

**“AN EVALUATION OF THE IMPACT ON
SOCIAL CAPITAL OF COMMUNITY
PARTICIPATION IN PLANNING”**

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Abstract

Participation of affected communities in the planning process is mandatory under Australian law. Research suggests that this is often problematic; stakeholder objectives diverge and conflict and there is little to suggest non-powerful participants benefit from their involvement. Participatory practice is frequently characterised by dissatisfaction, mistrust and perceptions of placation – and research reveals this has been the case since such policies were adopted. The continued implementation of engagement without evidence of its benefits thus presents an issue for social and spatial justice. This is especially urgent in light of proposals that it has an important strategic role to play in mitigating negative effects on communities of increasing urbanisation and population growth, and built environment impacts of climate change. To justify participatory approaches to planning, therefore, it must be demonstrated that they contribute benefits to non-powerful participants, irrespective of the extent to which interventions are subject to conflict and other issues. This thesis proposes that social capital, with its connection to both idealistic and pragmatic objectives of engagement, be presented as that benefit, and seeks to investigate the mechanisms by which participation in planning contributes to its development. I am interested in determining whether advantages accrue to communities too, even under politically complex or conflicted circumstances, by asking, ‘How does participation in planning interventions contribute to the development of social capital?’.

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List of Abbreviations

BCC – Brisbane City Council

BRU – Brisbane Residents United

CA – Create Annerley

CPT – Community Planning Team

CRP – Community Renewal Program

CS – CityShape 2026

ISC – Indicators of Social Capital

KF – Kurilpa Futures

NP – Neighbourhood Plan

NPM – New Public Management

PYB – Plan Your Brisbane

PSC – Psychological Sense of Community

SCI – Social Capital Index

SEQ – South-East Queensland

SIP – Service Integration Project

SSEQ – Shaping South-East Queensland

WECA – West End Community Association

Statement of Original Authorship

The work contained in this thesis has not been previously submitted to meet requirements for an award at this or any other higher education institution. To the best of my knowledge and belief, the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made.

Signature: _____
QUT Verified Signature

Date: _____ 23/03/2021 _____

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The time has come.

Chapter 1: Introduction

In Australia, the democratic right for people affected by planning decisions to participate in their formulation is reflected in policy and practice at state and local levels of government (Cosby and Howard 2019). Community participation in planning is seen as fundamental to democracy (Holmes 2011; Ruming 2019), and an ethical approach to governance (Cuthill 2003). Theorists and practitioners promote engagement as improving levels of trust, capacity and understanding (Brisbane City Council 2019; Cox 2001; Cuthill 2003; Cuthill and Fien 2005; Gaventa 2001; Great Britain 1969; Holmes 2011) – of resident needs and bureaucratic process alike – and a more responsive, representative planning system (Arnstein 1969; Carra et al 2018; Fainstein 2014; Gaventa 2001; Storey et al 2010). Such objectives continue to be advanced in the absence of empirical evidence (Redell and Woolcock 2004; Rowe and Frewer 2000; Ruming 2019), or where technical and political limitations of government prevent their delivery (Cuthill 2003; Healey 1992). Despite a half-century’s practice and a prolific amount of empirical and theoretical research, (Day 1997, p421), participation’s promise remains unfulfilled.

Social capital shares this sense of frustrated potential. As well as incorporating many of engagement’s proposed benefits (Brisbane City Council 2010; Cameron and Grant-Smith 2005; Cox 2000; Crawford et al 2008; Cuthill 2003; Cuthill and Fien 2004), social capital has much in common with participatory process: both concepts gained traction as post-war community development tools, and can be utilised across a range of disciplines and scales (Woolcock 2010). Precise definitions are hard to pin down (Onyx and Bullen 2000; Poortinga 2006, Shapely 2014), but align with notions including sense of community and the greater good, and have a broad, “intuitive” appeal (Cuthill 2003; Woolcock 2010). Both ideas are seen as being able to leverage

hazy definitions to connect people and organisations (Baum et al 2000; Baum and Palmer 2002; Cox 2000; Cuthill 2003; Paranagamage et al 2010), start useful conversations, and provide a meaningful shared objective for a range of human-focused professions, from health workers to economists (Woolcock 2010). In light of this context – and a dearth of unequivocal evidence supporting positive outcomes for non-powerful stakeholders – a further investigation of the relationship between participatory planning and social capital is warranted. This thesis aims, therefore, to determine whether social capital benefits accrue to non-powerful people participants of planning interventions, even under common problematic – conflicted, placatory, unrepresentative – circumstances.

To provide the context for enquiry, the first section of this chapter explores the history of participation and its role in the modern planning project (section 1.1), followed by a local history of engagement (section 1.2) The project’s purposes are described in section 1.3, followed by significance and scope of the research, including definitions of key concepts and variables in Section 1.4. The introduction concludes with an outline of the remaining thesis chapters in section 1.5.

1.1 Background

The ‘modern planning project’ formed in response to the unprecedented urban expansion and squalor of the Industrial Revolution (Ward 2013). Eighteenth century London’s “sloppy street life” (Glaeser 2018) was tolerated by the workers who lived in disease-ridden tenements near factories where they were employed, but eventually catalysed development of a system-level planning solution, when the City of London established the Metropolitan Board of Works to provide infrastructure, including extensive sewerage networks, to mitigate negative impacts of the city’s exponential growth. The move also usefully dealt with London’s cholera outbreaks, establishing

planning as an urban problem-solver, that would provide “the solution that would best further the common good” (Thorpe 2017, p569).

Planning’s functional priorities soon shifted from land use and infrastructure to incorporate social welfare (Ward 2013 p38), establishing planning as a utopian project to improve the amenity and efficiency of modern cities (Thorpe 2017), and promote social justice and environmental sustainability (Healey 1992, Thorpe 2017). Although “there is nothing inherent in the discipline that steers planners either toward environmental protection, economic development or social equity” (Campbell 1996, p293), the idealistic perception that the ills of the urbanised world “can be addressed through processes and plans” (Shevellar et al 2015, p267), persists nonetheless (Campbell 1996; Thorpe 2017).

The modern, morally agreeable cities (Fainstein 2010; Cuthill 2003) shaped by planning assumed their form without recourse to public input – apart from the occasional bribe to solve a land-use quibble (Thorpe 2017). Instead of asking residents what they wanted, the benign, omniscient scientist-planner assumed, and worked towards, a unified public good (Lane 2005, p9; Fainstein 2014). Planners shaped settlements that would “uplift the poor, eliminate the unsanitary, stimulate commerce, and bring order to the messiness of urban life” (Davidson 2020), and made decisions based on “theories, models and procedures of science and technology (Day 1997, p430). This socially objective, rational commitment to progress, underpinned by notions of the common interest, (Ward 2013; Fainstein 2014) constituted the moral basis of planning (Day 1997). Any semblance of access to power was obfuscated, ‘mystified’ by planning’s culture of technocratic professionalism (Shapely 2014).

The assumption of neutrality began to shift when, in the 1970s and 1980s, growing community opposition to urban redevelopment projects and government provision of modernist, systems-built social housing – built in pursuit of utopian goals – began to contribute to the “perception of planning as a dangerous top down activity (...) disconnected from people’s lived experience” (Ellis 2015, p437). Deep inequalities of access to decision-making processes and spatial justice, were identified (Arnstein, 1969; Davidoff 1965; Healey 1992; Lane 2006), and planning shifted “from a benign ... activity to control chaos and disorder, reduce poverty and improve health, to an exercise of power” (Shevellar et al 2015, p268). The ability of professionals to plan in the interests of local communities was challenged (Jacobs 1961; Thorpe 2017; Ward 2013), and planners were positioned as “state functionaries serving the interests of the government agencies who employed them” (Ward 2013, p48). A sense of “alienation between the authority and people” (Great Britain 1969, p3) meant that the value of professional planning expertise to contribute to the common good was no longer unquestioningly accepted.

Community participation in the planning process was proposed as a “palliative for the ills of the planning profession” (Broady 1969), to address the sense of alienation, the dissatisfaction, hurt and injustice caused by modern planning’s “lack of responsiveness and failures of empathy” (Fainstein 2014, p64; Great Britain 1969). A consultative approach to city-building would not only redress the fundamental subjectivity of planning (Thorpe 2017), but could be sensitive and responsive to citizens (Arnstein 1969; Davidoff 1965; Healey 1992) in a way the omniscient, rational planner could never be. Participation questioned and rejected, not only the capacity of experts to envisage and plan for a common good, but that good’s very existence (Healey 1992; Thorpe 2017).

1.2 Context

Participation in the spatial dimensions of public policy has a considerable, if inconsistent, history in Australia (Reddel and Woolcock 2004). Although the social upheavals that accompanied participation in 1970s Australia were more discreet than in those inviting revolution in the US, they involved significant governance reforms, including the adoption of ‘equal work, equal pay’ legislation, the dismantling of restrictions to immigration based on race (the White Australia policy), recognition of Aboriginal land rights, abolition of university fees, and the installation of progressive Labor leader Gough Whitlam as Prime Minister (Gleeson and Low 2000). The optimism of the era influenced planning too, as a community campaign led by residents (legendarily, housewives) working with the Builders Laborers Fund (BLF) successfully prevented the obliteration of green spaces in Sydney including the Royal Botanic Gardens. Meanwhile, in Melbourne, Ruth and Maurie Crow were fighting for citizen rights to shape city decision-making. Their activism, which included the establishment of the Town Planning Research Group, publication of a newsletter analysing planning and transport proposals for the city, and regular public seminars, arose in response to the Metropolitan Board of Works’ plans to re-shape the city “to accommodate Melbourne’s growing population and an increasing reliance on the private motor-car for transport” (Homewood in Dovey et al 2018, p51). Significant aspects of the Town Planning Research Group’s alternative proposals to state plans were eventually recognised and incorporated into Melbourne City Council’s Strategy Plan in 1985 (Homewood in Dovey et al (eds) 2018, p52), while Sydney’s ‘Green Bans’ campaign was instrumental in having formal community engagement mandated as part of 1979’s Environmental Planning and Assessment Act.

Things went a little differently in Queensland. At the same time as Sydney and Melbourne were exploring community activism and collaborative city-visioning, the Sunshine State was living under the “authoritarian and interventionist” government (Bongiorno 2015, p178), led by former peanut farmer, Premier Joh Bjelke-Petersen, whose pre-political achievements included advancing a method of land-clearing, dragging a chain between tractors, throughout the state. The maverick spirit (Steele and Dodson 2014) that had inspired machete-wielding settlers into native jungles to establish banana and tobacco farms, combined with an exploitative and extractive approach to commerce (Schultz 2008) to produce a “great flowering of developmentalism” (Katter 2014) in Queensland. A “laissez-faire” (Katter 2014) attitude to development, corruption and environmental regulation under Bjelke-Petersen enabled significant economic growth between 1968 and 1984 (Katter 2014; Steele and Dodson 2014). Much of this directly benefited Joh’s mates, the white-shoe-brigade (Stafford 2017), and came at the expense of environmental and public concerns; the autocrat premier defied public campaigns and protective legislation to have the much loved, heritage-listed Cloudland Dance Hall and the Bellevue Hotel demolished in the dead of night by bootleg contractors. Permits had not been granted for either demolition. Bjelke-Petersen also presided over a corrupt police force and network of businessmen and dealmakers and implemented strict, often violent, anti-protest laws. He declared that, under his government, ‘The day of the political street march is over’ (Smee 2019).

Despite an explicit disdain for democratic process, Bjelke-Petersen remains the longest-serving premier in Queensland. His legacy may be attributable to growing political polarisation in Australia’s most decentralised state. Only 75% of Queenslanders call cities with populations greater than 100,000 people home, while

the country as a whole is almost 90% urbanised. Urban centres broadly favour the more progressive Labor or Greens parties, while rural parts of the state tend to align with conservative values expressed by the Liberal National Party (LNP) coalition or populist minor parties. The state's "rapacious, development-at-any-cost ethos" (Steele and Dodson 2014, p142), so well established during the Bjelke-Petersen reign, continues to influence Sunshine State governments and policy, irrespective of ideology (Ruming and Gurrán 2014; Raynor et al 2015; Shevellar et al 2015; Steele and Dodson 2014); tension and politics continue to shape sanctioned and unsanctioned planning interventions in Queensland.

1.3 Purposes

The objective of this research is to explore circumstances under which benefits might accrue to non-powerful participants in planning interventions in the form of social capital. This will be determined according to an evaluation framework informed by the literature and a practice analysis of relevant case studies, cross-referenced against results from a survey administered to people who have been involved with participatory planning activities. Given the wide range of formats engagement can take (Aulich 2011; Holmes 2011; Thorpe 2017), the variable influence and objectives of stakeholders, applicable policy frameworks and tendency for participatory processes to involve conflicts of interest, the thesis will be structured to address the question, 'How does participation in planning interventions contribute to the development of social capital?'. Social capital has been chosen as the criterion for effectiveness because it relates directly and indirectly to the "furtherance of democracy" (Fainstein 2014, p64), participation was supposed to contribute. It fits the need for an updated moral basis for modern planning, and, like participation itself, is relevant to planning issues such as social and spatial inequality,

right to the city, representative decision-making and the role of the built environment in human flourishing (Reddel and Woolcock 2004; Paranagamage et al 2014). Further, the concept of social capital appears to be an unmixed blessing (Portes 2003) from the point of view of its bearers and of societies that contribute to its advance, resulting in positive social, economic and democratic outcomes which contribute to enhanced equity and community well-being (Cuthill 2003, p375), as well as beneficial outcomes including higher educational attainment, better health, lower levels of crime, more effective forms of government and economic prosperity (Harper 2001; Paranagamage et al 2010; Poortinga 2006).

Exploring the potential for local forms of engagement implemented in the context of Australia's political and economic systems to contribute to social capital's development, this thesis will thereby attempt to "reconcile the contradiction between the potential benefits increased citizen participation in local governance offers and the actual benefits it has provided" (Cuthill 2003, p378). It is proposed that this provide a measure of the broader effectiveness – and justification for the ongoing adoption – of participatory approaches to planning.

1.4 Significance, Scope, and Definitions

The social changes that catalysed participatory approaches to governance in the late 1960s was characterised by rejection of conservative, status quo authority, and an embrace of human and civil rights (Crawford et al 2008; Thorpe 2017). Today, in Queensland and the rest of Australia, threats to liveability and way of life (Kelly and Donegan 2015; McAuliffe and Rogers 2018; Thorpe 2017; Raynor et al 2015) are more likely to inspire engagement with governance. Such participation may also be inspired by another kind of rejection: the breakdown of trust in authority and institutions. Known as a 'democracy deficit' (Aulich 2011; Putnam 1996; Stoker et al

2018), the recognition that systems and values are failing to function properly was first identified in 1977 – around the same time participatory planning was advanced. A myriad of factors is seen to have contributed to the decline of the common good and social cohesion in Australia, including a lack of federal government response to climate change, uncritical and short-sighted neoliberal approaches to planning governance (Brownhill and Parker 2010; Fainstein 2014; Finn 2014; Harvey 2003; Schatz and Rogers 2016), and perceptions that access to power is subject to the influence of vested interests (Alexander and Gleeson 2019).

Despite a history and identity built on development, Brisbane, with an average population density of 155 people per square kilometre, is Australia's least-dense capital city. As is the case with Australia's two largest cities, Sydney and Melbourne, the vast majority of Queensland's 76,000 new residents annually settle in the outer 'burbs of the capital. In effect, this can mean anywhere along the South-Eastern conurbation, stretching from the Sunshine Coast in the north to the Gold Coast in the South (Kelly and Donegan 2014). Attempts to mitigate ever-expanding outskirt developments, or urban sprawl, the Queensland State Government has statutorily mandated for 94% infill or consolidation development along the SEQ strip (Queensland Government, 2017). To meet these requirements, residential suburbs with established transport infrastructure and services have been identified as having capacity to accommodate higher levels of density, facilitated by local government planning instruments and zoning. But such decisions come with "unnecessary political overlay" (McCosker 2017). Residents perceive that much contemporary Queensland planning is "skewed in favour of property interests rather than the common good of the community" (Healey 1998, p17), and that planning systems – and the governments that enact them – facilitate unsustainable development

(Shevellar et al 2015). The perception that vested interests are high-vis and wear hard hats contributes to the “generally unpopular local view of increased density” (Brown and Wei Chin 2013) – but this is at distinct odds with some developers’ views that planning instruments are an obstacle to efficient and economically viable city-building (Ruming and Gurran 2014).

Other than voting, participation in planning is one of few instances where communities are offered direct access to governance; policy is enacted in every other legislative sphere without referring to the preferences of the public. The situation has arisen because people feel intimately qualified to comment on the effects of planning because they establish the landscapes and soundtracks for our lives, whether it’s congested traffic, a lack of street parking, or a neighbour’s extension that overlooks the yard. We are invested, emotionally and economically, in planning decisions, because they impact on our daily lives, neighbourhoods, and our homes, so that the active, direct involvement of the non-expert population in built environment planning has almost become an expectation (Aulich 2011).

Seen as particularly urgent “in a period where people feel increasingly detached from traditional mechanisms of political and administrative organisation” (Holmes 2011, p8), a cooperative approach to planning could address the decline of trust and issues that have inspired it, leveraging the personal connection people have with their cities to help realise the “transformational potential” (Tattersall et al 2020) of communities and contribute to “a sense of a collective public realm” (Healey 2002) – if it worked the way it was supposed to. But the mechanisms by which non-powerful stakeholders might best leverage participation’s potential to meet the challenges of the future in a system defined by conflict (Legacy 2015; Thorpe 2017), are unclear.

Definitions of key concepts and variables:

- community – a group defined by some common element, once geo-spatial but with the advance of social media has expanded to include any group sharing a defining interest or demographic profile
- community engagement – is the broad term used in this thesis to refer to processes through which people influence and share control over initiatives, decisions and resources which affect them. May also be called public or civic engagement
- communicative planning – a form of participation focused on discussion or dialogue, that “facilitat[es] communicative interchanges between interested parties that fosters community empowerment and the development of discursive local democracy. Planning outcomes are not considered as important to the development of sense of identity and capacity as process. Also known as deliberative planning
- Community Planning Team – a self-nominated group selected by Council to represent the local community in a series of focused planning workshops as part of the Neighbourhood Plan consultation process
- consultation – included on the IAP2 Spectrum (2018) where its use is defined as “To obtain feedback on analysis, issues, alternatives and decisions” a form of participation that operates in the direction of stakeholders to engagement agency, usually responding to a specific plan or proposal. Arnstein positioned it at the superficial end of the spectrum (1969), but it is currently the most widely used form of participatory governance among Australian governments (Schatz and Rogers 2016, p43)

- densification – an increase in population density, seen by some Australian planners and academics as integral to a built environment that better supports active transit and increased opportunities for community interaction (the average density of Brisbane’s densest suburbs is around 6000 people per square kilometre – much higher than Greater Brisbane’s average of 140 people per km², but significantly lower than cities like Paris and Barcelona, where 200,000 people squeeze in to every km)
- engagement – separately, may include all forms of participation, even those at the less redistributive, actively involved end. Definition in the literature can vary depending on the organiser and objectives, but engagement can include informing, involving and collaborating with the community. This thesis uses ‘engagement’ and ‘participation’ interchangeably
- neoliberal – relating to or denoting a modified form of liberalism tending to favour free-market capitalism and minimal state intervention, epitomised by “the subjugation of the public to the private, the state to the market, the social to the economic” (Clarke 2019). Under this governing principle, “efficiency becomes the single criterion for evaluating public policy, and cost–benefit analysis becomes the tool for its realization” (Fainstein 2014, p6)
- Neighbourhood Plan – what Brisbane City Council calls its “most comprehensive” example of community engagement, a process of community consultation around an area “to manage change and accommodate growth and better protect valued environments at a local level” (BCC 2019). “Residents can shape neighbourhood plans by: participating in project engagement activities, responding to Council surveys, making a submission to Council on

draft documents, or nominating to be on the project community planning team (BCC 2019)

- participation – In the context of planning, the action of taking part in governance or decision-making, ideally developing an understanding of the situation before contributing opinions or ideas towards coming up with a solution
- participatory democracy – any of a range of activities that permits and encourages the involvement of “ordinary people” in making decisions that affect them. Although it may be used to include traditional representative democracy (Thorpe 2017), the term ‘participation’ in this thesis will refer to more direct, active or deliberative forms of involvement, “The public participation process, as the most visible mechanism for communication around planning issues, plays a central role in the emergence of participatory democracy in planning” (Brown and Wei Chin 2013)
- social capital – networks of relationships among people who live and work in a particular society, enabling that society to function effectively, and sometimes the benefits that accrue from these; features of social organisation ... which act as resources for individuals and facilitate collective action, seen to include concepts such as social networks, norms, trust and civic engagement
- town hall meeting – a traditional form of participation where members of a particular community, usually defined spatially, attending a public meeting to listen to and express opinions on locally relevant topics

1.5 Thesis Outline

The Literature Review that follows in Chapter 2 will explore the ‘essentially contested’ (Woolcock 2010) nature of participation through an analysis two of the texts that heralded its arrival. A review of the theoretical benefits of engagement in planning will follow, and then commonly identified obstacles to achieving these. The Literature Review concludes with the historical and political context for participation in Queensland and Australia. Chapter 3 describes the design of the study, including the proposed methodology for developing an evaluative framework from a thematic analysis of the literature, and how this will be applied to case studies of locally relevant examples of participation and responses to a survey of people who have taken part in these participatory interventions in the subsequent practice analysis. This chapter will also include details on instruments for gathering data, procedure and a review of ethics considerations and limitations. Chapter 4 describes the study results, including the evaluation framework derived from a thematic analysis and its rationale, summaries of relevant local case studies, and results of applying the evaluation framework to these, and to survey responses. Discussion of the results follows in Chapter 5, with thesis Conclusions drawn in Chapter 6.

Appendices, including raw data from the survey, engagement reports and minutes, are attached or included in the uploaded thesis folder.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This chapter will investigate the theories underpinning participatory forms of planning, and common issues with implementation, as expressed in the literature. Analysis of these will form the basis of a context-specific evaluation framework by which to assess local examples of participation to help determine whether all types of engagement increases social capital for participants. The first part of the chapter (section 2.1) will establish the historical background and conflicted foundations for community engagement in planning through a critical analysis of two of the topic's most influential publications, 'A Ladder of Participation' by Sherry Arnstein (1969), and the 'People and Planning' report by the Skeffington Committee (Great Britain 1969). The chapter also reviews literature on: the proposed benefits of engagement (section 2.2), issues perceived as contributing to the gaps between these theoretical drivers and outcomes on the ground; (section 2.3). The context for engagement in Queensland reviewed in the following section maps the trajectory for participatory planning from its idealistic cultural inception in the early 1970s through to present-day iterations, where participation is subject to accusations of post-political placation (Brownhill and Parker 2010; Gaventa 2001; McAuliffe and Rogers 2018; Schatz and Rogers 2016; Shevellar et al 2015 (section 2.4). This format will allow the literature review chapter to follow a rational course from a high-level theoretical perspective through to more pragmatic – but potentially, realistically problematic – practice-based analyses of the practice. Finally, section 2.5 will summarise the literature and highlight implications of the issues to establish a conceptual framework for the study, and to introduce the thesis rationale and methodology.

2.1 Historical Background: Contested beginnings

Two significant works on engagement, the Skeffington Committee's "People and Planning" report and Sherry Arnstein's "Ladder of Participation" were published in 1969. Both appeared to be advancing the same objectives: increased or improved involvement of communities in planning decisions that affected them. But a closer reading reveals conflicting agendas, with the different approaches taken by the authors – pragmatic paternalism on the one hand, disappointed critique on the other – foreshadowing participation's future complications.

The "People and Planning" Report was the result of 16 years' research by the Skeffington Committee's 26 members. Commissioned by the United Kingdom government, the committee investigated how the government might best respond to "recommended changes to the planning system to include much greater public participation" (Shapely, 2014, pi) that had been made in the Planning Advisory Group's 1965 publication, 'The Future of Development Plans'. Describing "the first concerted effort to encourage a systematic approach to resident participation in planning and the decision-making process" (Shapely 2014, pi), the final document was part of a wider trend to encourage more direct forms of participatory democracy (v), that would address the "systemic problems and the subsequent decline in public confidence" (Great Britain 1965) stemming from a highly bureaucratized and centralised system where plans could take 30 years to implement, and caused "years of misery" (Shapely 2014). The Skeffington Committee recommended that the community's opinions should be sought, to address this, that people should be 'able to say what kind of community they live in and how it should develop', and to do so in ways which 'influence the shape of our community'. The Skeffington Report thus set "a vital precedent" as "the moment when planning stopped being driven entirely

from above” and the state “accepted an obligation to include people in the decision-making process, to actually ask them for their opinions” (Shapely 2014 pv).

