has been instrumental; TSIs are expected to work within the templates established by and to serve the priorities of the state. This process has been described as the "hyperactive mainstreaming" of the third sector (Kendall, 2009), and one that has reduced it to "a shadow state" (Wolch, 1990). My research suggests that despite a decade passing since many of these articles were written, the same conditions prevail, with the state continuing to bring the parts of the sector into its way of working rather than recognising the sector in its own right (Lewis, 2005).

The creation of the TSI model in Scotland is an example of the state's instrumental approach to engaging the third sector. Through its active intervention in the third sector landscape, the state created interface bodies that reflected not only state priorities, but also state constructs. The *Baring Barometer of Independence* identifies the dimensions of purpose (mission), voice (speaking out), action (activities) in considering the sector's independence; while it can be argued that the development of the TSI model undermined all three dimensions, the barometer is insufficient in capturing the nature, degree, and impact of the state's intervention. As noted in chapter one, the development of the TSI model reduced the number of contracts from 120 to 32, and resulted in the closure and

merging of many organisations. This in itself superimposed a convenient structure rather than valuing existing arrangements and histories. The model determined the purpose and action of the organisations, and significantly, the geographical areas to be served in order for them to be coterminous with the existing local authority area boundaries. A number of the new organisations incorporated themselves as third sector interfaces, creating a legal identity that reflected a civil service construct, modelling organisations on state's priorities rather than third sector needs. This model drew these organisations into state fields of power.

Through this research it is clear that there are high degrees of risk for third sector intermediary organisations participating in local governance networks. The TSI model defined the purpose of organisations, bringing them into closer proximity with the state. Their purpose was compromised by the imposition of the civil servant construct and redefined the role of the intermediary body for the state's purposes, undermining the actual purpose of intermediary bodies as a voice for the sector.

Throughout my findings the idea of the third sector participating in society on its own terms emerged as a strong theme; some third sector participants expressed an explicit resistance to being 'managed' by the state. These comments typically arose in response to a question regarding the TSI model. The critique was not just about the actual model, but *the idea of a model* that was applied in exactly the same way across all 32 local authorities. An alternative approach was suggested by many in the field; that is, that third sector organisations be left alone to develop their models of working from the bottom up, using organic approaches. Rather than the state imposing a model of delivery, it was argued that the state should contract for the services it requires but leave the sector to organise itself and to respond with its own models. Warnings were also raised about the risks associated with the state taking organic third sector models and implementing them across the country. In the words of the director of a national third sector development organisation: "*the minute the state begins to do that you lose the qualities that make it work... the danger is you kill everything that's good*" (N8). Put another way, the state risks killing the golden goose. The next section reflects on issues of representation.

10.2.3   Facilitating voice

As reflected throughout this thesis, the role of third sector intermediary bodies in representing the third sector is fraught. Intermediary bodies are caught in between,

navigating a liminal space between the third sector and state. It is impossible to represent the entire diversity of the sector, and state requirements to do so can undermine the relationship between intermediary bodies and the third sector they try to represent. The involvement in local governance networks has opened the door to the state and invited intermediary bodies in, but as a consequence has created a barrier to their relationships with the third sector. The need for a clear advocacy role for intermediary bodies is a key finding to emerge from my research. A more activist interface role would make clearer the relationship between the sector and the state, and has the potential of increasing the legitimacy of the intermediary body with the broader third sector that it represents. Improved communication with the wider third sector would equally increase the TSI's awareness of the challenges experienced on the front lines, strengthening its role in conveying these issues to the state.

