
8.

Sharing Responsibility for Shaping the Future - Why and How?

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Introduction

In recent decades intellectual and political elites have paid little attention to issues concerning the future. Those who raised questions concerning the future, what it might look like, how it should be shaped and who should play a part in deciding its shape were dismissed as being out of touch with the ‘real’ world. It was regularly pointed out to such questioners that the market would make these decisions and there wasn’t much point in wasting time ‘theorising’ about such issues. Media coverage of events and discussions concerning issues rarely focused on the future and what its shape might be. The so-called ‘experts’ who were consulted, who appeared on TV and radio programmes and wrote extensively in newspapers were mostly economists. It seemed that everything could be reduced to its economic dimensions and only economists had a useful contribution to make to the discussion and problem-solving. The crises of recent years have highlighted the paucity of this approach.

Since 2007 the world’s economy has been in turmoil. The world’s political structures have failed to deal with this turmoil in a fair and just manner. Yet the failure for the most part to address the future in anything more than economic and fiscal terms displays a profound lack of awareness of the issues at stake. Of course the economic issues are very important but so are the political, the cultural, the social and the environmental. There is an urgent need for discussion of the vision of the future that is guiding decision-making across the board. But to raise this issue leads very quickly to being dismissed in the media, and sometimes even by Government, as being out of touch with the ‘real’ world. Such dismissal comes from

people and institutions whose world seems confined to economic and fiscal issues only. These are important issues but they are far from being the whole story. By contrast, there has been a sea-change for the general public although it should be noted in passing that this change has not manifested itself in much of the media's coverage of events or discussion of issues, including the future.

Ireland has been hit by five interlinked crises i.e. banking, public finances, economic, social and reputational⁵⁶ (NESC 2009). Many people have seen the multi-layered series of crises that have hit the world's economy and political structures and come to the conclusion that the basic model underpinning the world's development is broken, perhaps irreparably. Others argue that this conclusion is unfair and believe that slight adjustments are all that are required to rectify the problems currently being encountered. Either way, there is a growing clamour concerning the future, what it should be like and who should shape it; people are demanding that their voices be heard when decisions, especially those concerning the future, are being made. They have lost their belief in the market as the ultimate decider and they have little or no confidence in the current political structures, nationally or internationally, having the capacity to address these issues. They see much of what has been done in the past four years as incompetent at best.

In Ireland's case there is much agreement that the decisions taken in the period since 2007 have been unfair and unjust. Many would agree that:

- While Ireland meets the various benchmarks contained in the Bailout Agreement it has with the International Monetary Fund, the European Central Bank and the European Commission, the bailout framework conditions and benchmarks are producing a process of dispossession of those who are poor and/or vulnerable.
- Those being dispossessed by this Agreement had no hand, act or part in making the decisions that caused the problems in the first place.

⁵⁶ For a detailed outline of these crises cf. National Economic and Social Council (2009), *Ireland's Five Part Crisis*, Dublin, NESC.

- The ‘gambling bankers’ and their like are having all their losses repaid by the Irish tax-payer even though they knowingly undertook the risks involved in their original gamble.
- The Agreement itself is leading to profits of €9bn for the EU segment alone of the Troika.
- This process is failing to address the situation of moral hazard in which banks and financial institutions in the EU and beyond are protected from the consequences of their actions while innocent poor and vulnerable people are dispossessed,
- The European Central Bank and the European Commission both played a role in the decisions that caused Ireland’s problems. Now, however, these institutions refuse to accept their share of responsibility. Instead, they insist that people who played no role in these decisions (i.e. Ireland’s poor and vulnerable) must pay in full to reimburse these institutions.
- This is a profoundly immoral process.
- Much of what has been done at ‘official’ level to address the current series of crises has seriously damaged the well-being of a great many people.

Given this situation major questions arise concerning the future and how it is to be shaped. Among the most important questions to which answers are required are:

- Why should responsibility be shared?
- How can responsibility be shared in a real and meaningful manner at local, national and international levels?
- How can people ensure their voice is really heard or that future generation, and the environment, are protected?