The Committee’s recommendations were far from radical, however. Although it acknowledged that policies imposed from above could lead to frustration (Great Britain 1969) the report maintained that “responsibility for development plans had to remain with the planning authority”. Under the Skeffington model, “participation was framed as a relatively narrow concept, as a means of smoothing the planning process, – not as a mechanism for changing the democratic process” (Shapely 2014, px). Values advanced in the report seemed to align with ideas of a Utopian, common good, with participation providing the “opportunity of serving the community and thereby becoming involved in its life, contributing to its well-being and enriching its relationships” (Great Britain 1969). Participation was proposed as an integral part of a communicative, educative process, so that the public, once they understood the technical justifications behind planners’ decision-making, would be more likely to accept it (Shapely 2014) – and communities more likely, thereby, to ‘reflect our best aspirations’ (Great Britain 1969, p3).

Recommendations in the Report were couched in highly pragmatic, bureaucratic language, stressing the need to accept that ‘change is inevitable’, and that ‘striving at all costs to preserve what now exists’ might be pointless’ (Great Britain 1969, p11). Practical economic restrictions were acknowledged, with the extra costs of participation administration “limiting in practice, what can be done’ (Great Britain 1969, p39). Despite its apparently moderate brief, political enthusiasm for the report was limited; following the publication of the Skeffington Report, MP Judith Hart was tasked with the job of promoting participation, and presented a Green Paper advocating the creation of neighbourhood councils which would fit into

municipal wards to the federal parliament. The idea – along with Hart – was summarily dismissed (Shapely 2014).

Around the same time the Skeffington Committee was composing its report, the US government had put in place legislation supporting ‘maximum feasible engagement’ of citizens affected by planning decisions. These policies were intended, perhaps, to ease the pain of the brutal impact of urban renewal, which evicted established communities from their brownstone residential blocks, razed the lot and replaced them with urban highways, or efficient apartment buildings on the outskirts of the city. Consultation and involvement of residents mandated under the new scheme was supposed to restore a sense of agency to people whose lives and communities had been destroyed. According to Department of Housing and Welfare worker Sherry R. Arnstein, ‘maximum feasible involvement’ was anything but.

In her eloquent, almost poetic critique, Arnstein took aim at how the policy was implemented, describing the engagement she observed as part of the Model Cities program as failing participants in almost every way. Like the renewal projects themselves, borne of “a mix of righteousness and prejudice” (Davidson 2020), the process completely failed to meet people’s needs. Participants were not provided with adequate resources, technical information, in training to take part in the process effectively or even guidelines on their rights – including to be reimbursed for the costs incurred by participation – or options available to them. Arnstein observed that innovative ideas were shut down with appeals to maintaining the bureaucratic status-quo, and her summary of the program was: “In general, little or no thought has been given to the means of insuring continued citizen participation during the stage of implementation”. Instead of people planning for themselves, as per the intention of the program, they were being planned for (Arnstein 1969, p221).

Arnstein's call to arms, and articulation of injustice, was borne of protest. Inspired by a growing awareness of civil rights issues (Thorpe 2017), "Ladder of Participation" identified the potential – the need – for participatory processes to advance social rights, and explicitly advocated for redistribution of power. The most trenchant criticism of the engagement Arnstein observed was that it failed to respond to existing power imbalances by devolving authority to those most severely impacted by planning decisions, "the have-not blacks, Mexican-Americans, Puerto-Ricans, Indians, Eskimos and whites" (Arnstein 1969, p216). Arnstein viewed this power redistribution as fundamental to participation's intent, something governments had failed in their obligation to implement, to redress "profound inequities and injustices" by enabling "the have-not citizens ... to be deliberately included in the future" (Arnstein 1969, p216).

Despite the enormous academic influence of "Ladder of Participation" (Slotterback and Lauria 2019), Arnstein's position is not always unquestioningly accepted. Her "conception of citizen control can either be held up as the ideal" for example, or "criticized as impractical in the context of local political decision making" (Slotterback and Lauria 2019, p183). Nevertheless, an assumption that power-holders must cede control to the community members and 'have-nots' in order to contribute benefits continues to inform much of the discourse around participation; divergence between approaches advocated by Arnstein and the Skeffington Report are symptomatic of planning's fundamentally conflicted relationship with power.

2.2 Topic 1: Theoretical Benefits of participation

While the definitions of citizen participation are many, the general consensus among researchers is that such participation should be sought. At the very least, its

effects are nominal, at best, participatory action helps empower citizens and create a more sensitive and inclusive planning end product.

Crawford et al 2008, p539

Inclusion in planning governance is thought to confer a range of advantages, especially to those who do not typically take part in political and economic process. This section of the Literature Review will seek to identify the most commonly advocated benefits, aligned with social and spatial justice sought by Arnstein, and with the Skeffington Report's appeal to common good and understanding, and analyse the extent to which they relate to the subject of this thesis, social capital.

2.2.1 Better people

Advocates of collaborative planning see great potential for participatory planning to enhance social capital, increase social cohesion, strengthen democracy.

Sorensen and Sagaris 2010, p300

The “benefits of public participation are broadly accepted within democratic societies as promoting transparent, inclusive and fair decision-making processes” (Brown and Wei Chin 2013, p563), leading to better social and environmental outcomes (Irvin and Stansbury 2004, p56). At its most fundamental, citizen participation may be seen as “a basic building block for contemporary democratic society and sustainable communities” (Cuthill and Fein 2005, p64).

Arnstein's alignment of engagement with opportunities for social justice, and egalitarianism was not new; in its many forms, which include representative government, information gathering and sharing as well as more direct forms of engagement, participation has long been considered a vital component of democracy, a political response to a centralised or corporatised view of representative democracy

where “power is used to the advantage of those who have the advantage” (Cuthill 2003, p378). And the potential for civic involvement to benefit participants was far from novel when deliberative approaches to planning were proposed in the US and the UK in the late 1960s. Post-enlightenment liberals Jean-Jacques Rousseau and John Stuart Mill both advocated for self-government, active public roles for (male) individuals independent of the State, and the educative and moral improvement potential of an individual forced “to widen his horizons and to take the public interest into account” (Pateman 1970, p29). Participation was seen to have not only an administrative value but also a civic dimension, increasing opportunities for citizens to take interest in public affairs; and getting them “accustomed to using freedom” (de Tocqueville, 1975), a means of advancing “principles and maxims which have for their reason of existence, the general good” (Mill 1861, p398). Just as public participation was believed to give “personal satisfaction” to those affected by collectively determined decisions (Great Britain 1969, p4), Rousseau believed that a sense of collectivity and belonging would result from direct involvement in governance (Day 1997, p425). Mill found similar inspiration in the potential of participation to enhance sense of social obligation at the same time as benefitting the individual, observing that human capacity is enhanced when a person participates in the public sphere, and has to “weigh interests not his own; to be guided, in the case of conflicting claims, by another rule than his private partialities” (Mill 1861).

The timing of participation’s move away from centralised, paternalistic planning mean it has been “linked with movements for civil rights, racial equality, feminism, peace, and environmental protection” (Thorpe 2017, p569). Modern Planning, on the other hand, with its rational, unified, elegance, was seen as having failed to fulfil the progressive hopes that had attended its conception (Ward 2013).

The publication of Arnstein's article in particular, and the social conditions and government projects that gave it context, contributed to a school of planning thought that not only sought to change the built environment, but the very systems, aligned with oppression and exclusion (Cuthill 2003), that produced it, thereby to address "the profound inequities and injustices pervading [poor people's] daily lives" (Arnstein 1969). An explicitly redistributive agenda, in line with the radical spirit of the times (Gleeson and Lowe, 2000), forms a tenet of progressive intent. This premise that social justice advocates including Healey, Arnstein, Harvey – and less radical others – operate from, is that conservative forms of governance and the cities they have created need fixing (Finn 2014). Participation provides a means of redressing power imbalances that shape, and are shaped by cities (Butterworth 2000, ii), offering, instead, a "vision splendid of social possibilities" (Cox 2020); cities where "production meets people's needs, citizens participate in decision-making, and culture is an authentic expression of life experience" (Fainstein 2014, p3).

Engagement may contribute to such 'visions splendid' in a range of ways. Participatory approaches to planning are "more likely to result in laws that are recognised as legitimate and are in fact more rational and just" (Booher 2008, p387), thus contributing to "equitable, transparent and accountable governance" (Cuthill 2003, p380). Hands-on involvement may also lead to a greater sense of place ownership, stewardship and connection (Cuthill 2003; Stephenson 2010; Wood 2002). As advocated by Rousseau and Mills (Day 1997), participation contributes to improved standards of democracy through the development of greater understanding of, and respect for, governance, policy and practice (Great Britain 1969, Heywood 2011, Whitzman and Ryan 2014). Efforts to "facilitate greater public access to information about government" (Aulich 2011, p47) enable "local and political debate

and community activism” (Heywood 2011), thus supporting the development of participant skills, knowledge and ability (Cuthill 2003). Such activism can also inspire a sense of agency, or “a meaningful degree of control over the course of one’s life and environment” (Day 1997). This approach is supported by findings that participation leads to increased levels of civic awareness; of the roles, complexity of democratic and service-production processes, and of the results and responsibilities, of reaching them (Carra et al 2018, p256). Participation “can raise public awareness of local issues and increase social inclusiveness” (Laurian and Shaw 2009, p294) and has also been shown to increase “respect for institutions, processes of direct and representative democracy, participation in the management of common goods and the pursuit of shared interests” (Carra et al 2018, p256). Participation helps build relationships based on trust and tolerance (Cuthill 2003), and to facilitate participant understanding, consensus and collaboration (BCC; Butterworth 2000; Cox 2000; Cuthill 2003; Hou and Rios 2003). It may also be seen as valuable in its own right, “through its furtherance of democracy” (Fainstein 2014, p64).

Although it can be argued that “the radical potential of tactical urbanism is being lost to more mainstream approaches, which simply consolidate established framings of democracy and associated forms of economic power” (Webb 2017, p60), collation and direction of these may yet be required to realise participation’s “radical potential” (Mould 2014). Just as everyday citizen actions in urban spaces can blossom into significant and transformative political events (Hou 2012), collective power is needed to “reshape the processes of urbanization” (Harvey 2012, p4).

2.2.2 Better plans

In addition to these moral and ethical imperatives, there are also practical arguments for citizen participation in local governance.

Participation was not proposed by the Skeffington Committee as a means of improving democracy or of redressing social injustice. Rather, it was hoped that involvement of the community would help the general public understand planning rationale, making it more accessible and acceptable – and thereby expediting the process (Shapely, 2014). The quality of decisions made by public authorities would improve through the application of public scrutiny (Great Britain 1969). Similar pragmatic objectives continue to inform the adoption of participation in planning.

“Both town and social planning share a commitment to bring people into the planning process” (Shevellar et al 2015, p270), demonstrating a willingness to engage with citizens rather than merely consult people as ‘customers’ (Aulich 2011, p59). “The capacity to collectively establish arenas for dialogue and enable interaction in ways sensitive to cultural differences, can better inform planning and other urban governance processes” (Borruip 2016, p106), with operational benefits including better-quality information for planning and decision-making, up-to-date feedback on community attitudes and perceptions, and early identification of potential issues (Cuthill 2001, 2003, BCC 2019). Citizens “are often better placed to reconcile a range of perspectives on a given issue” (Curtain 2003, p2), and so “more participants with a more sophisticated level of technical and social understanding will yield better policy decisions” (Irvin and Stansbury 2004, p56). This generates benefits for communities of interest (Shevellar et al 2015), and improves the likelihood of meeting community needs and expectations (Adams and Hess 2001; BCC 2019). The “distributed intelligence of many players ... can form a more coherent and responsive planning system and offer more knowledge, ideas and effective joint action for these conditions than the cleverest policymaker or analyst”

(Innes and Booher 1999, p418), whilst a more communicative, deliberative processes may “contribute to a creative, inventive form of environmental planning to replace a merely power-brokering planning (Healey 1992, p246).

Complexities wrought by centralised hyper-bureaucracy in 1969 Great Britain have been replaced or supplemented in modern-day Australia by complexity across multiple, multi-level and departmental spheres of governance and community. Recognition of universal understandings of value informed by globalism (Aulich 2011) exist alongside perceptions of the the need for locally specific solutions informed by human-scale context (Vallance 2019). Participation can be invoked as a means of addressing both concerns simultaneously: a means of overcoming multiplicity, and of embracing and expressing it. For the former, where diversity can present barriers to consensus required for non-contentious planning decisions (Cuthill and Fien 2005), participation may provide a forum for multiple stakeholders to share their views, as well as the potential for conflicting needs to be met, and thereby to increase tolerance and understanding for diversity (ABS 2004; Aulich 2011; Fainstein 2014; Hillier 2000; Shapely 2014). Responding to the need to include a wider range of knowledges in decision making (Cuthill and Fien 2005, p64) increases “the potential to make decisions that better respond to citizens’ needs and desires” (Legacy 2018). In the second instance, participation can expand the range of considered views, to “incorporat(e) difference and oppositional views and representations into policy decision-making, trying to find some common ground as a basis for negotiation” (Hillier 2000, p33), contributing to more broadly informed planning solutions. Informed by ethnographic and community development practices, “listening to citizens yields services that are timelier and better tailored to the specific contexts” (Carra et al 2018, p254), and, more prosaically, can increase

community buy-in, and enhance the chances and speed of project implementation (Adams and Hess 2001; Crawford et al 2008; Great Britain 1969; Infrastructure Australia 2016). Bringing ‘local knowledge’ into the planning process has emerged as a critical part of good planning (Borup 2016, p106), informed by “the suspicion that communities are not merely a cheaper alternative but offer a qualitatively better source of policy ideas and processes” (Bryant and White 1982, p211). Further, engaging local knowledge aligns decisions and implementation strategies better with ‘street-level realities’ (Slotterback and Lauria 2019), improving the quality of resultant plans (Butterworth 2000; Paranagamage et al 2014; Slotterback and Lauria 2019), and enabling more responsive, place-appropriate designs (Cilliers and Timmerman 2014; Cuthill and Fein 2005; Heywood 2011). Active resident and user involvement in decisions that affect them is theorised to result in built environments that better support well-being, equity and health (Butterworth 2000; Chavis and Wandersman 1990; Heywood 2011; Jacobs 1961; Mehta 2006; Wood et al 2010). If modern cities are the result of the top-down, siloed and unrepresentative planning participation was supposed to supplement and improve, adopting community-responsive approaches to planning, should produce more people-scaled, community-centric cities. Advocates of community-oriented planning argue that “citizen participation in community organizations has been viewed as a means of improving the quality of the built environment” (Chavis and Wandersman 1990, p56), and such involvement increases the likelihood that cities “can be developed in a way that enables people and communities to achieve their full potential for a higher quality of life” (Paranagamage et al 2014, p4). Sense of community and belonging grow through taking an active responsibility for built environment quality and qualities; direct engagement with planning governance supports vibrant cities and strengthens

civic identity (Butterworth 2000, iv; Chavis and Wandersman 1990; Demos 2005; Jacobs 1961; Pillora and McKinlay 2011; Woolcock and Boorman 2003). Even where the link between built environment and sense of community is complex, the potential for a “catalytic effect” (Talen 1997, p12) is nonetheless recognised. The relationship works in both directions, so that “neighbourhood events and interactions that promote cohesion allow residents to know and value the homes, sidewalks, parks, and shops that constitute the physical fabric of the neighbourhood, potentially enhancing place attachment” (Brown 2003, p261, also Paranagamage 2014). A “shared, coherent conception of a locale or territory” acts “to inspire, mobilise, coordinate and comfort the many people and activities which shape the material and mental ambience of a place” (Healey 2002, p1785); design and layout of the built environment “can influence social interactions” (Baum et al 2002), and thus plays a key role in fostering a sense of community – and inclination to participate in local neighbourhood life (Butterworth 2000). Settlements that benefit from involvement and association “gain the strength and capacity to transform their environments into places of lasting achievement and beauty” (Heywood, 2011, p5).

Built environments that support community interaction and connection have been called ‘opportunity structures’ (Baum and Palmer 2002); places, which include “decent housing, safe playing areas, transport, green spaces, street lighting, street cleaning, schools, shops, banks”, that impact on community participation by facilitating “social interaction and a ‘feel good’ sense about a place” (Baum and Palmer 2002, p353). Urban design that promotes walking and socialising, seen as contributing to community connection (Giles-Corti 2006; Leyden 2003; Lund 2002, Rogers et al 2013; Wood et al 2010), mean that built environment characteristics has functioned as a proxy for social capital in studies where its presence is investigated

(Baum and Palmer 2002; Francis et al 2012; Talen 2000). Characteristics of social capital-supporting areas have been identified as: “High use of public spaces by diverse groups”, “Observable friendly interactions in public spaces” and “Helpfulness to strangers, responsiveness to needs of others in public spaces” (Cox 2001, p107). Other attributes of a built environments supportive of resident health and well-being include emphasis of the special character of places, accessibility, modifiability and a range of stimuli or activities (Butterworth 2000), allowing for proximity passive social contact and shared space (Talen 1999, p1363), along with “integrating infrastructure, in particular transport, information and communications systems” (Walsh and Butler 2001, p57). The idea that “participation and interaction do not just happen, but rather need places or common meeting grounds that facilitate these social relationships (Baum and Palmer 2002, p353), that contribute to sense of community by providing accessible space for people to meet one another, connect and watch the world go by (Francis et al 2012; Gehl 2001; Mehta 2007; Talen 1999), is supported by literature reviews demonstrating a relationship between the built and social environments (Chavis and Wandersman 1990, Wood et al 2010).

The interrelationship between physical and social environments is especially apparent in the practice of placemaking. With iterations including tactical, temporary and guerilla urbanism, the DIY approach aligns with “planning’s self-image that is citizen-centric, proactive and visionary” (Finn 2014, p382), and with the social and spatial justice agenda advocated as a means of redressing power imbalance (Arnstein 1969; Fainstein 2014; Healey 1992; Jacobs 1961; Purcell 2013). The practice may be seen as “a form of soft rebellion against a planning status quo that is perceived to lack creativity, flexibility, imagination and efficacy” (Finn 2014, p391), and invites communities to engage with cities in physical ways including the

installation of street furniture, murals, verge gardens, pop-up parks and similar interventions in public places. It has been particularly successful in the US, where its DIY beginnings and role outside top-down policy-making builds on neighbourhood association and small-government traditions. Placemaking in Australia, however, is more likely to be embedded within existing technocratic systems, highly managed and curated, with stringent public safety and risk management requirements to be met. This presents issues for the approach: if “DIY is posited as a “rational, and perhaps even necessary, tactic for citizens to rescue their communities from planning processes that are increasingly seen as part of an overly bureaucratic and intractably anachronistic system” (Finn 2014, p390), the co-optation by government of strategies that are supposed to empower citizens can divest DIY tactics of their political power (Iveson 2013; Mould 2014; Purcell 2013; Legacy 2017, p427). The radical activism agenda of placemaking (Iveson 2013; Lydon and Garcia 2015) is further subject to dilution or erosion by the embrace of the private sector (Mould 2014), when highly risk-averse governance environments limit the possibility that ‘transformative’ projects are council-led-and-controlled initiatives. If, as discussed earlier in this thesis, private operators are not subject to the same legislated requirements for stakeholder consultation, public space outcomes are less a reflection of local culture and identity than they are a tool to drive economic activity. The quality of resultant public space interventions may be high, but the underlying requirement that interventions contribute to economic growth of some kind means that placemaking is just another translation of power – in this case, the power of capital – into place (Finn 2014; Iveson 2013; Mould 2014).

An “increasing difficulty for elected representatives to manage effectively the diverse social, environmental and economic interests of their local constituents”;

means “representative democracy needs to be supplemented with more participatory forms”, (Pillora and McKinlay 2011, p5). This is particularly seen as valuable when society is confronted with rapid change and complex issues (Holmes 2011; Pillora and McKinlay 2011) that “defy resolution by government alone” (Aulich 2011). Participation not only provides more meaningful opportunities to engage with governance (Curtain 2003), but responds to the “growing understanding that ‘governments cannot simply deliver outcomes in complex areas that rely on enhanced individual responsibility and behavioural change to a disengaged and passive public” (APSC 2007, p1).

Participation ‘outputs’ – increased social capital, improved standards of democracy and more representative cities – are supposed to be “highly visible and have attracted much of the attention” (Cuthill 2003, p377), but there remains a dearth of evidence supporting the relationship between these outcomes and community engagement. Given that its formation was accompanied by such fundamentally conflicted objectives – paternalistic on the one hand; protest on the other – it should come as no surprise that achieving even the nominal benefits of participation has been far from straightforward.

2.3 Topic 2: Issues with participation

Despite the broad adoption of community engagement in planning, many of the issues that catalysed participatory approaches remain unaddressed, and engagement is frequently seen as having failed to live up to its expectations (Gaventa 2001, Cuthill 2003, Brownhill and Parker 2010, Ward 2013, Schatz and Rogers 2016, McAuliffe and Rogers 2018). A lack of consistent investigation into “the barriers and dynamics to participation in local governance, as well as the enabling factors and methods that can be used to overcome them” (Gaventa and Valderrama 1999, p1) intersects with

current participatory context tend to produce the following patterns: a lack of consistency defining engagement, contributing to ambiguity around objectives and a subsequent lack of consistent evaluation; the perception that participation merely provides an illusion of consultation to placate participants and rubber stamp planning decisions; and ‘elite capture’, whereby participatory governance interventions are predominantly dominated by relatively wealthy, well-resourced members of the community, thereby breaking the compact Arnstein envisaged for participation as a means of redistributing power to ‘the have-nots’.

2.3.1 Ambiguous objectives

While the concept of citizen participation and participatory planning are generally perceived as positive efforts, there is still little consensus as to what exactly what such participation should entail.

Crawford et al 2008, p534

The “literature on citizen participation seems to be an untidy one” (Day 1997, p422), owing to ongoing difficulties defining engagement and what it is supposed to achieve (Brown and Wei Chin 2013, Day 1997, Laurian and Shaw 2009, Rowe and Frewer 2000). Perceptions that the Skeffington recommendations were too “vague and ambiguous” (Shapely 2014, xiii) persist, arising from “confusion as to the appropriate benchmarks for evaluation” (Rowe and Frewer 2000, p3). Empirical studies appear to diverge with respect to the idea of what constitutes successful participation” or what it is supposed to accomplish (Day 1997, p422), planning professionals and academics “lack definitions and criteria of success in participation as well as methods to assess participatory processes” (Laurian and Shaw 2009, p294), leading to a paucity of evaluated research (Reddell and Woolcock 2004). Confusion is compounded by the fact that the nature and objectives of participation

may change depending on context, organisational objectives and needs, legislation and regulations, type of participation implemented (Brownhill and Parker 2010; Day 1997; Lane 2005; IAP2 Australasia 2018, 2019; Rowe and Frewer 2000). The array of spectra, tools, wheels and keys (IAP2 Australasia 2018, Queensland Department of Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning 2017, State of Victoria Department of Environment, Land, Water & Planning 2015) by which to evaluate engagement are testament to its multidimensionality (Brown and Wei Chin 2013, p567), and potential embrace of a range of perspectives and political agendas (Payne 1973, Brown and Wei Chin 2013).

A substantive review of the evaluation of participation in the US notes that, although engagement in planning practice and research has had received plenty of academic attention, the same cannot be said of its assessment (Laurian and Shaw 2009). Published evaluations of participation are scarce and tend to rely on few case studies. As well as limited clarity around definitions and expectations, the unwillingness to evaluate engagement may be attributable to “organizational culture and political constraints” (Laurian and Shaw 2009, p296) tied to funding cycles, and a pattern of moving onto the next project as soon as the current one is complete. More than just a practical obstacle, there exists a political dimension to this structural aversion (Daley et al 2019), as “evaluation can increase accountability and present political risks if it reveals inadequacies” (Laurian and Shaw 2009, p296).