There is, in addition, much scope for intermediary bodies to reflect on how they engage the third sector in participatory mechanisms, both to inform how intermediary bodies represent the sector, but also to involve third sector organisations directly in representation. In other words, there is strong potential for intermediary bodies to focus more on *facilitating* voice than directly *representing* voice. This was a theme that emerged strongly from my study; participants used terms such as "broker", "enabler", and "facilitator" to describe the potential role of intermediary bodies. In East Lothian, the TSI transformed its role from a direct representative to a facilitator of the sector's voices. As previously noted, I was directly involved in this work which, while not the focus of my case study, has direct relevance. In the final report on this work, we concluded that better democratic representation:

> … increases [the TSI's] legitimacy and scope for influence. It is harder for other local actors and institutions to disregard a TSI that can demonstrate strong democratic credentials. Stronger third sector representation can, in turn, help to improve local governance and outcomes for the communities it serves (Cullingworth and Escobar, 2019, p.24).

In addition to strategies to strengthen the involvement of third sector organisations in processes of representation, the use of countervailing power is another strategy that third sector organisations could employ. Fung and Wright (2003) describe countervailing power as "a variety of mechanisms that reduce, and perhaps even neutralise, the power advantages of ordinarily powerful actors" (p.260). They argue that without a form of countervailing power, collaborative governance is likely to fail as a truly democratic

forum. My study supports their argument; as examples from my research have shown, governance reflects the interests of the powerful. Fung and Wright (2003) identify three potential sources of countervailing power: adversarial organisations, political parties, and social movements. Of relevance to my case study is the potential of adversarial organisations and social movements. Third sector intermediary organisations are connected to and rooted in the broader third sector, and have the potential to mobilise the sector to take a stand against issues and to express adversarial, rather than consensual, voices to counter damaging state policies and strategies. In this way, there is potential for the broader third sector to be part of a social movement, creating a form of countervailing power in collaborative governance. The intermediary body itself can also exercise a form of countervailing power by walking away from the collaboration table, acting as an adversarial organisation.

Shared governance structures hold the potential for collaborative problem-solving that are not possible using traditional top-down methods; however, in line with Fung and Wright's (2003) argument, I would conclude that this can only be achieved through the use of countervailing collaborative power. Despite the image of countervailing power as a form of activist mobilisation, there is a place for it in collaborative environments. It holds the potential to contribute to an empowered participatory governance. The exercise of countervailing power requires a fundamental shift in how the sector participates in local governance. Rather than being a mediator participating in consensus-based governance and navigating a liminal space, the TSI would need to advocate for the wider third sector, participating instead in a space of agonistic pluralism. In this way, the sector could assert its independence and actively engage the voices of the broader third sector, and potentially the voices of communities. The following section on independence further develops the idea of intermediary bodies acting as advocates.

10.2.4 Asserting independence

The concept of independence is central to this thesis. As previously argued, it is understood that the third sector cannot be fully independent of the state; even organisations that do not accept funding from the state will be shaped by and accountable to the state through various forms of regulation, for example through charity law or health and safety regulation. Clearly, no organisation can exist in isolation from the state. However, the argument that there can only be interdependence between the sector and the state contains risk; the state and the sector are not, and never will be, equal partners. The financial

dependence on the state as the primary underwriter of the sector means that it cannot be a partnership of equals. Nonetheless, recognising this inequality does not mean accepting that there cannot be independence in the way that the third sector operates. In order for the sector to function as a vibrant part of civil society, it needs to be rooted in the third sector that gave rise to it. This does not mean that the sector cannot partner with government, far from it. As my research illustrates, it has an important role to play in bringing forward the voices of the third sector and facilitating links to communities, but in order to do this effectively interface organisations need to be able to play a role as *advocates* rather than as *mediators* between the sector and the state.

The *Baring Barometer* makes the case that the sector needs to assert its independence. Independence cannot be something that is conferred by the state; it is something that must be claimed by the sector. However, as my findings illustrate, state agencies and actors can make this more difficult. The first *Compact* that emerged in the New Labour administration explicitly recognised and applauded the independence of the sector; the government undertook to: "recognise and support the independence of the sector, including its right within the law, to campaign, to comment on Government policy, and to challenge that policy, irrespective of any funding relationship that might exist, and to determine and manage its own affairs" (Commission for the Compact, 1998, para. 9.1). While the statement sounds incontrovertible, its implementation has, as subsequent research demonstrates, been much more difficult. The development and implementation of the TSI model in Scotland, as my findings show, is an example of a government approach that undermined the independence of many local intermediary bodies; however, from the perspective of the Scottish Government it is unlikely that it viewed its actions in this way. As statements from my study illustrate, it is doubtful that it set out to undermine the independence of parts of the sector; rather, it set out to meet the goals of the state in a way that was efficient, but one that had significant consequences for the sector.

The other significant consideration is the impact of invisible power on managing the conduct of those within the third sector. It is not necessary for the state to threaten the third sector in a show of visible power; rather, when the third sector decides not to speak out for fear of losing funding, it is silencing itself, and by silencing itself it abandons its role as a watchdog for civil society. There have been diverging to views from within the third sector about compacts and the role they play in managing conduct. Kendall (2000) describes them as an "unparalleled step in the positioning of the third sector in public policy" (p.542). In contrast Halfpenny and Reid (2005) characterise compacts as having

the potential to "erode the voluntary sector's independence which is vital to political liberty" (p.542), and Morrison (2000, pp.129-130) describes compacts as a form of governmentality drawing on a Foucauldian analysis:

> What may be presented as increasing autonomy, a chance to govern oneself, is in fact a reconfiguration of rationalities so that the self-interest of (parts of) the sector aligns with the interests of a state seeking to mobilise a reserve army of support effectively and on its own terms.

Governmentality is insidious in embedding invisible norms and expectations that have constraining consequences. It is vital that the third sector asserts its independence. For intermediary bodies this necessitates a change in their role from being mediators between the sector and the state (as many examples in my study illustrated), to being advocates for the sector. Rather than being intermediary bodies, they should more appropriately be considered advocacy bodies, with a mission to represent the sector and the sector's interests. This would reflect a more traditional union approach to relations with the state and would better serve the interests of both the sector and state.

An advocacy body would have greater legitimacy in the sector, assuming of course it was accompanied by the appropriate participatory mechanisms and a responsive leadership to speak for its constituents. The state would also be better served as it would have a strong civil society voice as a partner in both service delivery and governance, gaining a much clearer perspective about the hardships and experiences from the coalface and the impacts of government policy. Rather than navigating a liminal space, the third sector would occupy a clearer advocacy space in governance. Governance spaces would better serve society if they embraced agonistic pluralism (Mouffe, 2005a), ensuring differences and conflicts could be expressed and valued. In other words, governance spaces would move away from the managed talk of polite consensus that characterised the discourse observed in my study, to allow for more honest debate and consideration. Mouffe states:

> What is at stake in the agonistic struggle is the very configuration of power relations around which a given society is structured: it is a struggle between opposing hegemonic projects which can never be reconciled rationally. The antagonistic dimension is always present, it is a real confrontation but one which is played out under conditions regulated by a set of democratic procedures accepted by the adversaries (Mouffe, 2005a, p.21).

Mouffe's contention is that dissension is inevitable; rather than trying to eliminate it, it needs to be acknowledged and built into the norms of debate where people are seen not as

enemies but *adversaries* with different views and interests. My findings show that third sector participants believed this shift in power and discourse was urgently needed, leading me to the conclusion that the third sector needs to rethink how it engages with the state and to, in Bunyan's words, "develop the legitimacy and power to engage politically within the context of a contested public sphere" (2015, p.363). Rhodes (1996), one of the seminal thinkers in governance, suggested that governance could "blur, even dissolve, the distinction between state and civil society" (p.654), concurring with some of my findings regarding the TSIP. Similarly, Brandsen and Pestoff (2006) argue that "the traditional boundaries between market, state and third sector have been breaking down, leading to the emergence of a class of organizational hybrids" (p.494). However, I contend that in order to safeguard a healthy democracy, a clear demarcation between the state and civil society voices is essential and must be actively maintained. In order to maintain a clear demarcation, the third sector must assert its independence.