Just as the political and economic context for participation shifts, so too do objectives, and thus the agenda and type of participation implemented (Brownhill and Parker 2010, Lane 2005, Rowe and Frewer 2000, p11). Factors such as “degree of openness, organisational objectives and needs, legislation and regulations, geographical scope of authority, and substantive influence on policy making”, may

vary to the extent that “participation may differ within the same class of organisation and with regard to the kind of issues that are salient at the moment” (Day 1997, p422). Despite this diversity, and related difficulties around evaluation, attempts to determine a relatively constant set of criteria by which to evaluate it have been made throughout the literature. Proposed process-based objectives include transparency, representativeness, independence, early involvement and resource accessibility, and outcome or acceptance-based objectives include genuine impact on the decision, increased knowledge and understanding of participants, increased trust for the government or agency implementing the participation, and increase in community empowerment or capacity building (See Table: 1 for information on criteria sources). Authors of papers assessing engagement, though, note that even these criteria, which have been determined most relevant and applicable according to the frequency of appearance in the literature, may not apply to all types of participation all the time; the range of contexts for engagement “renders findings incomparable and contradictory” (Day 1997, p422), so that evaluation schema that exist “have not been widely influential in a practical sense” (Rowe and Frewer 2000, p24). As there can be “no simple, constant or generally applicable solutions or theories” in balancing out the competing needs of those involved to determine absolute efficacy, (Brownhill and Parker 2010, Fainstein 2014), it is seen as impossible to draw definite conclusions about the impact of participation (Day 1997).

2.3.2 Placation and the Post-political

Participation without redistribution of power is an empty and frustrating process for the powerless. It allows the powerholders to claim that all sides were considered but makes it possible for only some of those sides to benefit. It maintains the status quo.

Arnstein 1969, p216

Engagement's fundamentally contingent quality contributes to "deficiencies of the formation of participatory technologies" (Legacy 2017, p426). Although moves to legislate for community involvement appear a genuine attempt to make planning more consistent, accessible and representative, the lack of clear definition for the process and its objectives make it vulnerable to issues including institutional structures and technocratic inertia (Finn 2014; Payne 1973). This inevitably leads to the provision of limited types of participation which do not challenge dominant trajectories, power or authority (Healey 1992, Legacy 2016, Shapely 2014). Similarly, the pragmatic imperative to minimise complexity – a means of meeting the needs of a range of competing stakeholders – increases the likelihood governments will implement more logistically manageable but ultimately powerless forms of engagement (Reddel and Woolcock 2004). Thus, "consultation has become the dominant approach used by government agencies to gather advice from the public" (Schatz and Rogers 2016, p43). And, although it may be seen as "a legitimate step towards full participation" (Arnstein 1969), such "consultative models, linked to rational and linear policy-making, have the effect of reducing citizen engagement to a selection of 'menus' which reinforce centralised and passive models of decision-making" (Reddel and Woolcock 2004, p85), and consolidate "established framings of democracy and associated forms of economic power" (Mould 2014, p60). Although it can be argued that time and effort required by consultative participation is justified "if it produces an understanding, co-operative public and planning better geared to public opinion" (Great Britain 1969, p5), if it is not combined with other, more meaningful modes of participation, consultation limits genuine, devolutionary engagement, and remains "just a window-dressing ritual" (Arnstein 1969, p219).

These and similar forms of participation serve only to placate, to entrench the status quo, as “consensus is advanced in the efforts to tame antagonistic participation of citizens” (Legacy 2016). The depoliticisation of engagement is frequently shaped to fit neoliberal or market-based governance processes (Schatz and Rogers 2016; Brownhill and Parker 2010; Gaventa 2001; McAuliffe and Rogers 2018; Shevellar et al 2015). Not only does “research suggest that formalising participatory planning renders some historical and effective means of community engagement invalid or less visible”, but the invitation to citizens to ‘have their say’ may in fact be a means of curtailing participation and its influence (Legacy 2017, Ruming 2019), as collective decision-making undermines local discontent and activism (Schatz and Rogers 2016). Based on “the inevitability of neoliberalist imperatives”, such arrangements encourage a “managerialist participation devoid of conflict and alternative possibilities” (Brownhill and Parker 2010, p278). Under these circumstances, the participatory process becomes less about inviting a representative range of input than neutralising dissent, choreographing conflict “to suit the neoliberalising conditions of city governments” (McAuliffe and Rogers 2018, p4). Participation becomes distorted (Laurian and Shaw 2009), or “carefully managed to provide the appearance of engagement and legitimacy ... while minimising the potential for those with conflicting views to be heard” (Thorpe 2017, p568). Such forms of engagement not only “fail to create debate and absorb ideas from within communities” (Shapely 2014), but enable the pursuit of “certain objectives and practices that claim to work on behalf of the city, but that in fact privilege particular interests” (Davidson and Iveson 2015). Industry drivers advocating expedited development processes (Steele and Dodson 2014) can adopt a “political rhetoric that describes deliberate and consultative planning processes as slowing down positive

development outcomes for states and the nation” (Shevellar et al, 2015, p269), but, just as planning reforms mandating participation after the Green Bans were lobbied for by Sydney’s real estate industry, public contributions may be “managed” to facilitate market-led responses (Thorpe 2017, p574). Under these circumstances, what is presented as inclusive and empowering engagement is effectively about containment and control (Pillora and McKinlay 2011).

The integration of state with corporate interests to further neoliberal aims ensures that those with “money power ... corporate capital and the upper classes” have greater influence over shaping the urban process (Harvey 2012, p38). Without any real process for handing planning governance power over to local citizens, placatory forms of engagement posit ‘consensus’-seeking collective decision-making as the modus operandi for citizen participation (Schatz and Rogers 2016, p43). Providing people with an opportunity to take part in non-binding, non-conflictual participation thus turns the process into “propaganda ... a form of tokenism” (Ruming 2019), contributing to the “perception that governments are doing their due diligence to ensure that residents and community-based groups voice their concerns, rather than really transforming how decisions are made and who is involved in making them” (Legacy 2017, p428). As Arnstein observed fifty years ago: “What citizens achieve in all this activity is that they have ‘participated in participation’ And what powerholders achieve is the evidence that they have gone through the required motions of involving ‘those people.’” (1969, p219).

2.3.3. The usual suspects

Neighbourhood activists are always just a small portion of the total population and never representative; their claim to legitimacy, therefore, is always suspect.

Fainstein 2014, p66

It may provide some relief to powerholders that ‘those people’ are rarely, if ever, involved in participation. Despite redistribution of power being one of the founding objectives for citizen engagement in local governance (Arnstein 1969), there are, and have always been, fundamental problems in achieving equitable representation or ‘voice’ in collaborative government and community processes (Cuthill and Fein 2005, Cuthill 2007), and fails to address power inequities, institutional inertia, or to accommodate more equity-oriented approaches to planning (Legacy 2016). Instead, active engagement with planning processes typically involves an ‘elite’ minority (Day 1997; Hillier 2000; Cuthill 2007 p432; Onyx and Bullen 2000; Reddel and Woolcock 2004): “professional politicians, economically concerned businesspeople and those in the middle and upper classes who are ideologically motivated and well-educated” (Day 1997, p428).

This dominance of participation by the well-resourced has been called an “inversion” of the “traditional association between political unrest and the lower classes” (Hillier, 2000 p39). Evidence, though, suggests that high socio-economic status has correlated with high levels of involvement since participation in planning was proposed: when the Skeffington Report was released, engagement was seen by many as something that “only a few interfering members of the middle classes ... really wanted” (Shapely 2014, viii). Councillors who spoke with the Committee’s members about their experience with engagement supported this viewpoint, noting that “public participation usually involved the same minority of organized groups” (Shapely:2014 x). The Committee wanted to change this though, and made the

objective “to involve all sectors of the community and not just the articulate groups” (Great Britain 1969, p4) explicit throughout the People and Planning report. The value in involving “the quieter members of the wider public” (ibid) was emphasised, along with “the need to engage with the whole community affected by planning – “the ‘non-joiner’”, as well as “organized groups and more opinionated members of a society” (Shapely 2014, x).

British Prime Minister at the time of the Skeffington Report, Harold Wilson, believed that most people were “apathetic and disengaged with political processes” (Shapely 2014, xiii). But although “most people are not motivated to get involved in public issues”, when they are, “it is usually because of one particular issue about which they feel strongly” (Payne 1973, p26). And people are likely to be invested – emotionally and economically – in planning decisions that impact on their neighbourhoods and homes (Raynor et al 2015). As areas with higher land values are more likely to experience the profit-driven development and built environment change that provoke defensive reactions (Kelly and Donegan 2015; McAuliffe and Rogers 2018; Raynor et al 2015), those involved are likely to be well-educated and well-resourced (Day, 1997; Fainstein 2011; Hillier 2000; Reddel and Woolcock 2004; Shapely 2014), and already characterised by a strong sense of community (Baum and Palmer 2002; Chavis and Wandersman 1990; Reddel and Woolcock 2004). Residents with higher social status are more likely to be involved in collective action as they are confident that they can influence policy or overturn decisions (Shapely 2014, Crawford et al 2008). This, combined with the growing expectation that the affected, non-expert public be involved with planning governance (Aulich 2011) is frequently framed as NIMBY-ism, “positioned by politicians, government planners, private developers and some sections of the community as self-interested

groups who oppose planning and development decisions which are seen to negatively impact upon their financial and material well-being” (Ruming 2019, p113).

Many of the ideological and practical explanations underpinning the lack of equitable representation in participation have not changed since a continuum of engagement was developed in the early 70s, whereby likelihood \ of involvement was determined by the intersection of three factors: motivation, opportunity and skill (Payne 1973, p26). Requirements to engage in participation according to sanctioned methods, or risk dismissal (Mould 2014, Brisbane City Council 2010) mean that, for many, the process has become “highly bureaucratic and standardized” (Hou and Rios 2003, p20; Finn 2014). “Diversity, complexity and engaging with the ‘disengaged’ are not easily accommodated given the dominance of managerialism and rational policy approaches” (Redell and Woolcock 2004, p82), and the perceived need for conventional plans has ‘significant, very conservative effects on the participatory process’ (Crawford 2008, p535). Even when participatory interventions have been specifically designed to address issues of disadvantage and implemented in areas where socio-economic conditions, levels of income and education are lower than the population average, it is often the case that those who participate “are not generally reflective of the broader community” and that such initiatives draw “on those who are already ‘engaged’ through their involvement in other groups and activities” (Reddel and Woolcock 2004). And although many planners make an effort to ‘adopt participatory methods and values’, (from Day 1997, p429; PIA 2011) a lack of resources to overcome “the values and processes that limit citizens’ roles in community power structures”, (Day 1997) and technocratic and logistic limitations (Woolcock and Boorman 2003, Cuthill 2003) mean that “in the pluralist arena ... the dominant values and the political myths, rituals and institutions tend to favour the

vested interests of one or more groups relative to others” (Fainstein 2014, p66). Academia further reinforces the situation, contending that “not everyone is qualified to decide thoughtfully on all issues” (Day 1997); and that “the quality of the justification of citizens’ values is commensurate with the amount of time and effort they put into thinking about them” (2008). The outcome, then, is that many “citizens lack the information, interest and opportunities requisite for effective participation in community decision making” and “low income populations lack the resources to mobilize even if they wanted to” (Day 1997, p428).

The failure of participatory processes to respond to inequity contributes to the perpetuation of homogenising forms of decision-making and deliberative governance as organised groups and opinionated people remain the “usual suspects” of participation (Day 1997, Fainstein 2014). In situations where stakeholders have different capacities than those expected and planned for by bureaucrats, “participation is weighted in favour of the already entitled and may serve only to consolidate existing power (Lane 2005, p2). It is perhaps unsurprising, then, that “participatory mechanisms primarily became a vehicle for middle class interests” (Fainstein 2014, p66). Participation on these terms fail to challenge underlying power dynamics, merely serving to further the advantage of those with political and economic standing over those on the political and economic margins (Hillier 2000, p39); instead of redistributing agency through engagement, “power and resources go to those who already possess a great deal of both” (Day 1997, p427).

2.4 Topic 3: Political context of participation in Australia and Queensland

Queensland’s historical legacy of undemocratic governance practices, centralised approach to policy-making and limited pathways for citizen participation remains significant.

Australia has traditionally aligned itself with working-class battlers (Whitman 2013) and the anti-élites (Sparrow 2015). The adoption of a redistributive, Keynesian approach to economics and governance at Federation (Gleeson and Low 2000) along with an explicit desire to avoid the class-based struggles of Europe (Gleeson and Low 2000) made Australia less susceptible to the extremes of US and European economic models. But just one century after a well-distributed wages boom that took place between 1821 and 1870, Australia, along with the rest of the world, moved away from economic equality ideals to adopt the free-market stylings of New Public Management.

Despite what are now perceived to be failings, the economic rationalist approach of NPM provided the Australian government with a framework for capitalising on the resources boom to re-shape the nation's identity into something entrepreneurial or aspirational (Bongiorno 2015). Following Thatcher and Reagan, proponents of small government and trickle-down economics in the UK and the US, public service reforms were characterised by a focus on efficiency. This was achieved by decentralising management and outsourcing or privatising previously government-controlled services and departments – and positioned the government as provider and the citizen as passive consumer of those services (Aulich 2011).

Queensland in the 1980s, in the thrall of unapologetically conservative Premier Joh Bjelke-Petersen, came to characterise the Australian government's "patronising and authoritarian attitude" (Payne 1973). Bjelke-Petersen's "determination to develop the state at all costs" (The Age, 'Death of a populist', 2005) included the redevelopment of former swampland on the Gold Coast. The subdivision of the settlement of Elston, which was filled in, renamed Surfer's Paradise and sold as lots

by opportunistic real estate developers “seemed to capture the very essence of the strange boom in consumption, investment and speculation” (Bongiorno 2015, p178) that characterised the 1980s Queensland. Known as ‘the Hillbilly Dictator’, Bjelke-Petersen facilitated unprecedented population growth and commercial development (Katter 2014; Steele and Dodson 2014). “Planning now served macroeconomic policy with little regard for the fate of existing communities” (Ellis 2015, p437).

Despite an autocratic, paternalistic style, Bjelke-Petersen remained a broadly popular leader until a federal enquiry into Queensland Police Department corruption and its links with state government ministers revealed the extent of his disregard for democratic process (Death of a populist 2015). But among groups who identified as radical, underground or counterculture, the period of his leadership produced an identity, a resistance culture that united and fought hard against the “crafty old order of authoritarian rural fundamentalism” (Schultz 2008). Lessons learned under his premiership may have been forgotten (Smee 2019), but resistance to that government remains a defining feature of Queensland’s political and cultural landscape (Birmingham 2019; Schultz 2008; Shaw 2019; Stafford 2006). Those who banded together to protest the status quo share a unique reference point as a result of their involvement – but may also have access to benefits like structural and individual social capital, as “feelings of disenfranchisement or exclusion from decision-making processes can also focus social capital development in bonding” (Crawford et al 2008, p547). It may be that, even under a tyrannical Premier, in the face of corrupt government, the momentum of neoliberal forces and unstoppable change, articulation in planning offers a sense of solidarity; “there are few things as effective at promoting bonding as a common enemy, few things as good for a sense of belonging as collective action” (Berger 2020).

The demise of Bjelke-Petersen coincided with Australia's ideological compass swinging away from New Public Management's top-down approach (Adams and Hess, 2001; Bongiorno 2015). The political message was "reframed to regard the public as 'citizens', whose agency matters and whose right to participate directly or indirectly in decisions that affect them should be actively facilitated," (Holmes 2011, p1), part of a "rush back" to a form of governance that emphasised the importance of "community outcomes, relationship-building, systems of shared communication and collaboration" (Aulich 2011, p57; also, Adams and Hess 2001; Holmes 2011). This community focus occurred in a range of policy areas, including welfare reform, rural policy and natural resource management (from Reddel and Woolcock 2004, p76), and strategic objectives for the approach took place "at the conjunction of hard-headed financial management and soft-hearted social orientation" (Adams and Hess 2001, p15). Although communities "helping themselves" (Baum et al 1990, p415), was the objective of the customer-service model of provision, it paradoxically added impetus to demands for community participation "from a better educated, more articulate and more demanding citizenry" (Pharr et al 2000). Conservative Prime Minister John Howard's Federal government demonstrated an interest in the ideas of social capital as a potential lever for welfare reform; despite socialist-sounding objectives, the rhetoric of community involvement was primarily a economic response to central government fiscal pressure (Adams and Hess 2001, p17). Emphasising the role of voluntary contributions to addressing social problems in place of the expectation of government intervention, allowed the government "to do more with less" (Schatz and Rogers 2016, p10) as the apparent return to community-based policy built on NPM's agenda of decentralisation and economic rationalism.

Subsequent reforms have sought to consolidate community engagement with governance in pursuit of varying ideological objectives. Under LNP Premier Rob Borbidge, Queensland's implementation of the Integrated Planning Act in 1997 included explicit directives "to provide opportunities for community participation and to establish better channels to listen to their views", (Cuthill 2003, p187). Similar initiatives throughout Australia incorporated amendments to government Acts or the introduction of new legislation to "strengthen public consultation requirements in relation to councils' proposed activities" (Aulich 2011, p50). Queensland's current Planning Act, last reformed in 2016, states that "providing opportunities for the community to be involved in making decisions" is integral to advancing the act's purpose (Queensland Government 2016). The State Minister for Planning celebrated that the reforms established "new expectations around community consultation and engagement" (Dick 2019, p16).

The Queensland government has invited the state's involvement on multiple occasions, conducting consultation on "Queenslanders' 30-Year Vision, The Queensland Plan" (State of Queensland 2014) under former LNP Premier Campbell Newman, and more recently under Labor Premier Annastacia Palaszczuk, engagement with residents of the South-East Queensland Region to respond to and shape the South East Queensland Regional Plan. The Queensland State Government references the importance of community engagement across multiple departments, and has produced comprehensive reports and resources on participation strategies and plans. At a local level, Brisbane City Council has an even longer history of participatory planning, adopting a formal Community Engagement Policy in 2008, predating the state's legislative requirement for all local governments to have a community engagement policy (Brown and Wei Chin 2013, p566), conducting a

range of participatory activities before and since legislation mandating its inclusion was passed. Examples include whole-of-city initiatives Brisbane CityShape 2026 in 2005 and Plan Your Brisbane in 2018, opportunities to make submissions or respond to planning decisions via the ‘Your City, Your Say’, platform, and a commitment to table community-led petitions with a minimum of eight signatories on any subject to Council. The Council has the resources to provide a range of avenues and platforms on which residents can express their ideas and opinions about Brisbane’s built environment, with local scale examples including the ongoing Neighbourhood Plan program, which shapes planning schemes for specific Brisbane suburbs and areas, the “Your City, Your Say”, online platform, and public access to street-level maintenance issues through the ‘Report It’ app.

The city of Brisbane is also the site of a successful non-statutory participatory campaign. In 1990 Queensland’s State Government proposed to sell South Bank, the riverside former site of Expo 88, for commercial development. Locals, however, “realised its potential as a public space, and public lobbying (including a petition run by Queensland’s only print newspaper, The Courier Mail), “saw 17 hectares of South Bank remain public parkland” (Southbank Corporation 2009). Instead of apartments and office buildings, Brisbane’s former CBD was transformed into public parkland comprising swimming pools, naturalistic streams and beaches, display gardens and elaborate playgrounds. It remains one of the best-loved – and freely accessible – places in Brisbane.

Community campaigns continue to play a role in Brisbane’s development and identity. The former industrial suburbs of West End and South Brisbane, two kilometres out of the CBD, have experienced significant population growth over the past fifteen years, going from predominantly single family dwellings (albeit on

smaller-than average blocks) to population density of 4,990 people per square kilometre – much higher than Greater Brisbane’s average of 155 people per km² – living in significant numbers of high-rise units. Not all development has been well-received by the area’s relatively wealthy, educated and well-connected locals; the West End Community Association and Kurilpa Futures groups have formed in response to perceived flaws with the planning process, and have run coordinated community campaigns on ‘inappropriate development’ including Save Our West End, Stop the Hale Street Bridge and protests against the West Village residential development. In nearby Milton, Brisbane Residents United has a similar anti-development agenda and concerns, but, unlike WECA with its regular community meetings and events, maintains its presence online. Create Annerley is a small group campaigning for lower speed limits on an inner-city arterial, Ipswich Road. The group conducted a town hall meeting attended by around 80 people at the end of 2017, promotes issues around safety and local amenity through via various media outlets, and has presented two petitions asking for the speed limit to be dropped to Brisbane City Council. The group is currently leveraging social media and existing community events to continue awareness and support for the campaign. Finally, although coordinated by a sitting MP, the process run by Gabba Ward Councillor Jonathon Sri explicitly draws on Brisbane’s history of community-led planning interventions. Sri, who advocates for civic involvement in planning governance through an invocation of Harvey’s ‘Right to the City’ (2003), organising protests, public space interventions and participatory budget activities for his ward, invited public consultation and engagement in the design of two parks, one in Thomas Street, West End and the other in Carl Street, Woolloongabba. The community-level process included a comprehensive social media and letterboxing campaign, a

community festival and a series of small-group workshops to coordinate and collate the wider community's designs. These Queensland-based community planning interventions will be analysed further in Chapter 4 Results.

2.5 Summary and Implications

Community participation in planning is a legislated requirement in Australia and around the world, appealing to notions of democracy and civic agency, but issues around “power, inequality, conflict, rationales of governments” (Brownhill and Parker 2010, p280) threaten to undermine participation's perceived advantages. These theoretical and practical implications can be summarised in three points of tension that shape the engagement debate:

1. There is a mismatch between expectations of community and administrators. Discrepancies inherent to the application of participation, where it is envisaged either as a means of protesting the status quo, redressing power imbalances and devolving power to the powerless towards the creation of socially just cities (Arnstein 1969; Booher 2008; Fainstein 2014; Healey 1992; Iveson 2013; Mould 2014), or as an extension of rational, utopian planning, contribute to ambiguous definitions and expectations. A lack of consistency contributes to a lack of coordinated or strategic approach to consultation and limits the scale and capacity of participatory initiatives (Curtain 2003; Reddel and Woolcock 2004; Rowe and Frewer 2000), on the part of administrators, and to a lack of certainty and trust for citizens. Not only does this situation make evaluation difficult, inconsistent and non-generalisable (Day 1997); it calls into question the means by which engagement can achieve its broad, socially beneficial goals.

2. Ambiguity and lack of agreement on what it is supposed to achieve also lead to the adoption of participation as manipulation or placation. Such “silencing

through inclusion” (McAuliffe and Rogers 2018), is frequently identified as motivated by neoliberal objectives (Gaventa 2001), leading to the “emergence of a ‘post-political’ era (Brownhill and Parker 2010, p278; Davidson and Iveson 2015; Legacy et al 2018). The prevalence of elite capture and NIMBY-ism, though, whereby people resist change in their own neighbourhoods, undertaking involvement only when something personal is at stake, acts to de-politicise these accusations – and, often, participation itself. What looks like an unwillingness to devolve power to community stakeholders seems problematic if this prevents the development of proposed benefits, such as greater understanding of governance process and higher standards of democracy. This calls into question many of the justifications for participation’s implementation and erodes public trust in institutions, further undermining civic benefits engagement is supposed to produce.

3. Government agencies are not showing any signs of taking participation off the menu of planning strategies – in fact, as jurisdictions throughout Brisbane, Queensland and Australia face the impacts of increased population and urbanisation, whilst attempting to mitigate the effects of climate change, resource dependency, health inequality and other megatrends (Planning Institute of Australia 2018, Queensland State Government 2019), it has been suggested that the need for participation will increase. Case studies listed above are indicative of the diversity – both of objectives and approach – that participation can comprise. Given the potential for such breadth of scope, it is important to determine some common advantage that can accrue to participants irrespective of engagement form and type, and to identify how this might best be leveraged to overcome gaps between theoretical benefits of engagement and the reality on the ground (Cuthill 2003), and thus to reasonably justify its continued implementation. Failure to determine that

engagement achieves shared objectives, and that participants derive benefits from involvement in the context of issues inherent to conflicted circumstances as identified by this literature review, would not only undermine faith in institutions, but faith in participation itself.