The concept of countervailing power identified in the previous section is directly relevant to the argument that the third sector assert its independence. As argued, an intermediary body can be a form of countervailing power in governance networks, both by walking away from the collaborative table and in mobilising the sector to take a stand against harmful state policies. Through the concept of countervailing power, the interconnectedness of the issues of representation and independence is highlighted.

10.2.5   Implications of an agonistic approach

The recommendation that local governance networks adopt agonistic pluralism would change the dynamics for all stakeholders. The critique of the consensus-based discourse applies to all partners not just to those representing civil society, although arguably there is a greater responsibility for civil society organisations to speak out on behalf of their constituents. An environment in which agonistic pluralism is embraced does not preclude constructive or collaborative working; rather, the employment of agonistic types of intervention, as required, would be seen as normal alongside other more collaborative approaches. Agonistic types of behaviour would include more challenging discussion and debate; third sector organisations would advocate more fiercely for their communities. Rather than the assumption being that all partners work towards consensus, there would be an assumption that opposing opinions exist and official records would acknowledge such dissent. In an environment of agonistic pluralism, third sector representatives would be viewed as representing their constituents, rather than representing the local governance

network. Their allegiance would remain with their constituents rather than with the partners of the network. In this environment there would potentially be situations in which third sector partners would walk away from the table, an action of countervailing power (Fung and Wright, 2003). In this context third sector organisations might consider, through their involvement with the broader sector, engaging in more direct campaigning tactics. This could include protests, the organising of social media campaigns, boycotts, or the withdrawal of services.

The acceptance of agonism in governance networks would not necessarily require a change to the existing structures, but would necessitate a significant change to the norms of partnership working. Barnes et al. define norms as the "informal expression of 'appropriate' behaviour" (2004, p.64). As has been demonstrated through this research study and from the literature, appropriate behaviour in governance networks is professional, constructive and characterised by consensus. In an agonistic environment, partners would accept the role of conflict as a healthy part of the process. In reflecting on the history of the TSIs, it is interesting to consider what the response of the sector might have been to the imposition of the TSI model had there been a stronger embracing of agonism. Is it possible that the sector would have resisted the civil servant construct, insisting on a model that was reflective of the sector's needs?

10.3 Areas for future research

The undertaking of research inevitably results in the identification of further areas of exploration, and my study is no exception. Future research is needed to explore the approaches of TSIs and other intermediary bodies in and beyond Scotland, and to understand how they navigate their relationships with both the sector and the state. The TSIP studied was considered a good example of third sector involvement in community planning; it would therefore be interesting to undertake research in a context that did not have a good reputation to see what impact this had on relationships. Much could be learned from understanding the work of intermediary bodies in different geographical contexts, particularly in more rural communities. There is also potential is examining the mechanisms that are used by intermediary bodies in their relationships with both the sector and the state. The recommendations from my study also highlight areas for future research, for example, investigating the potential for intermediary bodies to play the role of advocates rather than mediators. It would also be informative to research existing or

potential efforts for genuine partnership between the state and civil society to co-create mechanisms of democratic governance.

10.4 Contribution to knowledge

This thesis has made a contribution to the literature, to policy and practice, and to theory. Each of these is considered in turn.

10.4.1 Literature

This thesis contributes to the literature on the third sector, civil society, public administration, and democratic governance. It provides a detailed analysis of the participation of an intermediary body in state-initiated local governance. The empirical literature related to the third sector's role in governance networks is scant, particularly in relation to the specific issues of the third sector's independence and its representation role. Many of the related empirical studies are now dated and focus on England, where the role of intermediary organisations has now shifted considerably away from involvement in governance networks. This thesis contributes to this gap. In particular, it makes an important contribution to our understanding about the particular model in Scotland, the third sector interface. This research findings have implications for all third sector intermediary bodies and help to develop the limited literature on the impact of third sector participation in governance networks.

10.4.2 Policy and practice

The contribution to policy and practice is detailed in section 10.2. In summary, I have concluded that the state needs to work in genuine collaboration with non-state actors to co-create mechanisms that would facilitate the bottom-up participation of civil society with state actors in addressing society's wicked problems. Equally, third sector organisations need to reassert their voices in promoting independent views. Essential to the third sector's participation is its role as an advocate of the sector, rather than a mediator between the sector and state. A clear advocacy role for intermediary bodies will strengthen their legitimacy and ability to represent the broader third sector.

10.4.3 Theory

The conceptual framework used in this thesis makes a theoretical contribution on a number of levels. The bringing together of theories of reflexive modernity, public administration, and democratic governance creates a unique framing through which to understand the relationship between the third sector and state. This approach has enabled me to provide an analysis that is historically and politically contextualised. The use of liminality as a framing of an intermediary body's relationship with the third sector and the state is also a contribution. Similarly, bringing together the concepts of space, power, and liminality provides for a rich analytical toolkit.

I have built on Cornwall (2004 a, b) and Gaventa's (2004, 2006) conceptualisation of spaces. They frame invited spaces as ones that the public or civil society are invited to participate in by authorities. I have argued that in the context of the TSIs, invited spaces are actually *compelled* spaces as the TSI cannot refuse the 'invitation'. Reframing the language more clearly attends to the issues of power that are at play between the state and the TSI. I have similarly reframed the language used by VeneKlasen and Miller (2002), who describe invisible power as shaping meaning particularly at the individual level. In addition to using the term invisible, I have also the term *insidious* to capture the more sinister impact of this type of power.

10.5 Reflection on the research study

At this juncture it is important to reflect on the research study to consider its strengths and limitations. One of its strengths is the in-depth knowledge that was gained about one specific area; detailed interactions would have been missed if additional areas had been studied. Comparison across urban and rural areas may have made it hard to interpret emerging patterns because of dissimilarities of context. However, the fact that the research focuses on only one case study could be considered both a limitation and a weakness. While the study was in-depth, it did not benefit from a comparison with other jurisdictions that would have potentially provided different perspectives and insights.

The particular TSIP studied had a strong reputation and was seen as a successful example of third sector engagement in community planning. Anecdotally I heard of other TSIs across Scotland, where the third sector's involvement was marginal, a pattern that is evidenced in the literature (Sinclair, 2008; VAS, 2013, 2015). The research findings are limited to this one particular case study and therefore cannot reveal how a less successful

example of third sector participation in governance networks would impact on the sector-state relationships.

The case study organisation chosen was the TSI partner organisation that held responsibility for community planning and capacity building, rather than an organisation that performed all the TSI functions. I interviewed the TSI partner that held responsibility for volunteer development, but I did not interview the organisation responsible for social enterprise. I judged that, given this organisation's lack of involvement in community planning, this was not necessary. This could be considered a weakness as I did not have data from all the TSI partner organisations.

My own positionality might also be considered to be a weakness; I come from a third sector background and made my history and my interest explicit through the research. My own perspective and experience have undoubtedly shaped, and been shaped by, this research study. I came into the study with a concern about the third sector's independence, and a history of feeling compromised in navigating the third sector's relationship with the state. However, rather than viewing my positionality as a weakness, I regard it as a strength. Interpretive research assumes, expects, and embraces the role of the researcher. The researcher's perspective always shapes interpretation, regardless of whether this is explicit.

10.6 Conclusion

Governments value and promote third sector independence. A strong relationship with the third sector facilitates the state's access into third sector organisations and community associations; it enables important third sector input into the policy process; and provides diverse service delivery options (usually more economically). However, the very characteristics that make the sector appealing to the state have the potential to be undermined by the state's active reshaping of some third sector organisations and the embedded power, norms and practices that are expected in working with state agencies in governance networks. Hence, there are risks not only to the third sector and civil society, but also to the state.

This research has presented research on the Scottish experience of bringing the third sector into local governance through the creation of third sector interfaces. The interventionist "civil servant construct" has fundamentally reshaped the local third sector architecture,

creating organisations that mirror the state. While the goal of the state may have been to bring the third sector *into* governance arrangements, the development of the TSIs may have achieved the governance *of* some local third sector intermediary bodies by the state.