Chapter 3: Research Design

Evidence from the literature suggests that participation is conflicted, difficult to define and evaluate, and suspected to contribute to placation and the de-politicisation of planning (Aulich 2011, Brownhill and Parker 2010, Gaventa 2001, Legacy 2015, 2017, Putnam 1996). The impact of these issues is evident in the perceived lack of alignment, particularly for top-down interventions, between participant objectives with those of administrators, leading to a sense that engagement has failed to live up to expectations. These failures are manifest in the positioning of engagement as non-genuine or inadequate, used as a tool to further neoliberal objectives, in defensive responses to planning, i.e.: NIMBY-ism, perpetuation of non-human scale planning, the sprawling status quo. These present significant obstacles to the social benefits engagement was supposed to contribute: a substantial gap exists between these hypothetical opportunities and actual outcomes. Inconsistent definitions exacerbate a technocratic tendency to avoid evaluation, lead to misalignment between participant and administrator objectives, and contribute to perceptions of placation/advancement of neoliberal agenda/over-representation by elites. Efforts to re-align participation with its progressive aims by applying DIY strategies has failed to mitigate these flaws, especially when, as is often the case in Australia, the practice is implemented by government. Under almost inevitably conflicted circumstances surrounding engagement in planning, and in the context of an ongoing commitment to participatory approaches, it seems a useful goal to bridge that gap.

To investigate the means by which participation contributes to the development one of these theoretical benefits, it was necessary to return to the literature to seek out explicit or implied connections between the two concepts to provide a theoretical basis for the thesis, and then to build on this with evidence from a practice analysis

of case studies, and from subjective responses from people with direct experience of participation. Triangulation between these three sets of data provided a broad, multi-faceted understanding of the relationship between participation and social capital.

This chapter describes the design adopted by this research to achieve the aims and objectives stated in section 1.3 of Chapter 1. Section 3.1 of this chapter discusses the methodology, approach and rationale addressing the thesis' overarching question, "How does participation in planning interventions contribute to the development of social capital?"; section 3.2 details the study design, including details of participants and case studies that provided the basis for the study's practice analysis and establish a local context and the survey instrument that provided a range of individual, subjective perspectives on participation; details the participants in the study; section 3.3 lists stages in the research protocol and analysis; and section 3.4 outlines the procedure used and the timeline for completion of each stage of the study; section 3.5 discusses the ethical considerations of the research, its problems and limitations.

3.1 Methodology

To investigate how participation contributes to social capital, a relevant and expedient conflation of its theoretical benefits, I needed to return to the literature: to establish a relationship between social capital and engagement, refine the conceptual framework and establish a theoretical basis for the thesis, I conducted a thematic analysis of articles on perceived advantages of a participatory approach to find both specific and indirect references to the concept of social capital. Balancing the academic perspective, I built on abstracted benefits as per the literature with evidence derived from a practice analysis of case studies, including first-hand experience of engagement, and survey responses detailing subjective participant opinions of direct involvement with participation in planning. Triangulation between these three sets of

data provided a locally relevant, multi-faceted – and previously unexplored – perspective on the relationship between engagement in planning in Brisbane, Queensland, and the development of social capital.

The incorporation and review of real-life examples of participation initially suggested a case study approach. Identified as “one of the most common ways to do qualitative inquiry (Brown and Wei Chin 2013), this was further supported by the thesis’ focus on ‘how’ or ‘why’ questions, the investigator/author’s limited control over events being studied, and a focus on a contemporary phenomenon within a real-life context (Yin 1981). Although the specificity of adopting such a method has been identified as a potential drawback (Brown and Wei Chin 2013), the opportunity to holistically incorporate a range of interrelated features from a real-world contextual environment to help explain a pattern of behaviour (Yin 2018), and case studies’ focus on interpretation rather than quantification; emphasis of subjectivity over objectivity, and prioritisation of context—regarding behaviour and situation as inextricably linked in forming experience (Kohlbacher 2006), looked likely to overcome these potential disadvantages.

Multiple failed attempts to describe the methodological process undertaken, however, made it apparent that a more comprehensive approach drawing on a range of qualitative methods was required. Adopting qualitative study’s “pragmatist worldview” would take “best advantage of the full array of qualitative research’s methods and procedures” (Yin 2015, p3), and provide contextual richness, not only of everyday lives of many different kinds of people and what they think about, under many different circumstances” (Yin 2015, p3), but also provide a more nuanced understanding of institutional characteristics (Krishna and Shrader 1999). This approach would allow for incorporation of an evaluation research methodology for

creating a framework for exploring citizen participation effectiveness, as advocated by Crawford et al (2008), who observe that “a universally applicable method for evaluating the effectiveness of citizen participation would be an attainable and valuable research tool and that their agenda is a step in that direction” (Crawford et al 2008, p535). To balance the influence of academic theory, particularly the Arnstein paper, on perceived efficacy of participation, it was important to incorporate a less theoretical perspective; the study would also need to include first-person, practice-based responses from people with direct experience of engagement. The subjective nature of the surveys would also provide insight into the values and perspectives of participants in planning interventions, which is of particular interest to this thesis.

Mixed qualitative methods acknowledge “the value of collecting, integrating, and presenting data from a variety of sources of evidence as part of any given study (Yin 2015, p11). This can include observation, participant observation, life histories, in-depth interviews, and focus group research and has long been used to elucidate values, perceptions, attitudes, and opinions of both individuals and groups of people, providing in-depth examination of relationships and behaviors” (Krishna and Shrader 1999). Such an inclusive approach thereby warranted “the use of interviews and direct field observations as well as the inspection of documents and artifacts, (Yin 2015, p11) : “[a]ll evidence is of some use to the case study researcher: nothing is turned away” (Kohlbacher 2006, p20). A qualitative approach was further supported by the study’s small sample size; even without sufficient respondents to constitute a representative sample of the population, a qualitative approach would provide the necessary ‘saturation of information’ that “allows for in-depth analysis of social phenomena” (Krishna and Shrader 1999). Importantly for this study, a mixed methods qualitative approach has been effectively demonstrated in studies by Brown

and Wei Chin (2013), and Paranagamage et al (2010), and been used in a variety of disciplines to assess key aspects of structural social capital (Krishna and Shrader 1999) as well as those based on individual perception likely to be influenced by the characteristics of the respondent (Mohnen et al 2010). Further, the potential to develop social capital has been identified as a means to evaluate participation more broadly (Crawford et al 2010). Qualitative research's explicit embrace of the contextual conditions of people's lives to explain social behavior and thinking through existing or emerging concepts" (Yin 2015, p10) to represent the meanings given to real-world events by the people who live them, not the values, preconceptions, or meanings held by researchers (Yin 2015), allowed for a response that could acknowledge "how participants' perspectives diverge dramatically from those held by outsiders" (Yin 2015, p18). Without having to give much thought to formal design, the explanation or confirmation of participant perspectives through a 'circumscribed' reality, as described in the literature and case studies, (Yin 2015) would thus allow for a broad, multi-faceted response to the question, 'How does community participation in planning interventions contribute to the development of social capital?'.

3.2 Research Design

This section will describe the three parts of the methodology towards determining the contribution of participation in planning towards the development of social capital. Part 1 of the methodology will describe the thematic analysis of the literature, part two the practice analysis of local case studies of participation, and part 3 will describe the survey, including the participants and the survey instrument.

3.2.1 Thematic analysis: To establish social capital as a theoretical outcome of engagement in the context of academic discourse – which had so far revealed that

a gap exists between engagement and its effects – it was necessary to return to the literature. An analysis of articles advocating for engagement on the basis of benefits to participants could reveal explicit and explicit connections between participatory process and social capital, as well as providing relevant historical context or frameworks incorporating the concepts. Given that proposed benefits of participation have already been found to include benefits that align closely with social capital, including developed skills and sense of agency, commitment to a communal good and understanding of the governance process, it was necessary to consolidate the theory by adding explicit references, or examples that clearly linked both concepts. This was achieved through applying a more focused lens on articles already identified on benefits of engagement, and through simultaneously expanding and refining the scope of the review with supplementary academic and other publications addressing social capital. This literature was subsequently analysed to establish identified standards – from the points of view of both participants and administration agencies – likely to lead to the development of social capital. Evaluation criteria were chosen because they appeared, either explicitly or implicitly, in both practice-based and academic references, were listed by multiple sources, or have been identified as relating to the development of social capital. Data from the case study analysis was supplemented with further information derived from an application of the evaluation framework to responses to surveys of participants in a range of typical local engagement activities. Criteria were summarised and synthesised, then presented in table form to clearly indicate the standards by which social capital could be considered an outcome of participation.

3.2.2 Practice analysis: Given the discrepancy between theoretical benefits of participation with outcomes on the ground, it was deemed imperative that both

theoretical and ‘on the ground’, or practical, perspectives be incorporated into the methodology. To this end, a practice analysis of case studies, incorporating a desk review and application of an evaluation framework, would shed light on how and whether participation in planning contributed to the development of social capital – and whether the failure to achieve this or other benefits could be ascribed to failures or deficiencies of implementation. The evaluation framework, developed through the thematic analysis stage of the research process, was applied to examples of engagement including academic reviews of participatory initiatives, summary reports and minutes produced by state and local government administrations and the author’s informal experiential evaluations of participation. A content analysis of these was performed by conducting word searches for social capital criteria and related terms – for example ‘capacity’ and ‘understanding’ – to determine the extent to which aspects of social capital were explicitly integrated with engagement objectives and design. This approach will allow for potential comparisons between interventions on the top-down ‘placatory’ end of the spectrum as well as those fitting a community-led ‘protest’ description, helping to avoid issues related to inconsistent definitions that make impartial evaluation of engagement so difficult.

3.2.3 Survey: The subjective nature of participation (Payne 1973) and social capital (Mohnen et al 2010; Yin 2015) suggested the value and appropriateness of incorporating participant input on involvement in engagement processes into the data. As well as confirming or repudiating the results of the practice analysis, people’s perspectives on the interventions they had taken part in provided insight into expectations and effects of engagement not apparent from an academic or administrative point of view. Surveys were administered to people who had been involved in participatory planning within 10km of the Brisbane CBD over the past

ten years. Direct invitations to take part were issued via mailing lists and newsletters distributed by Councillors Jonathon Sri and Nicole Johnston and on local community Facebook group pages, including Annerley Community, Yeronga Residents and the Moorooka Community Grapevine. Responses were categorised according to participation type, with results for level of involvement, level of satisfaction and perceived benefits collated and cross-referenced against qualitative responses. Responses were also investigated to determine any correlations between variables including patterns of involvement based on demographics. Limited resources and inconsistency of recorded or available reports on engagement meant that survey participants in this research reflected a wealthy, highly educated inner-urban demographic. As per section (2.3.3) this is not unrepresentative of standard examples of engagement.

To provide a Queensland relevant context for analysis of the impact of engagement on the development of social capital, the practice analysis supplemented reviews of inner-and suburban examples of local-government-run Neighbourhood Plans and Community Planning Teams – and the grassroots campaigns that mobilise in response to these – with analysis of regional interventions: the Goodna Service Integration Plan – designed with an explicit capacity-building agenda – the State Government’s Shaping South East Queensland consultation, and a whole-of-state visioning and consultation project, the Queensland Plan.

3.3. Instruments: survey design

A survey was distributed to people (n=33, demographic information supplied in Table 4.3 and Appendices B1) who had taken part in local participatory interventions. Surveys comprised 25 multiple choice, Likert-scale or free comment items in three categories. The first section, relating to “Perceptions of experience in

community planning activities”, asked respondents to nominate the public participation process they had been involved with, to comment on what role they played and how they rated the activity in terms of level of involvement, skills acquired, and whether they would participate in a similar activity again. Survey questions were chosen to give respondents an opportunity to reflect on and describe their experience of participation, and to allow for identification of relationships between specific participatory activities and level of involvement – the dependent variables – with some of the indicators of social capital. Although the term ‘social capital’ was included in the survey title and introductory paragraph, it was deliberately omitted in questions; instead, respondents were asked whether they had developed skills and knowledge, a sense of community, connections with similar others and connections with others more powerful as a result of their participation. They were also asked whether they had been able to develop their skills, and whether they would participate again. These questions relate to the bridging and bonding categories of social capital identified by Putnam in his work on the concept (2000) as well as the linking type added by Poortinga in 2006 – the latter because ongoing potential for or commitment to involvement implies a sense of responsibility for one’s home suburb or city. These six items comprised an Indicators of Social Capital (ISC) score.

The second part of the survey was adapted from the Psychological Sense of Community (PSC) Scale developed by Nasar and Julian (1995) and utilised in Hollie Lund’s study of Sense of Community and the Built Environment (2002). This part of the survey comprised Likert scale responses ranging from Completely agree – Slightly agree – Neither agree nor disagree – Slightly disagree and Completely disagree. Sense of community has similar connotations as social capital, and it was

originally envisaged that responses to these PSC statements would provide a baseline or control against which to compare respondents' experiences of participation. As surveys were administered after participation had taken place, it was not possible to determine whether PSC was intrinsic or a result of participation. Instead, to define a relationship between participation and social capital development, a 'social capital index' (SCI) was developed, combining responses to questions 5 and 6, which relate to human capital developed because of participation, and 8, which relates to sense of agency/responsibility for one's neighbourhood/community.

The third, demographic section asked participants to provide information on details including age, income, residential status and time spent in the area. These independent variables provided the means to identify and control for established relationships between certain groups and levels of social capital: people with lower levels of education and lower incomes, for example, are less likely to be involved in social and civic activities (Baum et al 2000, p414), while women and older people have been found to respond more acutely to aspects of the built environment relating to increased or decreased social capital (Baum and Palmer 2002; Mohnen et al 2011). A complete copy of the final survey can be found in the Appendices chapter.

3.4 Research protocol and analysis

The following section outlines the procedure and timeline for collecting and recording data for the three stages of this study, which defines and operationalises social capital towards answering, 'How does community participation in planning interventions contribute to the development of social capital?'

Stage 1: Thematic analysis

1. Following a broad review of participation literature and case studies to identify current gaps and shape a conceptual framework for the thesis, a subsequent thematic analysis of relevant articles was conducted to seek out explicit or implied references to a connection between engagement and social capital;
2. Results of searches were collated and presented as per a literature review, with themes connecting participation and social capital identified;
3. A social capital assessment tool synthesising criteria from academic and practical sources was developed.

Stage 2: Practice analysis

1. Locally and politically relevant community engagement case studies were identified from the literature;
2. The evaluation framework derived from Stage 1's thematic analysis was applied to these case studies to determine the extent to which they met criteria determined to contribute to the development of social capital;
3. Results of analysis were recorded;
4. A table summarising the analysis, using star ratings to indicate case studies' approximate alignment with social capital criteria, was produced.

Stage 3: Survey and analysis

1. An application for ethics approval was submitted;

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2. Contact with Councillors Jonathon Sri and Nicole Johnston was made, along with people known to the author who have taken part in planning activities to establish intent to conduct a study into community engagement and potential for cooperation;
 3. After ethics approval was granted, including a variation submitted on the original questions (provided in the Appendices), initial contacts were sent letters advising of the study's aims and approach (Appendix A);
 4. Broad-based invitations to participate were published on social media platforms facebook and LinkedIn;
 5. A survey of people who have been involved in participatory activities was conducted over three months, during which regular reminders to take part were sent via social media and email;
 6. Responses were monitored over this period to ensure the survey was effective in terms of eliciting useful, relevant data;
 7. Interim results of the survey were printed and discussed with supervisors to determine utility and relevance of data;
 8. Once the survey was finished, final reports were printed out and data reviewed to determine any obvious patterns;
 9. Survey responses were categorised according to participation type, with answers scored or coded to facilitate comparison;
 10. A metric for social capital based on the literature and survey responses was developed;

11. Social capital indicators and other responses were analysed according to the frameworks derived from the literature and informal evaluations, and
12. Results from the practice analysis and survey, including demographic factors and existing sense of community, were triangulated and analysed, taking into account variations in responses, engagement outcome, type and level of involvement, and a connection between different types of participation and social capital was posited.

A complete list of survey results, letters of approach and invitations to participate is available in the Appendices section.

3.5 Ethics and Limitations

My personal and academic positions present potential for bias or conflict of interest, as a self-identified member of ‘the usual suspects’ in planning interventions, research student of participatory planning, and as a relatively well-resourced member of society who can afford to live close to the CBD, transport and other services, and who is personally interested in participatory planning. These circumstances contribute to a conflicted perspective; I benefit from both centralised planning approaches and opportunities for engagement, but it is in my academic interests to present participation in as unflattering and conflicted way as possible to ensure the topic appears relevant and interesting. My role as a community organiser who has had personal, equivocal involvement with built environment interventions may also contribute to an unfairly negative perspective of local government authorities. On the other hand, as a member of the majority class I am less likely to notice issues around equitable access. To counter this bias, and in the interests of genuinely contributing to a clear-eyed evaluation of engagement activities, I have incorporated as broad a range of perspectives as possible, including sanctioned, ‘official’ accounts and

reports. Similarly, it could be argued that the process of involvement for participants invites more negative responses than would otherwise have been the case. The study's small sample size undertaken could also be seen as limiting relevance and applicability. The methodology, incorporating a practice analysis as well as a secondary literature review, has been designed to compensate for the relative paucity of data. Further, a qualitative analysis of survey responses provided supplementary richness and depth. Sampling by self-selection would "identify participants that would be able to best address the focus question and not to generalize the whole population", thus crystallising those perceived issues with engagement, as, consistent with the literature (2.3.3), those participating in planning interventions are not representative of the population as a whole" (Mehdipanah et al 2013, p10).

Finally, the timing and structure of the survey limit the potential for determining a direct causal relationship between participation in planning and social capital. It is hoped that this study's opportunistic or expedient approach to data, incorporating individual responses as part of a broader review of engagement processes, will nonetheless identify contextual or correlative factors providing new insight into the role of participation in planning in the development of social capital.

Chapter 4: Results

This chapter details results from the three research stages towards addressing the thesis question, ‘How does community participation in planning interventions contribute to the development of social capital?’.

The first section describes findings of the thematic analysis of the literature on the theoretical relationship between participation and social capital, and includes the related evaluation framework by which participation’s potential to contribute to the development of social capital will be assessed. The second part of the chapter describes the practice analysis: application of the evaluation framework to relevant, desk-reviewed case studies, with results from a survey of engagement participants from the third section of the methodology. The summary will incorporate cross-reference or triangulation (Yin 2015) of the three sources. The following Discussion chapter looks at the implications of Results in the context of the study’s significance and scope, and is followed by the Conclusions chapter, which responds to the principal thesis question: How does involvement in participatory planning interventions contribute to the development of social capital?

4.1 Thematic Analysis. Results from the secondary review of the literature to establish theoretical connections between social capital and participation indicated that, much like engagement, social capital has been posited as fundamental to the functioning of a healthy civil democratic society (Baum et al 2000; Cox 2000; Onyx and Bullen 2000; Woolcock 2010). Although social capital may pertain to both personal and collective efficacy (Onyx and Bullen 2000), its description as the ‘glue’ that holds society together (Putnam 2000), shows that it is more generally conceived as a collective value, bound by reciprocity, shared norms, understanding and trust (OECD 2001; Onyx and Bullen 2000; Woolcock and Narayan 2000), enabling

collective actions, co-operation within or among groups (Onyx and Bullen 2000; Woolcock and Naryan 2000). Social capital may operate as either ‘bonding’ social capital, connecting people more closely to their immediate social groups and social support networks, ‘bridging’ social capital, comprising social connections that enable people to draw on wider groups and resources, and ‘linking’ social capital, that creates ‘vertical’ connections across institutionalised power or authority structures (Poortinga 2006, p256, Putnam 2000; Head 2008).

Concepts resembling social capital have appeared throughout history, but the first specific use of the term was made in 1916 when the U.S. State Supervisor of Rural Schools, L.J. Hanifan, identified the role community support networks could play in encouraging students to attend and stay at school. He saw the coordinated involvement of the broader community as a vital – but undersupplied – resource in rural America, where it was imagined to bear a “social potentiality sufficient to the substantial improvement in living conditions in the whole community” (Hanifan 1916, p130). The connection between coordinated, active involvement in public life has thence been explicitly linked to the development of “individual resources for social and political action” (Butterworth 2000), personal qualities with collective benefits: “self-development, citizenship and commitment to the public good” (Laurian and Shaw 2009, p294), “often expressed as building ‘social capital’ in the current literature” (Crawford 2008, p533). Although social characteristics – including social skills, charisma, and network of connections – enable an individual to “reap market and non-market returns from interactions with others” (Poortinga 2006, p438), collectivity is more frequently seen as the natural element for social capital’s existence. Involvement – networking, connecting, decision-making – aids the development of “participatory competence” (Butterworth 2000, p20), and is

necessary “for the effective mobilisation of political institutions and will” (Poortinga 2006, p256). This ‘network power’ (Innes and Booher 2001) is seen to contribute to collective intelligence, a jointly held resource enabling networked agencies or individuals to come up with strategies for achieving common goals (Chavis and Wandersman 1990) to improve the choices available to all of them, and to accomplish things they could not otherwise (Innes and Booher 2001).

Like planning before it, social capital was seen as politically or ideologically neutral, neither market nor government, combining abstract social theory with practical applications, and leveraging collective action for mutual benefit. Appearing to offer a more complex, constructive means of analysing human behaviour, (Woolcock 2010, p475), the concept of social capital subsequently formed the focus for policies of the late 90s and early 2000s, catalysing public spending reform, filling funding gaps that economic rationalist approaches to service provision helped create (Adams and Hess 2001; Reddel and Woolcock 2004). The “growing re-emergence in academic and policy thinking” of social capital as one of “the foundations of political activity and policy-making” (Reddel and Woolcock 2004, p75) was assured with the publication of “Bowling Alone”, by U.S. political scientist, Robert Putnam (2000). Based on years of research, the book identified a pattern of deterioration of sense of community, evidenced by reductions in participation in organisations and activities that formerly bound Americans to one another and to their country, including church groups, voluntary associations and community groups. In the same year that Putnam’s research opus was published, Australian academic and activist Eva Cox explicitly identified the connection between active involvement in governance and the development of social capital. Cox argued that participation in the public sphere is “one of the mechanisms through which we demonstrate and practice the necessary

and socially vital arts of social connection” (2000) that lay “a platform for ... the common good” (Cox 2000). Access to social capital was seen to be improve through government consultation (Barr 2016), requiring “the active and willing engagement of citizens within a participative community” (Onyx and Bullen 2000, p25) – social capital was a “by-product of the processes which constitute societies” (Cox 2001, p102).

In Australia under state, local and federal policy levels, social capital was seen as something governments could foster through responsive decision-making, arrangements for democratic leadership and social inclusion, and through community participation in planning and other areas of governance (Muirhead and Woolcock 2008). Reviews of the concept undertaken by the Australian Bureau of Statistics and the Australian Productivity Commission confirmed the two-way relationship between social capital and participation, observing that, as well as social networks and support structures, the expression of social capital was evident in civic and political involvement, empowerment and community participation (ABS 2004, p375), with pragmatic benefits to society including reduced transaction costs, increased cooperative behaviour, diffused knowledge and innovations, and “enhancements to personal well-being and associated spill-overs” (Productivity Commission 2003).

Despite issues some academics have with a perceived overlap of economic and humanist thinking (Inaba 2013, Glaeser et al 2002), the usage of the word “capital” in the term is not an accident; the alignment of personal and networked skills with economic value that ‘capital’ implies is generally accepted (Glaeser et al, 2002, Farr 2004), noting a correlation of high levels of trust with economic growth (p437). Connections between social capital and economic outcomes have been demonstrated

(Putnam 1996; Cuthill 2003) and “it is argued that high levels of social (and human) capital in communities provides positive social, economic and democratic outcomes which contribute to community well-being” (Cuthill 2003, p375). It has also been linked to “economic development, a well-functioning democracy, good education, and safe and productive neighbourhoods” (Poortinga 2006). Of particular interest to policy makers, “studies have consistently demonstrated that there are strong links between individual levels of social trust, civic participation, and people’s objective and subjective health” (Poortinga 2006, p257).

References to social capital have diminished significantly since its heyday (Woolcock 2010), and recent studies (Shiel et al 2018) have identified inconsistent scientific rigour in studies linking social capital with empirically measurable effects on health, but what Cox called “the best measure of our social processes, and of the resilience of our connectedness, that we can devise” (2001, p101), continues to be cited in current academic literature and government policy in a range of fields including “economics, political science, sociology, social psychology, business administration, education, and ... social epidemiology” (Inaba 2013, also Woolcock 2010). Demonstrated connections with other community assets – “the social capital of communities can contribute to beneficial economic and social outcomes in urban development, such as higher educational attainment, better health, lower levels of crime, more effective forms of government and a growth in GDP” (Paranagamage et al 2010, p231; also Cuthill 2003; Poortinga 2006) – mean it remains a compelling, pervasive policy aspiration, albeit more likely expressed now in terms of resilience (Weller and Bolleter 2013, p245, Yigitcanlar et al 2020), and liveability (Davern et al 2017, 2020; Leyden 2003; Lund 2002; Rogers et al 2013; Wood et al 2010).