The strength of the sector is that its roots are in civil society; it is not a creation of the state. The danger of an interventionist state is that the third sector becomes beholden to the state rather than beholden to its community. This process has been characterised as the manufacturing of civil society (Brandsen et al., 2015; Hodgson, 2004). This process, visible from my findings in the Scottish context, demonstrates that this manufacturing model continues with little of the post-politics critique of governance networks reaching or widely informing third sector policy, research and practice. To strengthen democracy and to ensure the full participation of civil society in state-initiated governance networks, a new approach is needed. Mechanisms need to be co-created in partnership between the state and non-state actors; the sector needs to act as an advocate for the sector and assert its independence; and, collaborative spaces need to embrace agonistic pluralism.

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Appendices

1. Plain language statement

2. Consent form

3. Example of national level interview guide

4. Example of local level interview guide – third sector organisation

5. Example of local level interview guide – TSIP

6. Observation guide

University of Glasgow

College of Social Sciences

1. Plain language statement

Study title and Researcher Details

Title – Scotland's Third sector interfaces: A Voice for the People?

Researcher - Jane Cullingworth (*email*: j.cullingworth.1@research.gla.ac.uk)

Supervisors - Professor Ken Gibb (*email*: Ken.gibb@glasgow.ac.uk   *phone*: 0141 330 6891) and Professor Nicholas Watson (*email:* Nicholas.watson@glasgow.ac.uk *phone:* 0141 330 3916)

Researcher statement

I am a PhD student in Urban Studies, part of the School of Social and Political Sciences. I am interested in the relationship between Third sector interfaces (TSIs) and the state. My interest grows out of my years of experience in the third sector.

Introduction

Before you decide to be involved, it is important that you understand why the research is being done and what is being asked of you. The purpose of this document is to provide you with information to help you make your decision about participating. Please ask if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information.

What is the purpose of the study?

This study is looking into the work of the Third sector interfaces (TSIs) in Scotland. There is a TSI in each local authority area. TSIs are funded by government to support third sector organisations, to promote volunteerism, to support social enterprise, and to engage in community planning. This study is looking at the work TSIs do in community planning. In particular the study is looking at how the TSIs represent the third sector in community planning.

Why have I been chosen?

You have been chosen because of the experience you have working either in or with TSIs, or in the broad policy field of which TSIs are a part. You are somebody who has important lived experience that research can learn from.

Do I have to take part?

No! It is completely up to you whether or not you take part. If you decide to take part you are still free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason.

What will happen to me if I take part?

I will get in touch with you to arrange a time to meet for an interview. It would be ideal to have an hour for the interview, but the length is up to you. We will figure out a place to meet that works for both of us. If you are comfortable with it, I will audio-tape the interview.

Will my taking part in this study be kept confidential?

Yes. All information which is collected about you during the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential. You will be identified by an ID number and any information about you will have your name removed so that you cannot be recognised from it.

Please note that assurances on confidentiality will be strictly adhered to unless evidence of wrongdoing or potential harm is uncovered. In such cases the University may be obliged to contact relevant statutory bodies/agencies. As the researcher, I will take great care that notes I take are not able to be seen by other people.

What will happen to the results of the research study?

I will be writing up the results of the research into a PhD thesis. I will produce other publications from the thesis, such as journal articles; I will also present my findings in different forums, such as conferences. In keeping with the University of Glasgow's practice, the data collected in the research will be destroyed ten years after the research process is completed.

Who is organising and funding the research?

I have a scholarship through a project called What Works Scotland (WWS). WWS is a research programme supporting public services in Scotland to work with evidence, focus on outcomes, experiment with collaborative public service reform and support authentic community engagement.

To learn more about WWS go to http://whatworksscotland.ac.uk/.

Who has reviewed the study?