The extent to which participation in planning may foster “a sense of collective agency and responsibility for the achievement of common goods or goals, and enables the development of shared understandings about the kind of society we wish to create and inhabit” (Holmes 2011, p7), to realise ‘the potential of citizens and resources’ through the development of social capital – the mechanisms by which it does so so – are unclear (Inaba 2013, Glaeser et al 2002). If it remains the case that “the development of local government policy and programs which support effective citizen participation in local governance are seen as key requirements in achieving local community well-being” (Cuthill 2003, p373) then identifying those “conditions that foster and strengthen sense of community within residential neighbourhoods is an important task for researchers and planners alike”. (Francis et al 2012, p402), furthermore, “understanding our efforts to involve people in public decision making within the context of social capital might allow us to evaluate the effectiveness of our (participatory) processes” (Crawford 2008, p534).

Development of Evaluation Framework

Criteria by which to assess participatory planning processes were described in multiple sources throughout the literature (BCC 2019; Brown and Wei Chin 2013; Laurian and Shaw 2009; Rowe and Frewer 2000). Although these were not formulated to specifically identify ‘conditions that foster and strengthen sense of community’, thus social capital, it is possible to assume a normative position whereby benefits – including social capital – are more likely to be derived from involvement in planning interventions when engagement is ‘good’, ‘genuine’ or ‘meaningful’; there will be considerable overlap, therefore, between criteria for ‘effective’ participation and that which is likely to produce social capital. The decision to reproduce several criteria that appear in Brown and Wei Chin’s (2013)

paper on the assessment of engagement is supported by those authors' observation that there exist "a limited number of ways one can judge the effectiveness of a participatory process; one would not expect entirely new evaluation criteria to emerge frequently in the literature" (p564). Significant overlap between this framework and objectives described in Brisbane City Council's Community Engagement policy, the most comprehensive and easily accessible outline of participation from the point of view of an administrator, were evident, including representativeness, independence and transparent process. Some criteria and citations have been synthesised to reflect these similarities, and to provide more broadly relevant participation objectives. Although it may be the case that standards listed here contribute to social capital in varying amounts, it is expected that overall benefits for participants will be shown to bear a discernible relationship with the quality of the engagement process as a whole.

Evaluation criteria were categorised into Process and Outcome groups by which to assess the quality or effectiveness of participation. This distinction would allow for potential comparisons on which aspects of participation have greater impact on the potential for benefits to accrue. Criteria for Process included 'Accessibility', a synthesis of 'resource accessibility' (Brown and Wei Chin 2013, Rowe and Frewer 2000), 'non-technical language/materials' (Brown and Wei Chin 2013) and 'comfort and convenience' (Brown and Wei Chin 2013; BCC 2019). 'Seeking out those affected' was combined with "planned, resourced and effectively promoted to those likely to be interested or affected" from BCC's Community Engagement Policy (2019), to produce the criterion of 'Relevance'. And 'Communicative about results of input' (IAP2 Australasia 2019, Brown and Wei Chin 2013) was amalgamated with BCC's 'timely feedback to participants and the

broader community showing how community input has been considered and what final outcomes have been determined by Council’ (2019) to produce ‘Communicated influence on decision’. Although ‘Deliberative’ (Brown and Wei Chin 2013; Healey 1992; Heywood 2011; Innes and Booher 2004) was not included in any of Brisbane City Council’s explicit engagement objectives, it has been included as part of this framework as it is considered a requirement for many of the Benefits of Participation listed in (2.2) the Literature Review. Outcome criteria, focused on the results of participation, were summarised to: ‘Influence on policy’, ‘Increased understanding’, ‘Increased trust’, ‘Workable solutions’ (which combined ‘consensus’, ‘compromise’ and ‘acceptable solutions’), and ‘Participant satisfaction’.

Table 4.1. Participation Evaluation Framework

Criteria	Description	Source
Process: Representative-ness	‘Public participants should comprise a broadly representative sample of the population of the affected public’. ‘takes into consideration the diversity of the community’	Brown & Wei Chin 2013; Rowe & Frewer 2000, p12, BCC 2019
Independence	‘The participation process should be conducted in an independent, unbiased way’	Brown & Wei Chin 2013; Rowe & Frewer 2000, p13
Early involvement	‘The public should be involved as early as possible in the process as soon as value judgments become salient’	Brown & Wei Chin 2013; Rowe & Frewer 2000, p14
Transparency	‘The process should be transparent so that the public can see what is going on and how decisions are being made’. Commitment to transparency as per City of Brisbane Act’s Five Key principles (2010); ‘open and accountable processes’	Brown & Wei Chin 2013; Rowe & Frewer 2000, p15, BCC 2019; Cuthill 2003
Relevance	‘Public participation seeks out and facilitates the involvement of those potentially affected by or interested in a decision’, “is planned, resourced and effectively promoted to those likely to be interested or affected”	IAP2 Australasia 2019; Brown & Wei Chin 2013; BCC 2019
Accessibility*	‘Public participants should have access to the appropriate resources to enable them to successfully fulfil their brief’, ‘The timing and place of meetings should be convenient [and]. comfortable’, ‘provides a	BCC 2019; Brown & Wei Chin 2013; Rowe & Frewer 2000, p15

	range of accessible opportunities for community and stakeholder participation'	
Deliberative quality	All participants should be given the chance to speak and provide opinions; a deliberative approach lends "a deeper dimension to planning dilemmas and solutions", and is "more likely to result in laws that are recognised as legitimate and just"	Booher 2008; Brown and Wei Chin 2013; Crawford et al 2008
Expectations management	The nature and scope of the participation task should be clearly defined, 'clearly articulates the level of influence the community has on the decision making process'	BCC 2019; Rowe & Frewer 2000, p16
Communicated influence on decisions	'Public participation communicates to participants how their input affected the decision', 'timely feedback to participants and the broader community [on] outcomes'	IAP2 Australasia 2019; BCC 2019
Outcome: Influence on Outcome	'The output of the procedure should have a genuine impact on policy'	Arnstein 1969; Brown & Wei Chin 2013; Butterfoss 2006; Rowe and Frewer 2000, p14
Increased understanding	Public participation should build mutual understanding between stakeholders and commit to the public good identified, 'ensure that Council has access to a range of information about community and stakeholder needs, opinions and options prior to making decisions'	BCC 2019; Brown & Wei Chin 2013; Butterfoss, 2006; Butterworth 2000; Innes & Booher 2000; Paranagamage et al 2010; Rowe & Frewer 2000, p14
Increased trust	Public participation should build trust and lasting relationships, 'so that it encourages community members and stakeholders to increase their trust in Council generally'	Brown & Wei Chin 2013; Innes & Booher 2000; Laurian & Shaw, 2009, BCC 2019
Workable solutions	Public participation should create a compromise and acceptable, practical solutions	Brown & Wei Chin 2013; Laurian & Shaw, 2009
Participant satisfaction	Good public participation should result in high satisfaction amongst participants	Brown & Wei Chin 2013; Butterfoss 2006; Laurian & Shaw 2009; Paranagamage et al 2010; Putnam 2000

Representativeness: The most frequently cited process criterion for effective participation was 'Representativeness', entailing that 'participants (...) comprise a broadly representative sample of the population of the affected public" (Brown and Wei Chin 2013). The role this broad invitation to participate plays in the formation of social capital can be defined by opportunities for participants to have access to a

broad range of perspectives and experiences, and by adherence to current standards of democracy and equity. Further, the notion of representativeness aligns with “tolerance of diversity”, an aspect of social capital identified by the Australian Bureau of Statistics into its review of the subject (2004), and with the current American Institute of Certified Planners Code of Ethics, which states: “Participation should be broad enough to include those who lack formal organization or influence” (Slotterback and Lauria 2019, p183).

Independence: The often fraught relationship between planning and power (Healey 1992; Hillier 2000; Thorpe 2017) suggests a need to separate powers for participation to be seen as credible and trustworthy. If, as is often the case, participation is not implemented independently, like a real estate agent purporting to act in the interests of both buyer and seller, such compromise “can erode public confidence in the planning system” (Ruming 2019, p112).

Transparency: Along with accountability, transparency has been identified as one of the components of good governance (OECD 2001; Pillora and McKinlay 2001), vital to the establishment of the norms, networks and reciprocity Putnam saw as requisite components of social capital (1990, also Baum et al 2000), and to the development of social and institutional trust. Participation in decision-making governance has been identified as means of improving standards of government openness, as “more robust expectations of transparency and accountability help define the new civics of leading change” (Briggs 2008, p4).

Early Involvement: Prior to the Skeffington report, public involvement tended to take place once plans were ‘cut and dried’. Participation under these circumstances was seen as a means of ‘rubber-stamping’ decisions (Shapely, 2014, ix), and the inability of plans to reflect community input more likely to lead to antagonistic

exchanges (Shapely, 2014, ix), with the public viewing the local authority ‘more as an antagonist than as the representative of the community’ (Great Britain 1969, p3). Communities “struggle to trust participatory strategic visioning exercises when their rights at development assessment are removed” (Shevellar et al p267), as it diminishes opportunities to challenge dominant planning orthodoxies (Legacy 2016). ‘Early Involvement’, therefore, where the public is involved in participation as soon as value judgments become salient (IAP2 2019), is vital if engagement is to further standards of collaboration between community and authorities, and thus to function as a political and social good.

Relevance: Much like representativeness, participation needs to ‘seek out and facilitate the involvement of those potentially affected by interested in a decision’ to meet democratic requirements and thereby support the development of social capital. A sense of ownership and responsibility – both contributors to a place-based sense of identity and community (Baum and Palmer 2002; Chavis and Wandersman 1990; Semenza 2003, 2009; Francis et al 2012) – was also apparent to the authors of the Skeffington Report, who observed that “people should be ‘able to say what kind of community they live in and how it should develop’, and that they should be able to do so in ways which ‘influence the shape of our community’ so that communities ‘reflect our best aspirations’ (Great Britain 1969, p3).

Accessibility: Given the extent to which participation has been envisaged as a means of redressing inequity (Arnstein 1969; Fainstein 2014; Healey 2002), it follows that participation must present as few barriers to engagement for a diverse range of participants as possible, and to provide equitable, straightforward access to engagement activities and materials, to ensure social-capital-promoting standards for democracy and equity are maintained. Not only does this contribute to the ease with

which criteria for Representativeness may be met; it increases the goodwill with which participants from all backgrounds view engagement administrators, thus contributing to a sense of common good and social capital.

Deliberative quality: A deliberative approach values a citizen's perspective of 'life in community' by acknowledging their abilities, needs, democratic rights and responsibilities (Cuthill 2003). Opportunities to discuss and deliberate over decisions can result in increased community support (Heywood 2019), sense of ownership and perceived legitimacy of government (Laurian and Shaw 2009, Shapely 2014), with the greater objective of creating cities and cultures that reflect and support all the people who live in and use them (Healey 1992; Innes and Booher 2004, Ng 2016).

Expectations Management: The perception that good process has been adhered to is almost more important than process itself (Baum et al 2000; Fainstein 2014; Laurian and Shaw 2009; Purcell 2009). Irrespective of the type of engagement implemented, ensuring those involved know what to expect is vital if positive outcomes are to be achieved (Aulich 2011, Brownhill and Parker 2010, Briggs 2008, Rowe and Frewer 2000): "Effective participation can occur at any level on the IAP2 spectrum. The key to effective participation is more about communicating and managing the decision expectations of participants in the process" of what the process involves to ensure mistrust and disaffection are not the outcome of engagement (Aulich 2011; Briggs 2008; Brownhill and Parker 2010; Rowe and Frewer 2000). It is clearly politically expedient for participation administrators to bear this in mind.

Influence on Outcome: Putnam's observation that, if standards of democracy are to be improved, increased levels of engagement should ensure public institutions are "devices for achieving purposes, not just for achieving agreement" (de Souza

2008, p8). Giving people “the opportunity to have a meaningful impact on the development of plans and programs that may affect them” remains an explicit commitment in the American Institute of Certified Planners Code of Ethics (Slotterback and Lauria 2019), and, as for satisfaction, there are implications for public perceptions of failing to meet standards of credibility: ‘If a procedure is effectively constituted but perceived by the public to be in some sense unfair or undemocratic, then the procedure may fail in alleviating public concerns. On the other hand, if a procedure and its recommendations are accepted by the public, but the ultimate decision is attained in an ineffective manner, its implementation could prove objectively damaging for sponsors and public’ (Laurian and Shaw 2009).

Increased understanding: That participation should contribute to mutual understanding between planners and community was a defining aim of the Skeffington Report, which noted that “the expenditure of time and effort will be justified if it produces an understanding, co-operative public and planning better geared to public opinion” (Great Britain 1969, p5). The potential for participatory processes to help “build participant skills, knowledge and ability, and relationships based on trust and tolerance” (Cuthill 2003, p378) relates to a strengthened democracy, improved community capacity and human capital, all components of social capital (Baum et al 2000; Baum and Palmer 2002; Cox 2000; Poortinga 2006; Putnam 2000). While some critics have proposed that it is the role of participants to “have or develop the skills necessary to address community needs” (Chavis and Wandersman 1990, p74), others hold administrators responsible for facilitating public engagement by building and supporting participant capacity (Arnstein 1969; Butterworth 2000; Cuthill 2003; Cuthill and Fein 2003), or humanising the system (Payne 1973, p26).

Trust: Lack of trust in government institutions has been identified as one of the drivers of participation (Aulich 2011, Cuthill 2007; Pillora and McKinlay 2011; Shevellar et al 2015), and may lead to future barriers to adoption of engagement (Brown and Wei Chin 2013, Cuthill 2007, Ruming 2019). This process can become cyclic, whereby “A lack of responsive political institutions results in citizens feeling alienated from decision making, experience a sense of powerlessness, lose trust in governments, and show less willingness to be involved next time” (Cuthill 2003, p382). The potential for engagement to redress representative system’s deficiencies, therefore, is seen as an object for participation (BCC 2019). As trust in people and social institutions is an important component of social capital (ABS 2004), the building of countervailing power in local communities can help create “a more equitable society based on understanding, trust and informed action for the common good” (Cuthill 2003, p378).

Workable solutions: The need for pragmatism inherent in the term ‘workable’ speaks as much to the institutional conservatism and inertia (Legacy 2016) that shapes participation as it does to a need for understanding and agreement between stakeholders, recognising that participation’s inherent conflict (Brownhill and Parker 2010; Legacy 2016; Schatz and Rogers 2016; Shapely 2014) needs to be managed if it is to constitute a public good.

Participant satisfaction: Positive community perception is integral if engagement is to achieve its political objectives, and for social capital to develop. Some theorists attribute New Public Management’s framing of “members of the public (...) as ‘customers’ or ‘consumers’, whose service demands were to be met and whose policy preferences were to be satisfied” (Holmes 2011, p10), as the source of this connection.

Perceived impact: Even those who emphasise the importance of the engagement process recognise that, for benefits to be realised, participation must have a measurable effect on outcomes (Arnstein 1969; Fainstein 2014, Purcell 2013). Participation that does not affect decisions, therefore, can be seen to have failed (Laurian and Shaw 2009) potentially leading “to disillusionment and dislocation ... (and) ... a feeling of apathy” (Shapely 2014, xvii).

4.2 Practice Analysis and Survey. This thesis’ study into how local examples of participation meet conditions towards the development of social capital was performed by desk review and analysis of application of case studies in the literature according to the evaluation framework devised through the thematic analysis, supplemented by first-person input from survey responses. Results are grouped according to analytical stages – desk review, evaluation framework, survey results – for each of the administering body’s projects, in reverse chronological order, which is broadly inversely correlated with the amount and quality of information available.

4.2.1 Brisbane City Council has a particularly consistent record of providing well-resourced opportunities for participation in planning governance. Community engagement is a mandated requirement of the City of Brisbane Act (2010), which states: “Brisbane City Council is guided by five key principles to ensure accountable, effective, efficient and sustainable governance. The principles that apply to community engagement uphold transparent and effective processes, and decision-making in the public interest; and emocratic representation, social inclusion and meaningful community engagement”. (City of Brisbane Act 2010 (Qld), section 4(2) (BCC 2014). In a statement on Community Engagement published on Council’s website in 2010, it is noted that two official documents, Living in Brisbane 2026 Vision and Council’s Organisation Strategy, “strongly articulate Council’s intent to

engage the community on major issues affecting the future of the city and activities that have significant impacts on neighbourhoods” (BCC 2014). A comprehensive permanent staff of professional planners, dedicated community planning team and clearly established and defined processes for running community engagement give Council significant resources to draw on.

Nominated as Council’s “most comprehensive example of meaningful community engagement” (BCC 2011, p4), as well as the city’s longest-running example of engagement (Brown and Wei Chin 2013), Neighbourhood Plans, incorporating Community Planning Teams, are suburb-wide reforms to Brisbane City Council’s whole-of-city planning framework, Brisbane CityPlan 2014. Implemented piecemeal across the city, with different suburbs or groups of neighbouring suburbs being targeted for attention at any time, the program involves two or three projects annually, to “guide development in local communities, to ensure each area retains and enhances its own special character and qualities” (BCC 2019). Consultation involves advising locals and other stakeholders of impending consultation activity, distributing newsletters to affected suburbs, inviting those interested to respond to online questionnaires, talk-to-a-planner sessions at community events, and invitations to nominate for a position on the Community Planning Team. Community Planning Teams contribute to the BCC Neighbourhood Plan process. Made up of groups of up to 30 stakeholders from a particular area, positions for these roles are intended to reflect “the population of the area”, with “a broad range of jobs, interests and experience” (BCC 2019), and are chosen by Council from a group of self-nominated volunteers. CP Teams are supported by Brisbane City Council’s project managers, economic development officers, city architects and heritage experts and members of the city’s planning board (or at least a

representative), and meet between four and six times over the course of a Neighbourhood Plan to learn more about the planning process, discuss their concerns and ideas for the area, and identify possible outcomes for development in the area. Elected ward representatives are present at CPT meetings but not permitted to contribute or influence participants. Local elected councillors attend Community Development Team meetings but are present as witnesses only and are not permitted to contribute opinions or ideas. Council describes the Neighbourhood Plan process as “providing you with an opportunity to have your say on how your communities will develop in the future” (BCC 2019).

Independent analysis suggests that the process is frequently contentious. In 2013, an evaluation of engagement conducted as part of the Sherwood-Graceville Neighbourhood Plan revealed unflattering results; survey respondents expressed considerable dismay and dissatisfaction that their input, gathered through the Neighbourhood Plan process, had no bearing on final outcomes (Brown and Wei Chin 2013). Feedback was particularly cynical from those who had been involved in the Community Planning Teams for Sherwood Graceville, who reported lower levels of satisfaction than those who were less involved in the Neighbourhood Plan (Brown and Wei Chin 2013). More recent Neighbourhood Plans have followed similar patterns. The engagement process for what was originally St Lucia-Taringa hit such a roadblock following its release in 2011 – in response to a perceived lack of evidence of the community’s concerns that the plan failed to address flood mitigation, public transport or the capacity of local infrastructure to manage increased residential usage – that the process was put on hold until 2015. After what an anonymous participant called “a failure of the planning team to properly investigate growth potential, land suitability and growth of [the local university] in the neighbourhood” (2017), the

suburb of St Lucia was excised from the plan altogether. The Ferny Grove-Upper Kedron area's Neighbourhood Plan process was impacted by a different issue; a state review of the draft neighbourhood plan for the area had called for an increase in housing density, and Council granted approval for the Cedar Woods development of 1500 residences in what was originally planned for 980 dwellings. Subsequent outcry from the community, part of the Neighbourhood Plan process, ensued, and the matter was reviewed by state and local governments in turn until the final plan reflected the original, lower density.

Brisbane City Council ran Plan Your Brisbane, a whole-of-city engagement project, over a "vast array of engagement techniques" (Articulous 2018), including citywide forums, school and library activities, 50 pop-up information kiosks in a variety of locations, a short film competition, a live interactive survey, online digital surveys and a 'densification' game, between September 2017 and April 2018. Plan Your Brisbane also incorporated around over the two-year process. Intended to help Council "understand what Brisbane residents most loved about the city and what residents believed Council should improve to help plan for Brisbane's future" (Articulous 2018) – specifically, how existing residents envisaged how Brisbane would accommodate an additional 386,000 people by 2041 – the exercise engaged around 100,000 Brisbane residents out of a total population of 2.4 million. According to the contracted report on Plan Your Brisbane, the 8-month process involved more than 277,000 interactions and more than 100,000 "genuine engagements", where specific contributions were provided (Articulous 2018).

Part of the broader Plan Your Brisbane, the two Intergenerational Forums were intended to appeal to a more age-diverse range of people than the consultation process as a whole. Differences between the intergenerational events and the

standard Citywide Forum were largely trivial, however; both took place on the imposing first floor ‘Presidential Ballroom’ of an inner-city hotel, and both were marketed to the general public – albeit with more focus on schools and through BCC’s Seniors platform and communications network for the intergenerational event – and both events followed similar formats, with the audience listening to a series of speakers, interspersed with use of an interactive online application that generated ‘word clouds’ of frequently mentioned terms, and group discussions of priorities for the city. Both forums were part of the seven-month Plan Your Brisbane process inviting people to be involved in influencing future planning for Brisbane.

CityShape2026 was implemented under Lord Mayor Campbell Newman in Brisbane between 2005 and 2006, to determine what form of development Brisbane residents would accept as the city grew to accommodate a further 200,000 people, which would significantly impact on the traditionally low-density city. Developed as an extension of Council’s Neighbourhood Planning initiative, the process sought to determine “a clear direction for how to manage Brisbane’s growth over the next 20 years” (BCC 2006), and was seen as “particularly important for neighbourhoods near major centres or where significant changes will take place” (BCC 2006). Around 60,000 people were involved in the citywide consultation exercise (McCosker 2017), with forty-one percent of CityShape 2026 respondents choosing the “multi-centred city” out of the four proposed growth patterns as their preferred outcome, based on increased development around designated activity precincts like shopping centres and transport nodes. This feedback, along with related policy areas nominated to need attention would shape future planning policy towards developing the Draft Brisbane CityShape 2026 into a final detailed plan (BCC 2006). Despite the process for CityShape 2026 being commended by planning

professional and advocate of deliberative democracy Phil Heywood (2019), there has been no formal or independent evaluation of CityShape 2026, and Council itself only produced a single 12-page document describing the process and its draft outcomes. The eventual plan was never finalised, but there is some evidence of its implementation as the “draft Local Growth Management Strategy (LGMS) for Brisbane City” (BCC 2008), and in later iterations of the City Plan, as indicated in information produced and distributed in 2012 (BCC 2012). Brisbane City Council’s stated preference is still to focus infill development along “trunks and nodes” (BCC 2019).

4.2.2 Queensland State Government has a somewhat erratic history of community involvement in planning, partly attributable to historic ‘laissez-faire’ attitudes to land-use regulation (Katter 2014), the state’s “legacy of political corruption and citizen disengagement” (Reddel and Woolcock 2004, p76) and an economy built on environmental exploitation and extraction (Steele and Dodson 2014; ‘Death of a populist’ 2005). Policy inconsistencies – the State Government website was once home to multiple pages and a wealth of material on engagement; this has now been winnowed down to a single paragraph – is also partly influenced by that State’s deep political divide, with the rural spatial majority of the State supporting the conservative Liberal National Party coalition, doing ideological battle with the relatively progressive seat of government in the highly urbanised South-Eastern corner.

Shaping SEQ, a region-wide consultation process in the South-Eastern corner of the State was implemented in 2017 towards developing the SEQ Regional Plan. Working as the Department of State Development, Manufacturing, Infrastructure and Planning, the State government consulted with local government representatives,

residents, key industry groups and communities around the state towards producing a plan for each of Queensland’s 17 regions. The process, which aims to recognise and respond to diverse climatic, demographic and economic environments around the state, and to identify planning matters that are important and specific to each part of Queensland, “seeks to strike a balance between protecting priority land uses and delivering a diverse and prosperous economic future for our regions” (DSDMIP 2021) and is iterative, with plans reviewed approximately every ten years to reflect changing circumstances.’. According to the 250-page Queensland State Government-produced ‘ShapingSEQ Consultation report’, (DILGP 2017), this process included “extensive” statutory and non-statutory consultation between May 2016 and March 2017, comprising 22 ‘talk to a planner’ sessions attended by 560 people across the SEQ region; a youth summit for over 100 Queenslanders between 17 and 25 years old from across SEQ, held in multiple Brisbane venues; 20 community conversation events attended by 1361 people; an online engagement hub; a survey of 850 SEQ residents aged between 18 and 30, and three Indigenous and Traditional Owner workshops (DILGP 2017). Community feedback, along with a review of the earlier version of the SEQ Regional Plan, informed the final iteration of Shaping SEQ. The comprehensive report on the consultation process provides specific and summarised feedback from each of the sessions, along with lengthy descriptions of statutory obligations and processes, collation of issues from feedback and the causal relationship between each part of the consultation.

The Queensland Plan was implemented in 2013 under LNP Premier – and former Mayor of Brisbane – Campbell Newman. CityShape2026’s positive public reception may have influenced the decision from the Queensland Department of the Premier and Cabinet to commission the statewide research project, which provided

“that every Queenslander should have a say in the future of our state—a once-in-a-generation opportunity to look beyond the immediate horizon to a future full of possibility” (State of Queensland 2014). Following an extensive program of consultation, including the “Mackay Summit”, a gathering of 140 Queenslanders representing industry, community and special interest groups to develop six key questions to shape a whole-of-state engagement agenda, subsequent consultation took place over a range of platforms and included community summits, online surveys and public information and promotion. Responses from 80,000 people were then gathered, analysed and interpreted to produce six areas for discussion at a ‘Brisbane Summit’ on October 9 and 10, 2013. The ambitious scope of “the largest statewide community engagement activity of its kind ever undertaken in Queensland” (State of Queensland 2014), with a proposed 30-year implementation timeframe, would also incorporate development of six ‘Foundation Areas’, proposed governance mechanisms by which these would be achieved, along with a commitment to annual assessment reports on how objectives were being met. Two professional engagement and communications organisations were tasked with delivering components of the plan to the state, “to champion the priorities of Queenslanders and Queensland communities, at both the regional and state-wide levels” and thereby to create a “roadmap for growth and prosperity” (State of Queensland 2014).

Aspirations for Community Renewal and Service Integration Programs were more constrained under Labor Premier Peter Beattie, who presided over “increasing momentum for more spatial and community-sensitive policies” (Reddel and Woolcock, 2004, p76) to implement a range of spatial and people-centred policies (Reddel and Woolcock 2004) that emphasised community empowerment over

traditional functional program delivery (Queensland Department of the Premier and Cabinet 2001) aiming at providing “public sector leadership for a citizen engagement agenda” (Queensland Department of the Premier and Cabinet 2001). This ‘social orientation’ was part of a shift away from hard infrastructure as the solution to social and spatial inequity, to a community, place-based response, in recognition that “traditional notions of consultation and centrally managed community input into the policy process were no longer sufficient to manage community expectations and the complexity of modern political life” (Reddel and Woolcock 2004, p77) and of “the need for broader responses in order to improve disadvantaged places” (Walsh and Butler 2001, p21). Under Beattie, a suite of citizen participation, social planning and human service integration ‘experiments’ aimed to challenge “the dominance of managerial policies that foster largely passive notions of consultation” (Aulich 2011, p56). Active citizen involvement, therefore, was integral to the projects, which included Community Cabinet Meetings, where serving MPs shared conversations and cups of tea with constituents around the state, community-led Crime Prevention Strategies partnerships and Community Renewal Program, including, the Goodna Service Integration Project or SIP, which connected support organisations with residents from 15 identified communities to respond to place-based disadvantage. The Queensland initiatives were informed by “the “political dimensions of spatial inequality” (Reddel and Woolcock 2004, p76) when research revealed that support for the populist One Nation Party occurred along distinct socio-economic lines, and in response to “declining level of trust in political institutions” (Aulich 2011 p54, also Reddel and Woolcock 2004). Development of social community capital and capacity were explicit objectives for the interventions, which were organised over a

range of platforms and events including community reference groups, local action plans, agency coordination and community forums.

4.2.3 Community-led campaigns lack the resources and expertise available to even local-level decision-makers, so attracting and maintaining a network of participants tends to rely on alternate systems of organisation and compensation. Informal or grass-roots engagement can provide shared objectives, place attachment and a sense of solidarity, and may also offer “an effective way to overcome a citizen’s sense of futility and powerlessness in the face of larger forces.” (Holmes 2011, p17).

Parks Co-Design Process: The Gabba Ward in central Brisbane takes in the suburbs of Kangaroo Point, Dutton Park, West End, Highgate Hill, South Brisbane and the western side of Woolloongabba. Traditionally home to high numbers of academics, artists and activists, the area is represented by Jonathon (Jonno) Sri, the only Greens councillor in Brisbane, who runs with an explicitly decentralised, deliberative and anti-establishment agenda (BCC 2020). This has included participatory governance experiments, including two processes collaborating with the community to design public parks. The first, Bunyapa Park, transformed a corner block car park in central West End into a publicly-accessible common. Engagement took place in 2016, and included community workshops co-convened by Sri and a local landscape architect, lobbying local government, Brisbane City Council, to override the original (non-community-led) draft plan for the space, and consultation via the ward councillor’s Facebook page and e-newsletter to approve the new design (Sri 2016). In 2018 the Gabba Ward office under Sri ran a second consultation for Carl Street park in Woolloongabba. This process included the community-wide “ParkFest” event, at which ideas and issues were discussed and

collated on site, followed by two small-group participatory design sessions incorporating the community feedback. The draft plan produced through these activities was sent to Council, with most proposals established by the co-design process summarily approved. Details of the small group activity, including notes and drawings made as a result of community input, are available on the Gabba Ward website (Sri 2019).

The West End Community Association: provides a salient example of Gabba Ward identity and ideology. The group formed in 2004 to advocate on behalf of the community on issues such as sustainable development and access to public spaces – seen as particular issues for a suburb that has borne much of the brunt of State Government’s mandated infill requirements (Bowman 2019; Tilley 2018). As well as running campaigns including Save Our West End, Stop the Hale Street Bridge and taking an active role in coordinating the community-led approach for what was to become Bunyapa Park, WECA also play a broader role in the local community, organising events including the Kurilpa Derby, the Kurilpa Beggars’ Banquet, and West End Film Festival, auspicing grants for community groups such as Boomerang Bags and Plastic Free West End, and keeping members and neighbours informed about local issues, events, and initiatives through a website, Facebook page and newsletter. Kurilpa Futures. The local Turrbal indigenous name for the section of Brisbane where West End has been built is “Kurilpa”, the place of the water-rat. Once an important gathering site, the area has undergone significant development and densification over the past 12 years. Sharing many of the members and objectives of WECA, therefore, Kurilpa Futures’ purpose is to put “people and communities before developers in the planning for the Kurilpa area”, with an overall aim “to ensure that development on the Kurilpa Peninsula meets the needs of the

residents of, and visitors to, South Brisbane and the wider Brisbane community” (from <https://kurilpafutures.org/>). Both groups have access to significant resources, apparent in professionally produced plans and submissions, frequent reference to contributions from members, regular, well-organised meetings and events and the maintenance of multiple online portals including websites and facebook pages. The groups worked closely with Cr Jonathon Sri to protest the seven tower, 1250-luxury apartment mixed-use development on the former Absoe Factory Site on Boundary Street, ‘West Village’.

Brisbane Residents United: according to information on the BRU website, this community group aims to “represent Brisbane and surrounding district residents and provide them with a united voice to Council, State and Federal Governments on matters pertaining to urban planning and development” and to “Act as a resource centre, facilitating information sharing across established and start-up local resident associations” (<http://brisbaneresidentsunited.org/>). Although it is not made explicit on the website, much of this energy is focused on lobbying against high-rise and high density residential development, and in support of maintaining or increasing quality greenspace provision. Much of the group’s work is online advocacy, making submissions independently or in alignment with organisations including the Queensland Conservation Council and West End Community Alliance, among others, responding to proposed developments and reviews of the Planning Act, for example, or lobbying local government/candidates to incorporate BRU’s positions in political platforms. The group maintains a website with limited resources, and, although it is apparent that, although BRU has in the past provided a community voice and outlet for residents keen to “protect the area's ‘tin and timber’ from

encroaching development” (Moore 2010), now appears to largely constitute the work of a single individual.

Create Annerley was established in 2017 in response to the release of a report by AAMI Insurance Company that Ipswich Road, an urban arterial running through the inner-city suburb of Annerley, was the site of more accidents than any other in Brisbane (Annerley News 2017). The group, comprising local residents and artists with support from community development workers, wanted to see the safety and amenity of the neighbourhood prioritised over transport ‘efficiency’, and ran multiple interventions including an online survey, a Town Hall meeting calling for ideas and experience from the community, and a petition to reduce the speed limit for the stretch of road running past the local primary school and shopping centre to 40km/h. Members of the group have lobbied local politicians, appeared on television and the radio discussing the need to make the area safer for vulnerable users, maintaining a sporadic social media presence and, in a bid to build awareness of the issue, has worked with the local Traders’ Association to run community festivals and creative workshops. Towards the end of 2020 both Brisbane City Council and the Department of Transport and Main Roads made separate announcements that speed limits along the strip would be reduced.

Application of the Evaluation Framework (Table 4.1) to Neighbourhood Plan and Community Planning Team processes largely supported case study results:

Table 4.2: Rating of participatory interventions as per evaluation framework

Type of Engagement	Representativeness	Independence	Early involvement	Transparency		Accessibility	Deliberative quality							Compromise	
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					Relevance			Managed expectations	Communicated influence	Perceived Impact	Understanding	Trust		Participant Satisfaction
NP	***	**	***	***	***	***	**	***	****	***	***	**	**	**
CPT	***	**	***	**	***	**	****	*	***	*	****	**	*	**
PYB	****	**	n/a	*	***	**	***	**	**	*	**	**	n/a	**
CS	***	**	n/d	n/d	***	***	n/d	***	***	**	**	****	n/a	***
SSEQ	***	**	**	**	**	***	***	***	**	**	***	***	**	**
QP	****	**	**	**	**	***	****	***	***	**	****	***	n/d	***
CRP	***	***	****	n/d	****	****	****	***	***	***	****	***	n/a	***
PCDP	***	****	****	***	***	****	****	****	****	****	**	***	***	***
WECA	***	****	***	****	***	***	***	**	n/a	**	***	**	**	***
KF	***	****	***	****	***	****	****	**	n/a	**	***	**	**	***
BRU	***	****	***	**	***	****	*	**	n/a	*	*	*	*	***
CA	***	****	**	**	***	***	***	**	**	*	*	**	*	***

Participatory project code:

NP – Neighbourhood Plan Engagement Process

CPT – Community Planning Teams

PYB – Plan Your Brisbane Engagement Process

CS – CityShape 2026 Engagement Process

SSEQ – Shaping South-East Queensland Engagement Process

QP – Queensland Plan

CRP – Community Renewal Program

PCDP – Parks Co-design Project

WECA – West End Community Association

KF – Kurilpa Futures

BRU – Brisbane Residents United

CA – Create Annerley

n/a = not applicable

n/d = no data

Stage 2.1 Analysis of Application of Evaluation Framework to Case studies.

Brisbane City Council Neighbourhood Plans and Community Planning Teams.

Perhaps in response to fallout from the Sherwood-Graceville Neighbourhood Plan, BCC has made their definition of ‘meaningful’ explicit in the context of community engagement, saying that a meaningful process “is planned, resourced and effectively promoted to those likely to be interested or affected; takes into consideration the diversity of the community; clearly articulates the level of influence the community has on the decision-making process; provides a range of accessible opportunities for community participation; provides timely feedback to participants and the broader community showing how community input has been considered and what final outcomes have been determined by Council (BCC 2019). Further, “the community will have multiple opportunities to participate in community engagement processes that are clearly articulated in relation to project constraints, the scope of community influence, and Council’s decision making process. Community members will understand their role within this process” (BCC 2011). If engagement was evaluated by these intentions, Council would score highly on all counts – but accounts from survey responses gathered by this study suggest that the ideals espoused by BCC in theory are not always made a reality – and that participants do not always read the disclaimer.

Targeted at residents through letterboxing and local councillor newsletters, BCC processes were good, apparently genuine attempts at Representativeness. Independence and Transparency were less well achieved, however; what little formal evaluation of engagement could be found was produced by the same agency or department that administered the intervention, or by a company employed by that organisation. Council’s use of feedback summary reports to communicate Influence on Outcome of the Neighbourhood Plan process, where the vast majority of responses cite technocratic justifications for outcomes, presents further issues for

both Transparency and Accessibility. Council's size and access to professional planners give the capacity to implement planning projects, coordinating zoning, frequently changing legislation, and multiple 'overlays' and jurisdictions. Council may also make use their significant resources to manage communications, transport and other relevant infrastructure decisions or policy settings, or planning may be deferred to State-based authorities not subject to local government planning restrictions. Established bureaucratic networks and relationships can further obscure transparency and complicate the 'line of sight', as well as giving Council a distinct advantage over the community as it navigates multiple layers of internal decision-making – and multiple sites for potential conflict This also suggests that genuine representation of residents and users is not prioritised or sought.

Of all the participatory case studies reviewed, Neighbourhood Plans and Community Planning Teams provided the most comprehensive explanation of 'Communicated Influence'. CPT meeting minutes and Summary Reports are both produced and published online (albeit only for a set period of time after the final Neighbourhood Plan has been drafted) to enable comparison between community input and project outcomes. In summary reports, submissions are listed and responded to either individually or as a group if multiple submissions were made on the same issue. Responses include information explaining why a submission was implemented or could not be according to statutory planning regulations. Information was more likely to be available on "procedural rather than substantive" (Rowe and Frewer 2000, p14) criteria, such as the number, age, sex, and postcode of participants, and on specific activities, ideas and proposals they contribute, than on qualitative information, like participants' impressions of their involvement, whether

they were satisfied with their experience, and whether it led to desired or beneficial outcomes.

Of participants surveyed for this thesis, 20 out of a total 33 had taken part in Neighbourhood Plan and Community Planning Team processes. Both Brisbane City Council-run interventions, Neighbourhood Plans and Community Planning Teams, reported the highest percentage of passive participation, at 11.7% and 12.5% respectively. Survey results suggested a negative relationship between impact on outcome and levels of satisfaction – only 11.7% for the Neighbourhood Plan process and 12.5% for the Community Planning Teams said they were “Very satisfied”, while at the other end of the scale around 11% of the Neighbourhood Plan group reported that they were “not satisfied at all”. Further, only 12.5% of CPT respondents said that they had gained knowledge and skills from their involvement. Approximately 17.6% and 37.5% of people who took part in Neighbourhood Plan and Community Planning Team activities respectively reported that they derived no benefit from their involvement, but over 70% of Neighbourhood Plan and 50% of Community Planning Team respondents said they had benefited from an “Improved sense of community”. The vast majority of respondents – 100% the Neighbourhood Plan group and 75% of the Community Planning Teams – said they would participate again, with around 22% of these saying this was because existing representative systems were inadequate.

Plan Your Brisbane: The diverse range of activities and events implemented as part the PYB process are evidence that Brisbane City Council made a genuine attempt at representativeness – but a lack of genuine diversity and apparent consensus-seeking agenda played out over the course of the event. After the welcoming presentation, three members of the audience stood up to discuss their individual

planning concerns, which centred on a lack of quality and design criteria for the development of high density residential apartment buildings. This issue was not engaged with further, however. In the next activity, group members were asked to identify and solve accessibility issues for Brisbane. Two people in the group, slightly younger than the average, and from non-English speaking backgrounds, proposed car-based solutions, and high-speed tunnels. Rather than take the time to explain why these options were considered less valid for the achievement of (unspoken but clearly assumed, for the most part) objectives, their responses were simply ignored. The two ‘outlier’ participants left soon afterwards. The unmet objective is also apparent on the the final page of the report produced to document the project, which lists postcodes of all the people who had contributed to the consultation process. Although this list represents every postcode in Brisbane, the total number of participants from each of the different postcodes was not included. To overcome perceptions of inequity, it is politic – and more manageable from an administrative perspective – to present engagement as representative. This objective can be seen in the listing of participant age groups, separate, often one-off events for youth and indigenous residents, an “Intergenerational” forum, quantification of diversity, and in the list of postcodes on the final page of Articulous’ Plan Your Brisbane report. The consistent lack of meaningful contextual information, though – how many people from each suburb contributed, for example, or what the primary concerns of young people, indigenous people were – makes these attempts look tokenistic at best, or sleight of hand. Further, in order to involve as many people as possible and to reduce the likelihood of contentious issues fracturing and disrupting participatory events, large-scale participation exercises tend not to be implemented in response to specific plans, amendments or development proposals, and are instead more likely to be

conceptualised at the ‘visioning’ stage of planning towards the development of vague, consensus-driven but non-committal aspirations, instead of specific built environment outcomes. The only results from the vast Plan Your Brisbane, intervention, for example, were eight indistinct and non-statutory planning principles for the city – five of which were repackaged versions of outcomes from CityShape 2026. “Getting people home quicker and safer with more travel options”; “Create more to see and do”; “Ensure best practice design that complements the character of Brisbane” and, pertinently, “Empower and engage residents” (BCC 2019). This reduces opportunities for genuine participant sense of agency and satisfaction: “Consultation initiated by government or industry usually does not provide the community avenues for expressing what it needs or wants – it usually provides choices between options that industry or government are happy with” (CLI#18).

CityShape2026: Allocating resources to the production of impressive-looking booklets detailing engagement descriptions and results was not standard practice in 2005-6 when the Brisbane CityShape 2026 process was undertaken. The slender pamphlet produced by BCC to document the process that did take place only notes that more than 40,000 people attended the input workshops and five Neighbourhood Planning fairs implemented, and that 10,000 nominated one of four different shapes that Brisbane could take in the future. Given these numbers, it appears unlikely that the consultation process for CityShape 2026 met criteria for Representativeness; Accessibility under such restricted circumstances would also have been compromised. And, although it was noted that “Council also asked for advice from those directly involved in the planning processes – town planners, community and environmental groups, developers and architects” (BCC 2012), the lack of information on how results from participation were balanced against this input,

where participants lived and how they would be affected by proposals, suggest a similar issue for Transparency. In fact, given the only available evidence, Perceived Impact and Communicated Influence – Brisbane residents wanted the city to develop and densify along transport arterials and mixed-use retail centres. Brisbane City Council maintains this commitment to community preferences by prioritising infill development along “trunks and nodes” (BCC 2019) – look like the only criteria met by the CityShape process. Even so, there is only intermittent evidence of its implementation, with high-rise apartment buildings in a few inner-city suburbs constituting the bulk of consolidation development, along with continued greenfield sprawl.

The Queensland Plan: Just eight years after the CityShape 2026 intervention, documentation of engagement had improved markedly; Representativeness was an explicit objective for the Queensland Plan, so “the research platform supporting the consultation process was designed with the aim of being totally inclusive” (QP Report, p10). Statistical robustness of the process was evaluated to determine that QP participants were a representative of the broader Queensland population. This broad scope, and evidence that diverse and genuine attempts were made to engage with those affected made Relevance a relatively straightforward criterion to achieve, and the range and variety of participation opportunities suggests a good level of accessibility. Deliberation took place in at least the early stages of the Plan, where groups determined the issues the consultation would address, and Transparency of influence was also achieved – although the ‘decision’ in the case of the Queensland Plan was merely the definition and categorisation of concerns for the future of Queensland and ideas about how these might be addressed. Data for the remaining Outcome criteria – Impact on outcome, Increased understanding, Increased trust,

Workable Solutions and Participant Satisfaction, is not available in the QP report. The “once in a lifetime” style of the consultation, though, meant that, although commitments were made to keep participants and other Queenslanders up-to-date with new iterations of the plan every ten years, initial and subsequent processes have not included efforts to connect participants, or to establish other ongoing forums for engagement. Excised from this study’s Evaluation Framework because it occurred so infrequently, the criterion of “Seek input from participants how they participate”, cited in Brown and Wei Chin’s 2013 paper as a measure of effective engagement, comes from the IAP2 Australasia Spectrum of Public Participation Core Values (2019) and was met twice over.

Community Renewal Program: Clear opportunities for the development of social capital were presented by projects implemented by the Queensland Government in the 1990s. The suite of projects was comprehensively researched and adopted, with multi-sectoral support and cooperation to present the program. However, issues with representativeness were apparent, and There is also evidence to suggest that the process, which involved fundamentally re-working accepted service provision practice, was unfeasible from the point of sustainability (Woolcock and Boorman 2003) and, as noted earlier, did not represent value for money. Further, despite the State Government’s relative economic capacity, an independent review of that bureaucracy’s Service Integration Program (SIP) observed that an integrated, consultative approach to service delivery had proven problematic, with government’s tendency to departmental compartmentalisation and inability to adapt to a more collaborative governance model (Keats et al 2004). Despite these shortcomings, the project showed substantive evidence of achieving social capital outcomes. The criterion of Understanding – whereby participants were provided with the skills and

knowledge they needed to participate effectively – does not look to have been particularly well met.

Community-led examples: The Parks process scored highly across nearly all criteria, supported by comments from one respondent saying it was “a model (of) community participation – from the councillor engendering a grass roots approach to community involvement (...) to craft a fun day of spatial dreaming that in the end led to tangible, realistic design outcomes” (PCP#31). Although substantial efforts were made to involve the significant international student population of the area and the ParkFest event was designed to appeal to and accommodate a range of age groups and abilities, however, the co-design project was not very Representative. The adoption of a process whereby the smaller group worked with choices made by the larger, broader “ParkFest” group circumvented some of this lack of diversity, but was primarily attended by supporters of the local Greens councillor or individuals with a personal interest in spatial justice and urban design. This deficiency in the Parks process was not noted by participants, however, who were more positive about engagement processes generally, noting that “Council is becoming increasingly greener which sees council now taking green space and neighbourhood planning of green space more seriously ... There are definitely more people becoming politically active” (PCP#30) and “Carl street has shown that council is amenable to community input and that again, when people come together, even small groups, we are the ones with the skills and abilities necessary to create quality spaces” (PCP#31). This process also resulted in one of the more popular – and expensive – choices being made for the final design, which was seen by one of the park’s landscape architects as detrimental to the project’s integrity.

People involved with the Parks Co-Design Project reported the highest levels of active involvement in the planning process at 33.3%, and the highest level of satisfaction, with 44% of participation saying they were “very satisfied” with the process. This was followed by 21.4% for the community-led activities. Around 11% of the Parks Co-Design respondents and 7.4% of the Community-led group said that they were not satisfied with the process at all. Community-led was the only group that participated through a combination of activity and consultation, at 21%. Over 92% of the community led intervention participants and 77.8% of Parks Co-Design Project respondents said they experienced an “Improved sense of community” as a result of their involvement, with one noting that “It was good to see the community interested and involved/participating in the process (CLI#12) and another. explicitly noting that involvement “has increased my sense of community and made me feel better connected to my neighbours (CLI#11). No-one from either of these groups thought that they had not benefited in any way from their involvement. High percentages – 88% from Parks and 78% of Community-led – said they had been able to develop their skills after the intervention, and the 100% of respondents from the both processes expressed an intent to participate again.

The majority of community-led interventions, though, had reduced access to decision-makers and thus real agency. There was little evidence in reviewed engagement activities of ‘compromise’; the single exceptions to this was the participant who noted that community protest had resulted in “mediation forcing redesign, height drop and more vegetation” (CLI#16). While Brisbane has also been witness to a succesful community-led intervention – against the “Grace on Coronation” development in Toowong – this not so much compromise as outright rejection (Walsh 2018). More typically, engagement did not result in any form of

compromise; as indicated earlier in this chapter, a limited, technocratic explanation as to why a submission was accepted or not was the most a participant could hope for. the group’s reactive agenda, protesting the effects of density settings mandated by state and local-level planning instruments, meant that many of participation’s objectives – such as impact on outcome and compromise – are virtually impossible. Genuine deliberative discussion with decision-makers would have potentially resulted in improved levels of understanding, but, as it was, the frequently confrontational nature of engagement for BRU more likely meant that, “With each submission reviewed, the disregard for the planning intent, regulation and process becomes more apparent” (BRU#26).

Sense of Community and Social Capital

As well as comments on perceptions of participation, the survey gathered information on “Psychological Sense of Community”, derived from adding together positive responses to questions in Section 3 of the survey. Out of a total 32 respondents, the average Psychological Sense of Community (PSC) score was 40.2/50; the median 42. The total PSC score for people who had taken part in community planning activities was slightly higher, at 40.8, with 43 as the median. Of the three (9.38%) respondents who did NOT participate in any community planning activities: two, #13 and #24 had a lower than average PSC Scores (35/50, and 24/50). The average PSC score for non-participants was 34.