This study has been reviewed by the Ethics Committee for the College of Social Sciences.

Contact for Further Information

If you have any concerns regarding the conduct of this research project, you can contact the College of Social Sciences Ethics Officer:

Dr Muir Houston (*email*: Muir.Houston@glasgow.ac.uk)

You can also contact either of my supervisors:

Professor Ken Gibb (*email*: ken.gibb@glasgow.ac.uk   *phone*: 0141 330 6891) or

Professor Nicholas Watson (*email:* Nicholas.watson@glasgow.ac.uk   *phone:* 0141 330 3916)

Thank you.

University of Glasgow

College of Social Sciences

2. Consent Form

Title of Project: Scotland's Third sector interfaces: A Voice for the People?

Name of Researcher: Jane Cullingworth

Consent statement

I confirm that I have read and understood the Plain Language Statement for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason.

Consent to participate

I agree to participate in this research study   ☐

Consent on audio-recording

I consent to interviews being audio-recorded   ☐

Anonymity

I understand that I may be referred to by a pseudonym

Consent for quotations

I agree that things I say can be quoted; I understand that a pseudonym will be used   ☐

Signatures

Name of Participant ...……………………………………………….………

Signature ....………………………………………………..……………..

Date ……………………………………………………………………

Name of Researcher   Jane Cullingworth

Signature ..………………………………………………..……………..

Date ……………………………………………………………………

3. Example of national level interview guide

Important to me that you feel free to speak openly
   Confidentiality
   - No one else sees transcript
   - May be professionally transcribed
   - Password protected
   - Interview deleted from my phone

   Anonymity
   - No names used
   - Pseudonyms used

Questions for xxxxxxxxxx – October 21, 2016
   - Can you describe your experience with TSIs?
   - What do you think of the TSI model?
     - Bringing together volunteerism, capacity building, social enterprise, representation
   - How do you make sense of Scottish Government's commitment to local empowerment with actions such as the creation of the TSIs?

Key issues – *representation* and *independence*; increasing significance given rise in governance networks and participatory planning and will continue with the *Community Empowerment Act*
   - Do you have any comments on how the TSIs represent the third sector in community planning?
     - What mechanisms are used?
     - How does it represent such a wide range of interests?
     - Any confusion between the third sector and the community?
     - Are there models of good practice?
   - Do you have any comments on how the TSIs maintain their independence, particularly as advocates, in their relationships with community planning?
     - Is the TSI's independence an issue?
   - Is the question of independence one that your organisation grapples? If so, how does this play out?
   - Are there any consequences to the sector in having organisational models, like the TSI model, determined by the state?
   - Do you have any comment on community planning and its effectiveness?
     - Anything about the TSI role in particular?
     - What do you think the future holds with the *Community Empowerment Act*?
   - The Scottish Government has been committed to creating mechanisms to engage communities.
     - Do you see any risks?
     - Does this make community an insider?

Wrap-up

- Do you have any recommendations of particular TSIs that would be interesting for a case study?
- What criteria would you be using to select case study areas?
- Is there anyone or any other organisations you would recommend I speak with?
- Can I come back to you if I have questions?
- Are you interested in receiving a summary of my findings?

4. Example of local level interview guide – third sector organisation

Questions for xxxxxxxx, July 6, 2017
- How does your organisation engage with the state – local and national? How would you characterise this relationship?
- Public Social Partnership – can you talk about your experiences?
  - Purpose?
  - What are the key issues in how PSPs are unfolding in Wychwood?
  - What would be needed to make it work better?
  - NHS the lead – but what impact has it had on relationship with the council?
- The compact group talks about third sector/statutory partners as working in equal respect
  - Do you think there is equal respect?
  - How can there be more respect?
  - How does change happen – change in structures? Processes? Something else?
  - Has relationship got better, worse, or stayed same over past few years?

Key issues – *representation* and *independence*; increasing significance given rise in governance networks and participatory planning and will continue with the *Community Empowerment Act*
- Is the question of independence one that your organisation grapples? If so, how does this play out?