As noted in Chapter 3’s methodology, a relationship between social capital and the participatory planning experience reviewed by this study was represented by a “social capital index”. Survey questions used to determine social capital were: question 3, relating to satisfaction with the participatory process, questions 5 and 6, relating to perceived benefits of participation, and question 8, relating to sense of

agency/social responsibility. Of those who had participated in any of the planning activities, the average SCI was 3.5. All respondents reported that they had derived some social capital-related benefit: seven people reported one social capital benefit (of whom four reported no human capital outcome but said they would participate again); three reported two benefits, four people reported three benefits, six people reported four of the six benefits, three reported five benefits, and six people got 6/6 for the Social Capital Index. The remaining 3 people had not participated in any community planning and derived no benefit. Two of those who reported deriving all 6 benefits got lower than average PSC scores – respondents #27 (34/50) and #31 (36/50). There was no clear correlation between reported satisfaction with the participation and level of benefit achieved.

Nine respondents (28.13% of the total) indicated that they believed that participation in the planning process was tokenistic or meaningless in terms of achieving objectives, or that there was a disconnect between participation and the achievement of objectives, suggesting an issue for the development of trust as a result of engagement. Although levels of satisfaction with participation varied from ‘Very satisfied’ to ‘Not really’, the average Psychological Sense of Community (PSC) score for those reporting perceptions of placation was slightly higher than the total average, at 42.33/50.

A further impediment to development of social capital, three respondents (9.38%) indicated unequivocal hostility towards the local government administering the engagement activities. One of these respondents got the lowest PSC score (17/50) recorded for this survey, but the average score for all three respondents was high, at 38.33/50. The majority of respondents (89.66%) said that they would participate in similar activities in the future, and recorded an average PSC score of 41.13/50. The

average PSC score for the 10.35% of people who did *not* want to participate in similar activities in the future was 31.3/50. Respondent #25, who said that they had not taken part, but who indicated that government should do more to encourage people to participate, and that she would participate if she thought that it was worthwhile, scored the median PSC, at 43/50.

Six respondents (22%) indicated that they felt there was a need to participate, to ensure more democratic outcomes for the community, or expressed a belief that participation can hold authority to account, part of collective agency and countervailing power that can contribute to social capital.

Table 4.3 Survey participant demographic data

	4064	4065	4075	4101	4102	4103	4104	4105	4107	4121	4169	Australia
Total population	10,837	9,500	23,352	22,861	7,660	14,316	6,535	13,321	6,290	25,264	13,995	23,401,892
Male	49.3%	48%	48.4%	50.1%	52.4%	49.7%	48.7%	49.8%	50%	48.5%	51.6%	49.3%
Female	50.7%	52%	51.6%	49.9%	47.6%	50.3%	51.3%	50.2%	50%	51.5%	48.4%	50.7%
Median age	32	37	36	32	30	31	36	35	35	36	33	38
Families	2,457	2,430	6,064	4,852	1,527	3,243	1,550	3,387	1,557	6,602	3,005	6,070,316
No. of children	1.8	1.9	1.9	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.8	1.7	1.7	1.9	1.6	1.8
For all families	0.5	0.9	0.8	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.6	0.7	0.8	0.3	0.8
Total private dwellings	5,059	3,658	92,10	11,138	3,641	6,458	3,001	6,000	2,441	9,775	7,430	9,901,496
Average people per household	2.4	2.8	2.7	2.2	2.3	2.4	2.3	2.4	2.7	2.7	2.1	2.6
Median weekly income	\$2,190	\$2,538	\$1,946	\$1,728	\$1,489	\$1,613	\$1,665	\$1,676	\$1,628	\$2,031	\$1,802	\$1,438
Median monthly mortgage repayment	\$2,400	\$2,600	\$2,146	\$2,167	\$2,100	\$2,000	\$2,123	\$1,996	\$2,000	\$2,167	\$2000	\$1,755
Median weekly rent	\$450	\$460	\$395	\$450	\$400	\$350	\$361	\$355	\$370	\$390	\$420	\$335

4.3 Results Summary

The most commonly attended – and contested – activity reviewed by this thesis was the Brisbane City Council Neighbourhood Plan process, including Community Planning Teams. Because of Council’s assiduous commitment to documentation, this is also the intervention for which the most, and the most comprehensive from a range of perspectives, information was available.

Representativeness: Results from this thesis research support findings that, although administrators make explicit and often sincere attempts to invite a range of perspectives, most frequently implemented forms of participation are not representative. Although only a small percentage of participants, already a select group, responded to the study’s survey, it is nonetheless possible to extrapolate from past evidence and the author’s experience, to determine that the criteria was not met. Implications of this were apparent at the citywide forums, where presentation of views that diverged from unspoken norms were curtailed to get back to group consensus-seeking activities. The over-representation of ‘elites’ – educated, wealthy and politically progressive groups – may be engagement’s default setting for several reasons: firstly, much contested planning takes place in high land-value areas, so people who live there are more likely to be impacted and thus involved; secondly, time constraints limit the capacity of people with insecure or demanding jobs, children or other dependents, to engage. Thirdly, and most pertinently, the fact that elite capture has been an issue in engagement since its inception, where it was observed that “only a few interfering members of the middle classes ... really wanted participation” (Shapely 2014, viii), indicates systemic bias and deficiencies. The resources required for city-scale community engagement involving large numbers of people and formats is generally only available to substantial organisations or government bodies. These same groups, however, restricted by their reliance on

bureaucratic logic, risk management and departmental compartmentalisation, would need to undergo significant transformation to meaningfully communicate with and incorporate representative diversity – let alone to facilitate power-sharing forms of participation (Aulich 2011; Holmes 2011).

Independence: Results from case studies and surveys show that nearly all examples of engagement investigated for this thesis were implemented and evaluated by the same authorities that made planning decisions; other than the entirely community-led processes, participation was not independent at all. Perceptions of compromised independence were further undermined by a mismatch between consultation input and subsequent policy. For example, according to Articulous’ report on the Plan Your Brisbane consultation, participants consistently expressed a wish for more medium density, more affordable and more accessible housing in Brisbane (Articulous 2018). One year after engagement had closed, however, Council announced a “Temporary Planning Instrument”, generally deployed under emergency conditions, to ‘protect’ the status of detached dwellings and backyards in low-density residential areas. This move meant that even areas previously approved or designated suitable for multiple dwellings – the medium density housing identified as a priority by PYB participants – were henceforth limited to the development of detached homes.

Early involvement: ‘Line-of-sight’ issues rendered this criterion less relevant than it could have been; interventions were subject to multiple layers of jurisdiction and stages of decision-making, making it increasingly difficult to identify the start point of a project. The scale and complexity of many planning decisions mean that consultation has a generally less well-defined beginning; it is either visionary, in which case it is unlikely to relate to a specific place or planning decision, or takes

place as part of an iterative process, where opportunities to identify the effects of community involvement are diluted by subsequent or overlapping consultations. These circumstances can also contribute to diminished expectations of impact over time, which may not be an unreasonable response.

Transparency: As well as a demonstrated disconnect between results of consultation and implemented policy, it is an issue for transparency that BCC selects people for Community Planning Team positions without public scrutiny. There are no requirements to demonstrate, beyond noting that “The CPT is made up of a cross-section of ages, genders, places and periods of residence or business, and local interests, relative to nominations received” (BCC 2019), who CPT members are or what interests they have in the site under discussion. Instead of enabling transparency and community agency, bureaucratic settings for participation over which the public has no view or control contribute to the mystification of planning engagement was supposed to solve. This perception was supported by surveys with several respondents noting that processes should have provided more or different opportunities to contribute (NP#14, #20, #22 and #27), and communicated more clearly: “I feel that the language of many planners is too distant from locals. More effort to overcome participants' concerns about the value of the process in the long run would have helped”. “I would have asked for a clearer outline of what the meetings could actually achieve [...] . I would have asked for less jargon and more plain English so that [participants] could feel more connected to the process and less like we had to be town planners to engage. This does not mean being patronised, but being communicated to in a shared language” (NP#21).

Relevance: was one of the better-achieved criteria for activities reviewed for this thesis, particularly when adopted at local government level. Although there was

evidence that state-scale consultation met many of the other evaluation standards, the lack of place-based planning objectives meant the process was less meaningful and successful overall. The criteria of relevance was relatively well-implemented by all the participation types, although, as indicated, wealthy and well-educated people were disproportionately likely to be affected by planning decisions inviting participation. This latter type of engagement, where “residents are asked to react to proposals that are often conceived for interests disconnected from their own, and at a scale for which they have little control” (Lydon, 2015), is not considered to advance the benefits of participatory planning, and has been called “fundamentally broken” (ibid.). Without comments from survey respondents it is not possible to identify whether involvement in visionary, state-level planning activities impacted negatively on participants. While a more removed, abstract brief may permit more circumspection than responses shaped by localised defensiveness (Raynor et al 2015), with no issue galvanising the population or the ability to “contribute to incremental change at the neighborhood or block level” (Lydon 2015), it is hard to imagine that sense of community, agency and subsequent social capital could spontaneously form under such circumstances.

Accessibility: ensures that a diverse range of participants have straightforward access to engagement activities, including understanding of proposals and materials. The general lack of representativeness apparent in this and other participation studies, though, offers clues to low standards of accessibility. A range of opportunities to engage with the process in different areas – at shopping centres and community events, as well as online – was evident, but these efforts assume a level of familiarity with English, literacy and the workings of bureaucracies. If people’s exposure to such processes, including adherence to specific procedures, the provision of personal

details and attendance of regular meetings, is limited, it is difficult to determine how or why, without a clear legal obligation or immediate concrete outcome, they would be motivated to take part. A similar lack of accessibility based on assumptions about participant awareness was apparent for the Communicated Influence on Outcome process. While each written submission to the Neighbourhood Planning case studies received an individual response, and an outcome – change or no change – results were published in summary reports on Council’s website, it was clear that some decisions with popular local support were refused. The judgement on this could appear arbitrary. For example, a submission made by 12 people was refused, while another, appealing a similar property and zoning decision, gained approval. Although application of the planning framework to submissions was as consistent as possible, ultimate discretion for decisions rests with Council: there is no further possibility of appeal within the planning department. It was also an issue that the majority of responses referred to technocratic expertise – Council’s size and access to resources give it the capacity to implement multiple planning ‘overlays’ and projects simultaneously; the need to manage coordination – and potential conflict – of these means there are multiple layers of internal decision-making over which the public has no control. Established communication networks between departments and contractors further obscures transparency and complicates the ‘line of sight’. Instead of enabling transparency and community agency, these bureaucratic settings for participation contribute to the mystification of planning it was supposed to solve.

Deliberative quality: While it was the case that some of the interventions investigated by this thesis incorporated a deliberative approach, with round-table discussions on aspects of Brisbane, local suburbs (Neighbourhood Plans) or a shared public space (Parks Co-Design Project), these were not examples of the “open,

dialogical, and deliberative participation formats in which process is all-important” (Laurian and Shaw 2009, p295) seen as requisites to broaden of understanding for participants towards civic identity (Butterworth 2000) and the development of social capital (Crawford et al 2008). This was especially the case when, as for this study’s participatory examples, deliberation reproduces homogenous perspectives instead of revealing diverse, representative and potentially challenging range of ideas.

Expectations management: Brisbane City Council has demonstrated intent to better manage community expectations. On the website page for engagement, the explicit provisos on Council’s decision making process are listed: “Brisbane City Council believes it is important to consider the views of a community when making decisions about projects that affect their local area or the city as a whole. There are many factors that can influence the decision-making process, including costs, technical aspects, environmental concerns, legal requirements and political commitment. This can mean that some members of the public may sometimes not agree with the final outcome (2019). The extent to which this intent is reiterated over the course of engagement projects is unclear, however. The positing of consensus as a goal for participation is seen as antithetical to the open sharing and discussing of ideas necessary for the development of many of the benefits described earlier in this chapter; many advocates of deliberative democracy see conflict as not only inevitable, but desirable, evidence that participation is genuine; “It can never be possible to construct a stable, fully inclusive consensus” (Healey 1992, p239). Participation is a fundamentally political act (Inch 2012, Legacy 2015, 2016, Thorpe 2017), and conflict provides evidence that the conversation and the power struggle are real. But conflict presents political difficulties, whereby the adoption of one preferred outcome over another could be seen as ignoring the wishes of another

section of the electorate. To avoid this result, community influence on planning decisions is almost never posited an actual goal for participation. Instead, clear outcomes for engagement are avoided, so that a popular preference for improved public transport is replaced by a vague, vision-type objective: “Getting you home quicker and safer” (Brisbane City Council) the unspoken idea that such a non-specific – and therefore non-conflictual – goal will be more acceptable to a broader section of the community.

Communicated influence on decisions: Although every properly made submission to the Neighbourhood Planning case studies received a response, including notification of outcome on the eventual plan – change or no change – with results published as documents on Council’s website, it was apparent from the summary report for the Dutton Park-Fairfield Neighbourhood Plan (BCC 2016) that popular local support was not a prerequisite for implementation. The judgement on this could potentially be interpreted as arbitrary; for example, a submission made by 12 people was refused, while another, appealing a similar property and zoning decision, with only a single supporter, gained approval. Although application of the planning framework to submissions was as consistent as possible, it is made explicit that ultimate discretion for decisions rests with Council (BCC 2019). There was limited evidence, though, that publication and distribution of glossy reports, meeting minutes, submission responses and summaries assuaged negative perceptions of participation – but neither was it apparent that people who reported negative experiences were likely to seek out such documents in an attempt to better understand the relationship between community input and outcomes, or the rationale behind eventual decisions. These documents did not attempt to advance particular

agenda or political positions, but their use as proof that engagement has occurred, and has followed correct protocol, compromise the ideal of Independence.

Influence on Outcome It was apparent that BCC in particular had made explicit attempts to manage participant expectations – but also, that this was not always apparent from respondents’ point of view. Survey respondents complained that “many of the ideas and points raised during the Community Planning Team meetings were not evident in the Neighbourhood Plan that was eventually produced. This has negatively affected my perception of local government’s planning processes. In hindsight, knowing that some of the key themes that emerged from those meetings, things that there seemed to be consensus around and which people were passionate about, seemed to have no bearing on the Neighbourhood Plan, makes the community engagement process seem like a token measure” (CPT#3), and one respondent questioned “whether the comments and input contribute towards any tangible positive changes” (NP#9). Further, the provision of opportunities to take part in processes where high-level policy objectives are the only outcome can create a dissonance between participation and decision-making, further obscuring sense of agency and influence. State-scale initiatives similarly tended to operate at a higher level of policy shaping than could have had built-environment outcomes.

Increased understanding: The BCC Community Planning Team process, which comprised a series of workshops led by planning experts and council representatives, seemed particularly likely to advance this criteria – but only 12.5% of CPT respondents said that they had gained knowledge and skills from their involvement. Whether or not this assessment is accurate, it suggests that participants’ perception of understanding is subject to influence by other factors which have implications for social capital. The criterion of Understanding – whereby participants

were provided with the skills and knowledge they needed to participate effectively – looks to have been particularly well met.

Increased trust: Results from this study’s practice analysis suggest that trust of government and their planning departments is not a likely outcome of much engagement. Council’s commitment to honesty and openness was questioned by survey respondents, one of whom noted: “I now know to ask ‘difficult’ questions in an open forum – not quietly, one to one” (CPT#6), while some perceived a “hidden agenda” (NP#8) or “a proneness to manipulation by members motivated to advance the interests of particular political parties” (NP#2). Multiple participants questioned the democratic validity of the engagement processes, noting that “‘local government’ hierarchy are only interested in paying lip service to community concerns when they are forced to listen at all” (CPT#6), and that participatory planning process was “a bit of a box ticking exercise” (CPT#19). Acknowledgement that the processes were not adequately independent was apparent in comments that participation was required to balance out priorities in the planning process; there was a “need for structural requirements for public and community consultation” to supplement “limitations and achievable scope of representative democracy” (NP#2).

Workable solutions: Evidence from this research suggests that engagement processes offering the greatest benefits to participants, where process had a measurable impact on outcomes, could not be described as workable. The which involved fundamentally re-working accepted service provision practice, was unfeasible from the point of sustainability (Woolcock and Boorman 2003) and did not represent value for money. Despite these shortcomings, the project showed substantive evidence of achieving social capital outcomes. More frequently, though, for many of the less hands-on interventions, there was a deliberately indistinct path

between the results of consultation and subsequent decision-making. However, given the fact that participation failed to achieve representativeness, any decisions made on the basis of input would not be democratically viable; lack of statistical representativeness of Add in the complexity of multiple layers of governance and multiple stakeholders with conflicting values, and placation starts to look like an inevitable – and not entirely unwelcome – outcome. Under representative governments who need to balance a complex range of stakeholder needs, placation seems inevitable – and this may be all that is technically and democratically desirable. As “a local citizenry could never be assumed to hold the technocratic expertise of planners, the following questions must be asked: through what governance process should local citizens be granted planning agenda setting and decision-making power, if at all?” (Schatz and Rogers 2016, p41).

Participant satisfaction: Most of those who had been involved in the Brisbane City Council initiatives registered low levels of satisfaction. Other than a few examples of circumspection, disappointment was largely a result of perceived deficiencies or outright corruption of the participatory process, and failure to achieve desired outcomes. This was especially the case for people who had been part of a Community Planning Team, which as a group scored the lowest satisfaction score, lowest ‘Social Capital Indicator’ score (1.67 out of a possible 6, compared with 3.5 for Neighbourhood Plan participants, 4.67 for Parks Co-design and 5.1 for Community-led interventions), and almost half of whom recorded no participation - related benefit. Brown and Wei Chin observed a similar effect in their 2010 study, whereby the Community Planning Teams, who had been the most involved with the process, reported lower levels of satisfaction than those reporting less frequent or comprehensive levels of engagement.

As for most examples of participatory planning, legislated requirements for consultation do not bind the government to implementing decisions made through the process. On Council's web page for engagement, explicit provisos on the decision making process are listed: "Brisbane City Council believes it is important to consider the views of a community when making decisions about projects that affect their local area or the city as a whole. There are many factors that can influence the decision-making process ... This can mean that some members of the public may sometimes not agree with the final outcome (BCC 2011). Despite the disclaimer, survey results suggested that Neighbourhood Planning was frequently dissatisfying for participants, largely owing to lack of success in achieving desired outcome, or of evidence of community input: "results indicate that participation satisfaction is more closely related to participation outcomes – or a lack of belief that these have been achieved – rather than process variables such as comfort and convenience" (Brown and Wei Chin 2013, p577). Dissatisfaction may also have been the result of a mismatch between consultation input and subsequent policy: according to the report on the Plan Your Brisbane consultation, for example, participants consistently expressed a wish for more medium density, affordable and accessible housing in Brisbane (Articulous 2018). One year after the report was published, however, Council announced a "Temporary Planning Instrument", generally deployed under emergency circumstances, to 'protect' the status of detached dwellings and backyards in low-density residential areas – i.e., to prevent development of the very housing identified through engagement as popularly desirable. Further, although negative responses in high-social capital areas were seen to provoke a desire to participate in future activities as a means of holding decision-makers to account, this sense of community and agency came at the expense of trust in government and

cohesion with the broader public: “If communities have high expectations about their level of influence only to discover that their input is advisory and largely ignored, they will develop resentment against the government” (Brown and Wei Chin 2013, p582).

Chapter 5: Discussion

Understanding our efforts to involve people in public decision making within the context of social capital might allow us to evaluate the effectiveness of our (participation) processes.

Crawford et al 2008, p534

This chapter contains a discussion, interpretation and evaluation of the results with reference to the literature, organised according to thesis chapters thus far and aligned with the study objectives as described in section 1.3. The discussion begins with a recapitulation of historical and political context for community engagement in planning, followed by issues identified in the review of the literature, a summary of the methodology and its rationale, and findings from each of the stages of the research; the thematic analysis of the literature, and the practice analysis. The discussion chapter concludes with a summary of the context for the thesis question, How does community participation in planning interventions contribute to the development of social capital?

When participation was introduced as a means of mitigating the negative impacts of urban renewal projects that destroyed urban communities in late 1960s U.S.A, Sherry Arnstein wrote that bureaucracies presented benefits of participation as self-evident; like eating spinach, it is “good for you” – and that this “revered idea” was unquestioningly accepted (Arnstein 1969, p216). Assuming government’s rational self-interest in maintaining power, sustained implementation of participatory approaches to planning governance is evidence that they are good for someone – but limited and inconsistent evaluation mean that despite half a century’s practice, and a “prolific amount of both empirical and theoretical research” (Day 1997, p421) there

is little hard evidence to support benefits of involving the public for non-powerful stakeholders.

Discrepancies between the original redistributive agenda outlined in the most influential critique of participatory interventions in academia, “Ladder of Participation”, (Slotterback and Lauria 2019), and current proposed objectives notwithstanding, it remains an issue that community engagement is a mandated requirement for local and state-level planning processes despite a lack of any consistent or substantiated benefits for participants (Redell and Woolcock 2004; Rowe and Frewer 2000; Ruming 2019). This is further problematised by claims that genuine community input not tenable in a governance context frequently defined by competing agendas, prioritisation of neoliberal outcomes and uncoordinated planning policy (Brownhill and Parker 2013; Schatz and Rogers 2016; Shevellar et al 2015), whereby interventions achieve nothing but civic antagonism (Brown and Wei Chin 2013; Day 1997). The essentially contested nature of participation may provide the illusion of democracy, but if people are to take part in such “complex processes which require significant time and effort to navigate” (Cosby and Howard 2019, p7) in good faith, there needs to be clearer incentives than the potential to redress the democratic deficit that attended adoption of participatory approaches to planning in the first place. By asking ‘How does involvement in participatory planning contribute to social capital?’, this thesis proposes such an incentive, a pragmatic outcome for commonly implemented forms of engagement, conducted under typically conflicted circumstances – whilst acknowledging Arnstein’s academic legacy and the social justice demands she made.

Participation’s essentially contested beginnings were confirmed by an initial review of the literature. Often-conflicting conceptualisations suggest that the

perceived failure of the practice to live up to expectations – the gap between theorised benefits and outcomes on the ground (Cuthill 2003; Laurian and Shaw; Shapely 2014) – is attributable to difficulties defining and evaluating the process (Brown and Wei Chin 2013; Chavis and Wandersman 1990; Day 1997; Gaventa 2001), and miscommunications around what it should entail. These inconsistencies allow for accusations of placation and manipulation (Arnstein 1969; Schatz and Rogers 2016; Shapely 2014), a tendency to be co-opted into neoliberal-enabling or status quo-supporting political agenda (Arnstein 1969; Brownhill and Parker 2010; Fainstein 2014; Gaventa 2001; Schatz and Rogers 2016) and a consistent lack of representativeness, or elite capture (Fainstein 2011; Hillier 2000; Reddel and Woolcock 2004). The literature review also revealed three competing perspectives: that of the pro-participation academic/theorist, of the administering body, frequently local government with responsibilities for planning patterns of development, and that of the participant, who has a personal stake in their involvement. Unsurprisingly, it appears that participants and administrators of the process may have quite different ideas about what constitutes a desirable outcome, while the academic perspective, in a bid to remain morally neutral, seems to be that, if benefits are to be derived from participation in planning interventions, these are more likely – perhaps only possible – when engagement is ‘good’, or ‘genuine’. Inherent in this is the normative assumption that common forms of consensus-advancing participation cannot result in advantages to non-powerful participants. The mechanism by which participation contributes benefits in ‘genuine’ representative, communicative formats is taken for granted; theorists appear to assume the deliberative, redistributive model of engagement as the ideal – and departures from this as the unspoken source of participation’s ongoing failures (Innes and Booher 2003; Sandercock 2000).

The thesis methodology needed to account for all these assumptions and discrepancies, and the fact that objectives for participation may not be shared by all its stakeholders (Cuthill 2004; Holmes 2011). Social capital, which represents “an outside, summative evaluation of theory-based process and outcome variables, localised to a specific neighbourhood process from the viewpoint of participants in the process” (Brown and Wei Chin 2013, p564), with connections to community wellbeing (Cuthill 2003, p383), and the potential to fill the moral obligations void left by the abandonment of planning’s commitment to a unified public good (Fainstein 2014, Shapely 2014) appeared to be something participants, administrators and academics could all agree on – despite inherent conflict and post-political context for planning.