- Do you have any comments on how the TSIP represents the third sector in the PSP, or in broader issues of representation?
  - How does it represent such a wide range of interests?
  - Is there any confusion between the third sector and the community?
  - Is there any impact on organisations in having the TSIP represent them (does it impact on how outspoken they are)?
- Do you have any comments on how the TSIP maintains its independence in its relationships with community planning?
  - Is the TSIP's independence an issue?
  - Are there any risks to the ability of the TSIP to maintain "independence of voice"?
- One of the themes emerging is of the TSI's role – of being in-between the third sector and the state rather than of the third sector
  - TSIs/intermediary bodies have to navigate a difficult tightrope
  - Any comments on this?
- Another theme is about the consensus-based nature of partnerships depoliticising the voice of the sector
  - Any comments on this?

- What do you think of the TSI model?
  - Bringing together volunteerism, capacity building, social enterprise, representation

WRAP UP
- Is there anyone or any other organisations you'd recommend I speak with?

- Can I come back to you if I have questions?
- Are you interested in receiving a summary of my findings?

5. Example of local level interview guide – TSIP

Questions for xxxxxxx, May 19, 2017

- Reflect back on themes arising from the field
- Community planning
    - What difference does it make?
    - What ownership do people feel about the Partnership Board?
    - Can anyone influence the agenda?
    - What is the balance at the Partnership Board between officer led vs councillor led?
    - What about the argument that there should be more community in community planning?
- Third sector strategic group
    - Can anyone put agenda items forward?
    - Do they feel ownership?
    - Is it a co-chair model?
- What do you think the change in administration in Wychwood is going to mean for community planning?
    - What about locality planning? What is officer driven versus councillor driven?
    - What is the future of neighbourhood partnerships?
    - How will this affect role of local sector forums?
- One of the themes is structure versus process
    - Community planning is now *a way of doing things*
    - But what has made this happen – legislation? Structure? Relationships? Something else?
    - How does culture change – by changing structures? Relationships? Something else?

- Another theme is about the consensus-based nature of partnerships depoliticising the voice of the sector
    - Any comments on this?

Key issues – *representation* and *independence*; increasing significance given rise in governance networks and participatory planning and will continue with the *Community Empowerment Act*

- Is the question of independence one that your organisation grapples? If so, how does this play out?
- How do you "represent" the third sector in community planning or in broader issues of representation?
    - How does you represent such a wide range of interests?
    - Any confusion between the third sector and the community?

    - Is there any impact on organisations in having the TSIP represent them (does it impact on how outspoken they are)?

- What do you think of the TSI model?
    - Bringing together volunteerism, capacity building, social enterprise, representation

6. Observation guide

Observation
Description
Date

Environment	Observations
Space	
Culture	
People	
Demographics	
Agenda setting	
How is the agenda set?	
Can anyone contribute to the agenda?	
Decision making	
How are decisions made?	
Who makes recommendations for decisions?	
Does everybody contribute?	
Are some people listened to more than others?	
Leadership	
Who is formal leadership invested in?	
Are other people leaders? If so, based on what behaviours?	
Power	
How is power operationalised through behaviour?	
How do TSI representatives demonstrate power?	
Do some community planning partners contribute less? If so, who?	
Are there issues that aren't being discussed?	
Relationships	
How do partners interact with one another?	
Do people challenge one another?	
Information	
Compact group	
Partnership board	
Council	
Sector wide strategic group	
Local sector forums	
Thematic sector forums	
Other	

Environment	Observations
Independence	
Did this come up as a theme?	
Representation	
Did this come up as theme?	
Key issues	
Role of TSIP	
Role of third sector	
Liminality	
Community planning	
Individuals	
Role of council staff versus non-state actors	
Other	
Quotes	
My reflections	
What does this meeting say about community planning?	
What does this meeting say about partnership working?	
What does this meeting say about third sector relationship with state?	
Comments	
Consent	
Questions	
Follow up	