A “lack of either definitive analysis or widespread agreement” (Cuthill 2003, p374), on exactly what social capital is or should achieve (Inaba 2013, Farr 2004) it shares participation’s hazy conceptualisations. And so, like participation, social capital can be used to advance a range of ideological positions. Under John Howard, the Australian federal government promoted social capital as a means of abrogating its responsibilities for welfare (Adams and Hess 2001; Farr 2004; Redell and Woolcock 2004). Social capital’s mediating role connecting people can mean that “the same strong ties that help members of a group often enable it to exclude outsiders”, demanding conformity (Portes 2003) and contributing to ‘external diseconomies’ (Inaba 2013), whereby those outside the connected group experience disadvantage as a result. And as for participation, social capital can be criticised as operating only within select social groups to achieve a particular form of success (Inaba 2013). But negative implications are in the minority; based on fundamentally human means of connecting through “networks, norms, and trust” (Farr 2004, p8),

social capital is thought to provide direct and indirect benefits to communities that make them more resilient and capable (Cox 2000; Poortinga 2006; Subramanian et al 2003; Woolcock 2000, 2010) and has been posited as contributing to measurable community benefits around economic, educational and democratic capacity (Cuthill 2003; Paranagamage et al 2010; Poortinga 2006), and as an aspect of sustainability (Rogers et al 2013).

If participation can be shown to contribute to benefit participants through contributing to social capital, the proposal that engagement is required to mediate responses to ‘wicked problems’ facing the world (Aulich 2011; Holmes 2011; PIA 2018; Stoker 2004) makes practical, equitable sense. To determine the mechanisms by which this could occur, it was necessary to approach the question from three points of view: the first part of the research design, a thematic analysis, involved identifying the relationship between social capital and participation to determine whether explicit connections between the concepts had been made, and developing an evaluation framework that could measure how good, meaningful, or effective participation could contribute – with the corresponding assumption that interventions not meeting these criteria would be less likely to result in social capital. The second part of the method applied the framework to locally relevant case studies to establish a baseline for different types of participation as implemented in a typical planning context. Finally, given the high, personal stakes engagement with planning often involves, it was important to identify the extent to which subjective and emotional responses shaped participants’ perspectives of their involvement, through administration of a qualitative survey. Demographic questions were included in the hopes that responses would highlight any effects of elite capture on engagement and perceptions.

Results of the thematic analysis showed that social capital was a reasonable summative measure of effective engagement practice, and that the criteria for likely contribution to such a benefit would include ‘Process Criteria’ of representativeness (Brown and Wei Chin 2013; Rowe and Frewer 2000; BCC 2019); independence (Brown and Wei Chin 2013; Rowe and Frewer 2000); early involvement (Brown and Wei Chin 2013; Rowe and Frewer 2000); transparency (BCC 2019; Brown and Wei Chin 2013; Cuthill 2003; Rowe and Frewer 2000); relevance (BCC 2019; Brown and Wei Chin 2013; IAP2 Australasia 2019); accessibility (BCC 2019; Brown and Wei Chin 2013; Rowe & Frewer 2000); deliberative quality (Booher 2008; Brown and Wei Chin 2013; Crawford et al 2008); expectations management (BCC 2019; Rowe and Frewer 2000) and communicated influence on decisions (IAP2 Australasia 2019; BCC 2019). ‘Outcome criteria’ for engagement to contribute to the development of social capital were: influence on outcome (Arnstein 1969; Brown and Wei Chin 2013; Butterfoss 2006; Rowe and Frewer 2000); increased understanding and increased trust – or at least perceptions of these (BCC 2019; Brown and Wei Chin 2013; Butterfoss, 2006; Butterworth 2000; Innes and Booher 2000; Laurian and Shaw 2009; Paranagamage et al 2010; Rowe and Frewer 2000); workable solutions and participant satisfaction (Brown and Wei Chin 2013; Butterfoss 2006; Laurian and Shaw 2009; Paranagamage et al 2010; Putnam 2000).

Despite significant overlap between objectives and criteria described in Brisbane City Council’s Community Engagement policy, the most comprehensive and easily accessible outline of participation from the point of view of an administrator, and by academics working from a participant perspective, Brown and Wei Chin (2013) and Laurian and Shaw (2009), alignment was not apparent in practice. The top down interventions in particular did not score well according to the

evaluation framework, with transparency, independence, influence on outcome and trust the most obvious casualties. Formal participation at this level of local planning has been seen as tokenistic and instrumental, with engagement mechanisms seen as tick-a-box processes, and contributions from community passing “into a void” (McAuliffe and Rogers 2018, p10). Negative experiences were particularly likely to be reported by people who had taken part in place-based projects, Brisbane City Council's Neighbourhood Plans, with the effect most pronounced for those who had been involved with the Community Planning Team process. Brown and Wei Chin (2013) observed a similar negative bias for their study, suggesting that increased involvement of CPT led to higher expectations of influence – and thus greater dissatisfaction when engagement did not lead to desired outcomes.

Tension and conflict are seemingly inevitable when local planning presents a perceived threat to existing neighbourhoods (Raynor et al 2015). As the most localised example of top-down engagement investigated by this study, stakes for the Community Planning Team process – and potential for dissatisfaction – were high. This was borne out by survey results, where people reported negative perceptions of involvement – frequently saying they derived no benefit at all – when objectives went unmet. Results from the survey also showed that social capital levels of those involved in the CPT were lower than for any other participatory intervention, and that respondents were less likely to say they would be involved in future activities. Smaller, community-led activities, on the other hand, were almost invariably described in positive terms. Although they were often less well-organised and resourced, and less broadly representative, the smaller interventions were more likely to provide participants with opportunities to meet multiple times and discuss problems and potential solutions in depth with like-minded citizens, and to connect

in other, non-planning contexts. Unlike for the Community Planning Teams – who, it could be argued, shared opportunities for group discussion and commitment – high social capital was apparent even when campaign objectives were not realised.

For all BCC’s careful wording of engagement policy, the results of the practice analysis suggest that residents remain hopeful their engagement will influence decision-making – and that failure to affect outcomes was the source of considerable frustration. It is perhaps revealing of the potential for disappointment that similar outcomes for participant satisfaction were observed in the Skeffington Report, where “‘despite a high level of interest amongst residents in the area’ there was still a ‘great deal of dissatisfaction with the amount and nature of consultation provided by the council’” (Shapely 2014 xvi). However, although it was seen to accrue more to participants in grass-roots activities, the various stages of research for this thesis and including the survey indicated that high social capital was a correlant for all types of engagement. This was the case even when respondents reported that their involvement in planning processes had resulted in lower trust of local government and planning departments, and where interventions failed to meet objectives for representativeness, transparency and influence. It was even possible to determine a negative correlation between measures of ‘effective’ engagement and levels of social capital, especially apparent in responses to survey question #8: Based on your experience, are you likely to be involved in similar activities in the future? Where many repondents indicated that, despite their mistrust of the process, they were keen to – felt they had to – participate again. Not only does this observation suggest that lack of impact and perceptions of unfair or dishonest process did not lead to participant apathy as predicted by Shapely (2014) and Cuthill (2003), but that

“feelings of disenfranchisement or exclusion from decision-making processes can (...) focus social capital development” (Crawford et al 2008, p547).

The implications of this are that social capital is not equally available to all: those not living in high land-value suburbs with the time, resources, inclination or ability, to take part in planning activities, have reduced access to its benefits. For participation to achieve its (assumed) political benefits, it is only necessary – and more manageable from an administrative perspective – to present engagement as representative. Such a situation is made possible by the fact that only a small portion of the resident population – between five and ten per cent (depending on whether the total population is taken as Brisbane or Greater Brisbane) in the case of Plan Your Brisbane – are likely to engage with planning governance. This has been the case since the Skeffington Committee, noted that “most people did not engage with politics and were unlikely to be motivated to do so unless there was a threat to their own interests and a real opportunity of influencing or overturning decisions” (Shapely 2014, xii). It presents little political threat for governments to engage with this minority “articulate groups” (Great Britain 1969, p4), by providing opportunities to attend events, author petitions, contribute to public campaigns via surveys and visioning activities, as various acts of validation and distraction. Participants may not see the principles they value represented in the real world or written into planning policy, but engagement offers the sense – and accompanying bonding social capital – that similar others share planning principles like wellbeing, equity and sustainability. The engagement system has neither the time nor the capacity to engage with or try and understand those who want something other than the progressive, planning-for-a-better-world version of cities. Non-elites, perhaps, have different values; they want more space for cars and parking, to cut red and green tape to facilitate development,

and are not made to feel welcome under this model of engagement; the usual suspect participators, the ten per cent, just wait for them to leave before getting on with imagining more equitable, environmentally friendly, 20-minute cities. Perhaps, cynically, there is little need for proponents of car-dependent, big-box-centric suburbs, road-widening and greenfield encroachment to take part in participatory planning; systemic default seems to enable those settlement patterns anyway – and will continue to do so as long as it does not cost governments politically or economically.

Despite enthusiasm expressed by administrators for “meaningful” (BCC 2019) community engagement in planning, it remains the case that “participation methods often seem to be employed simply in recognition of a need to involve the public in some way, assuming that involvement is an end in itself, rather than a means to an end” (Wiedemann and Femers 1993). Arnstein called such “established and routinized” citizen participation (Irvin and Stansbury 2014, p57) an “empty ritual” (1969) – but, less cynically, its primary objective was to help the public understand technical justifications behind planning decisions, to make planning more accessible (Shapely 2014). Because, despite significant access to resources, examples reviewed by this thesis support the theory of a public service restricted by its reliance on rational bureaucratic logic and departmental compartmentalisation that lacks the capacity to incorporate unformatted, unpredictable, irrational input – that produced by the general community – into city planning. Such practical limitations can be presented as – and almost inevitably become – ideological limitations; genuine participation, as it has been envisaged by social and spatial justice advocates from Arnstein to Legacy under such circumstances becomes “untenable” (Schatz and Rogers 2016). Even the best case scenario reviewed by this thesis, the Parks Co-

design Project, which deliberately appealed to a broader range of people than those typically interested in participation and provided child care arrangements and timing to suit a range of employment status, was restricted by bureaucratic – and pragmatic – capacity, communicating in English via email and social media with residents of the area, rather than the many lower-income essential workers and other users, to end up with an homogenous group discussing and working on the final design.

It has been suggested that representative systems “may have been more meaningful in smaller communities faced with relatively slow change” (Bloomfield et al. 1998, p8): participation may be seen as an attempt to re-scale current iterations of ‘representative’ democracy. In order to achieve representativeness at a city scale, avoid conflict and meet legislative and economic obligations, however, opportunities to develop social capital may be sacrificed as “moves towards a more participatory democracy [have] been progressively undermined by the range, scale and complexity of contemporary society” (Cuthill 2003, p377). And so, smaller, contentious (protest-focused), or community-led activities appear to offer greater opportunities for the development of social capital – but these take place in areas where levels are already high, and at the expense of broader social cohesion. Both of these situations have implications for social capital: technocratic limitations make participatory interventions – and the benefits they offer – less accessible to non-‘usual suspects’ members of the community, and social capital tends to accrue in groups where high levels are already apparent.

It could also be argued that the tendency for engagement to garner the attention only of the ‘usual suspects’ is potentially less problematic from an equity point of view than actual representativeness. Although loss of trust in government was evident in survey results, relatively low stakes for the majority of participants, whose

wellbeing is not under threat from negative planning outcomes, made plans to participate again feasible and non-threatening. It may also be the case that financial and spatial security – 25/33 participants owned their homes, nine outright, nearly 1/3 had lived in the area for over 12 years and and over half (16/33) reported incomes of over \$100K – protected participants psychologically from negative built environment impacts. The decision to continue to be involved in participatory campaigns, therefore, is perhaps less about achieving particular planning outcomes than asserting political identity and establishing a sense of community solidarity. Is elite capture, therefore, a form of placation, whereby the only people who complain about their built environment are those who have a really nice built environment – but much higher standards, and property values – than those who do not participate? Even if the usual suspects don't get what they wanted – which they generally won't – they remain satisfied, mollified, because they still live in lovely, leafy suburbs with lots of public transport and access to greenspace, for example. And perhaps the sacrifice of the usual suspects appeases the engagement gods; participants have participated but it amounts to nothing; the status quo can be retained.

Overall, it was apparent that participation in Brisbane operates under “the political realities of the planning system” which serves merely “to reproduce existing structures of power, and does little to overcome public distrust” (Bedford et al 2002, p311). Observations that engagement cannot be perceived as effective without impacting on outcomes (Brown and Wei Chin 2013) As a governance body reliant on development-related revenue (Dodson 2018), there is an ostensible need to manage the perceived threats to liveability and way of life for residents, of the impacts of climate change, increasing urbanisation and densification, without compromising on economic benefits enabled by those threats. However, if the government wants to

apply participatory approaches as a means of addressing the erosion of trust in government at the same time as providing an outlet for community concerns, the express acknowledgement of the range of contexts and conditions that produce and shape participatory episodes (Brownhill and Parker 2010), and the explicit acknowledgement of participation's limitations, that "innovative policy-making based on citizen engagement cannot be isolated from the realities of political systems" (Schatz and Rogers 2016 p40), would be more useful approach than simply inviting the public to contribute to planning decisions and then cross their fingers. Such a post-collaborative strategy would recognise the "difficulties and challenges of participation from different perspectives" (Brownhill and Parker 2010, p276).

As well as shifting significant focus to expectations management strategies, further adaptations to typical engagement practice could include scaling down the size of interventions, increasing opportunities for face-to-face interactions over multiple occasions, and improving opportunities for communication between administrators and participants. It may also be politic to advance opportunities to participate only after developers have been consulted, so that communities are in a position to negotiate and compromise on available trade-offs. As per the Skeffington Committee's original conception, the focus of engagement could move away from a means of influencing built environment decisions – which is so rarely the outcome – back to learning more about how and why planning decisions are made. To compensate for the perceived loss of community agency, governments could provide better legislation around accountability and responsibility for built environment interventions, for example, so that those who stand to make the profits are also bearers of the risk, even in public/private partnerships.

Acknowledgement of the limitations of participation, though, is only part of the project proscribed by the findings of this thesis. The neutrality of planning needs to be questioned or disavowed; its inherent politicisation made explicit: “Public space is the quintessential site of politics ... the everyday expression of collective decisions about how we live together, about who gets access to which space, and for what purposes, about the role of the state and the rights and responsibilities of citizens” (Thorpe, 2020). While a lack of social stratification – and so, politics – in Çatalhöyük, humanity’s earliest settlement, meant that each of its citizens had equal capacity to build their own home, to shape their own part of the city, as humans have evolved, so too has their the capacity for inhabitants to shape their cities, not only to provide homes for the people who were essential to their economic growth, but, relatedly, as an expression of their power over others. Perhaps the modern planning project recognised this and the responsibilities it entailed, supporting resident health and wellbeing as a requirement, and payment, for maintaining power. Participation, therefore, although it was established as a reaction to power, ostensibly challenging city-shaping forces and the inequity that enabled them, has been unable to resist. Notions of the common good, and a progressive, social justice agenda have not been enough to counter the inevitability of power, whether it takes the form of neoliberalism or centralised technocracy. The tension between the approaches to engagement espoused by Skeffington and Arnstein’s ladder, in their promotion of two very different justifications for participation, inadvertently reveal this, by exposing planning’s inherent politicism (McManus 1998, Thorpe 2014), and uneasy, ultimately subservient/dependent relationship with power. In other words, planning is inherently political; participation, for all its intentions, cannot help but succumb.

Chapter 6: Conclusions

The academic influence of “Ladder of Participation” has been unparalleled, with over 17,000 citations of the article – and 13,000 of those in the last decade (Slotterback and Lauria 2019). Produced in the same year, and on the same topic as the relatively overlooked Skeffington Report (Great Britain 1969), Arnstein’s treatise has shaped the field of participatory planning theory (Slotterback and Lauria 2019), and set the scene for 50 years’ investigation into the inherently conflicted nature of planning (Thorpe 2017, p576). Perspectives from both 1969 documents, however, offer clues to the unresolved gap between what participation was supposed to achieve, and what it actually does. The Skeffington Committee’s People in Planning report advocated for increased participation of the community in planning decisions that affected them. It was theorised that greater involvement of the public would lead to improved understanding of planning and bureaucratic process, thereby increasing acceptance of decisions undertaken and expediting implementation. Theories underpinning the objectives of participation as per Arnstein’s conception, on the other hand, were seen to align with reformist movements including feminism and civil rights. Arnstein’s call for redistribution and decentralisation of power mean engagement has been framed as a means of reasserting planning’s progressive intent; whether or not Arnstein intended for her version of participation to be aligned with the progressive intent of Modern Planning, it is this version, instead of the pragmatic, managerial-realist view espoused by Skeffington, that has informed much subsequent academic theory around engagement. Administrators, though, seem more likely to subscribe to the Skeffington model – and it appears that divergence between the approaches is the source of participation’s woes.

The literature review and subsequent thematic analysis performed for this study found that issues around the conceptualisation and application of participation in planning can be attributed to inconsistencies defining the practice and its objectives and a related lack of evaluation: without a shared understanding to guide the practice, participation is subject to accusations of placation and manipulation, perceptions that it fails to incorporate community input and is only implemented to satisfy mandated planning requirements. It is almost inevitably subject to ‘elite capture’, whereby those most likely to engage come from high income groups, eliminating the potential for redistributive social justice and enhanced equity engagement is supposed to provide. But there also appear to be enough overlap and common themes around what engagement should achieve from the point of view of participants and administrators alike to derive a consistent set of objectives. This thesis proposed that this be abbreviated to social capital, and that to justify its implementation, participation should contribute to its development. A practice analysis, incorporating evaluation of local examples of engagement and responses to a survey of people who had taken part in planning interventions found that even the most negatively perceived processes allowed 75% of participants to increase their social capital as sense of community, connections, skills and knowledge. The practice analysis also confirmed findings that the types of people likely to be involved in participatory planning are already likely to have higher-than-average access to social capital.

In summary, for much locally significant consultation, there is a lack of alignment between objectives of administrators on the one hand, and the experience of participants on the other. This disconnect provides an explanation of the gap between theoretical ideals of participation and the reality on the ground. Differences between what decision-makers want – and say they can offer – and what participants

expect, though, does not seem to prevent the development of social capital. Rather, expressed as sense of community, agency and solidarity, social capital appears to accrue to people who participate in recurring or episodic small group interventions that are led by the community and offer opportunities for genuine dialogue and discussion – but at the expense of institutional trust, and in ways that are consistently inequitable.

Implications and limitations:

Like others capitals in Australia, Brisbane is experiencing the negative impacts of climate change, increasing urbanisation and high, unplanned population growth. These issues frequently manifest as planning conflicts, underpinned by – and feeding into – a “political culture characterised by strategic uncertainty and polarity, popular anxiety about growth and change, and defesive localism” (Gleeson et al 2010, p14). Australia is also increasingly impacted by spatial and social inequity, with implications for built environment policy including failure to provide diverse, affordable housing, mortgage stress, reliance of those living in outer suburbs and regional Australia on private vehicles and subsequent vulnerability to petrol price increases (Dodson and Sipe 2006), increased levels of obesity and other non-communicative diseases, urban heat islands, physical and social isolation and depression. There is growing recognition that a ‘business as usual’ approach to planning, characterised by sprawling low density settlement patterns, inadequate transport infrastructure and avoidance of politically unpopular infill development, is not going to adequately serve future populations (Daley et al 2018, Infrastructure Australia 2016; PIA 2018), especially in the face of mounting climate change impacts and events (PIA 2021).

If Australian governments continue to adopt participatory approaches as a means of ameliorating the negative political influence of increasing density, urbanisation, congestion and other planning challenges, it will be necessary to determine the extent of “limits to the transformative potential of citizen participation within the formal institutional processes of planning” (Legacy 2016, p427) to identify how participation might best be incorporated into decision-making structures as a means of supporting communities affected by planning issues, including those around climate change, urbanisation and population growth, in a way that contributes to equity, a strengthened democracy – and to social capital. Conceptions of power should be broadened, to “include aspects other than effects on decision making, such as human self-actualization and more complex understandings of justice (Laurian and Shaw 2019, p184). Such impacts around collective identity, “local pride and morale” (Walsh and Butler 1991), can be considered in the same category as increased community resources or empowerment, identified as a goal of participation nominated by theorists but frequently ignored by practitioners (Laurian and Shaw 2009, p296). It is this broadened conception of power to which social capital belongs.

For governments to justify the ongoing positioning of participation as part of a pluralistic and pragmatic approach to planning – without ceding or decentralising power – these or similar adaptations could be made to address a current lack of representativeness and tendency to elite capture and placatory approaches as an act of good faith. In a complex and neoliberal-oriented governance context subject to placation, the capacity to develop social capital through community participation in planning seems the most attractive and democratically acceptable justification for its implementation that can reasonably be hoped for.

Future research:

It has been argued that neither membership nor participation is the key factor in the development of social capital (Cox 2000), instead, requiring “quality and consequent learned optimism” (Cox 2000, p102) to form, and achieve its full potential. Opportunities for further research, then, could focus on how changes to engagement proposed by this thesis impact on public perceptions of the process and how this relates to ‘consequent learned optimism’, revisiting evaluation criteria proposed by this thesis to measure any changes. It will be important to establish clear goals if engagement is to be employed by Australian and Queensland governments to mitigate negative impacts of climate change, urbanisation and population growth, and to – quantitatively and qualitatively – evaluate the means by which it is done. Implementation of adapted or other forms of participation in places most vulnerable to these changes – outer suburbs, rural, regional and low socio-economic areas – to determine impacts on social capital would be a particularly valuable subject of research. It would also be useful to compare areas subject to participation with areas where engagement is not implemented to identify whether there is any measurable difference, in the face of these megatrends, to local levels – or perceptions – of liveability, resilience and wellbeing.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Evaluating the Impact on Social Capital of Community Participation in Planning Survey

Submission of this survey is accepted as consent to participate in a research project (QUT Ethics Approval Number 1900000106) being undertaken for a Masters of Philosophy by Ilithyia Bone. Your participation is voluntary and anonymous, and will contribute considerably to understanding the relationship between social capital and participation in planning. If you need more information please read the documents at: <https://survey.qut.edu.au/survey-data/68/68903/media/89/8981.pdf> and <https://survey.qut.edu.au/survey-data/68/68903/media/89/8982.pdf>.

Your comments will add much-needed detail and richness to the survey data, thank you.

Perceptions of experience in community planning activities

1. What community-based planning activities have you participated in?
2. How were you involved in these activities?
3. How satisfied were you with your involvement?
4. What would you have done differently to improve participation?
5. What did you get out of your involvement?
6. Have you been able to develop these skills/connections since your participation in the activity ended?
7. How has being involved with this activity changed your perception of your community/local government?

(Appendix A continued) Perceptions of local community

8. Based on your experience, are you likely to be involved in similar activities in the future?

Perceptions of local community

1. I am like most people who live in my neighbourhood
2. If I feel like talking, I can generally find someone in this neighbourhood to talk to right away
3. I do not care whether the neighbourhood does well
4. My friends in this neighbourhood are part of my everyday activities
5. If I am upset about something personal, there is no one in this neighbourhood I can turn to
6. I have no friends in this neighbourhood I can depend on
7. If there were a serious problem in this neighbourhood , the people here could get together to solve it
8. If someone does something good for this neighbourhood , that makes me feel good
9. If I had an emergency, even people I do not know in this neighbourhood would be willing to help
10. This neighbourhood supports a range of activities

And now a few questions about you...

1. What is your postcode?
2. What is your age?

(Appendix A continued)

3. What is your gender?
4. How many children under ten years of age live with you?
5. How long have you lived in your neighbourhood (this can include moving house, but staying within the same area)?
6. Do you rent or own your home?
7. What is your (approximate) combined household income?

Thanks for participating!! If you have any questions, please contact me on i.bone@hdr.qut.edu.au

Appendix B

Final survey report saved in pdf format: Evaluating the Impact on Social Capital of Community Participation in Planning Survey_final; Appendix B1 and Appendix B2: survey results saved in xls format including bar graphs indicating responses; Appendices B.3, B.4, B.5 and B.6, collated survey responses organised according to type of engagement activity: Neighbourhood Plan, Community Planning Team, Parks CoDesign Project and Community-led Intervention participants, also saved in xls format

Appendix C

Appendix C.1 and C.2 Tables 4.1 Evaluation Framework and 4.2 Application of
Evaluation Framework to Case studies saved as pdf files

Appendix D

Brisbane City Council Neighbourhood Plan summaries reviewed for this thesis

PYB (Plan Your Brisbane) Engagement Report (Articulous 2018) .