This chapter seeks to provide some responses to these questions.

1. Why?

There are many reasons why responsibility for shaping the future should be shared. Here we identify six and elaborate a little on each. We will

then move on to address the question how? The six reasons we focus on are:

- To ensure priority is given to well-being and the Common Good
- To deal with the challenges of markets and their failures
- To address other challenges in a manner most likely to succeed
- To link rights and responsibilities
- To work towards a new paradigm more appropriate for the 21st century
- To protect the interests of future generations.

1.1 To ensure priority is given to well-being and the Common Good

1.1.1 Well-being

In recent years there have been many useful discussions and publications on the issue of well-being. The National Economic and Social Council (NESC) defined well-being as follows: “A person’s well-being relates to their physical, social and mental state. It requires that basic needs are met, that people have a sense of purpose, and that they feel able to achieve important goals, to participate in society and to live the lives they value and have reason to value.” (NESC 2009, p.xiii) This is the well-being that *Social Justice Ireland* and the present authors would like for all members of all societies.

As far back as Plato it was recognised that the person grows and develops in the context of society. “Society originates because the individual is not self-sufficient, but has many needs which he can’t supply himself”⁵⁷. The person grows and develops through relationships with people; family, neighbours, community, wider society. Down through the ages various philosophies and social arrangements have been proposed to meet the felt need in societies to fulfil their perceived obligations to their members. These varied from Aristotle’s position of favouring private ownership but common use of property to ensure the dire needs of people were met, to

⁵⁷ (Plato, in Lee 1987, p58, cited in George, V. 2010, p6)

the emphasis of both Plato and Aristotle that education should be free and compulsory, to Cicero's discussion of equality, to the early Christian emphasis on sharing and forming community.⁵⁸

In more recent times the dignity of the person has been enshrined in The Universal Declaration of Human Rights which states: "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood." This core value is also at the heart of the Catholic Social Thought tradition. *Social Justice Ireland* and the authors in particular, support the values of both these traditions. We advocate that the dignity of each and every person must be recognised, acknowledged and promoted effectively. This implies that society's structures, institutions and laws should exist for the authentic development of the person.

1.1.2 The Common Good

The right of the individual to freedom and personal development is limited by the rights of other people. This leads to a second core value, namely, the common good. As we noted earlier the concept of the 'common good' originated over two thousand years ago in the writings of Plato, Aristotle and Cicero. More recently, the philosopher John Rawls defined the common good as "certain general conditions that are...equally to everyone's advantage" (Rawls, 1971 p.246). François Flahault notes "that the human state of nature is the social state, that there has never been a human being who was not embedded, as it were, in a multiplicity. This necessarily means that relational well-being is the primary form of common good. Just as air is the vital element for the survival of our bodies, coexistence is the element necessary for our existence as persons. The common good is the sum of all that which supports coexistence, and consequently the very existence of individuals." (Flahault, François, 2011: 68)

⁵⁸ For an interesting review of the historical development of welfare see George, V. (2010), *Major Thinkers in Welfare: Contemporary Issues in Historical Perspective*, Bristol, The Policy Press.

Social Justice Ireland understands the term ‘common good’ as “the sum of those conditions of social life by which individuals, families and groups can achieve their own fulfilment in a relatively thorough and ready way” (Gaudium et Spes 1965:74). This understanding recognises the fact that the person develops their potential in the context of society where the needs and rights of all members and groups are respected. The common good, then, consists primarily of having the social systems, institutions and environments on which we all depend, work in a manner that benefits all people simultaneously and in solidarity. The NESC study referred to already states that “at a societal level, a belief in a ‘common good’ has been shown to contribute to the overall well-being of society. This requires a level of recognition of rights and responsibilities, empathy with others and values of citizenship” (NESC, 2009, p.32).

This raises the issue of resources. The goods of the planet are for the use of all people – not just the present generation; they are also for the use of generations still to come. The present generation must recognise it has a responsibility to ensure that it does not damage but rather enhances the goods of the planet that it hands on – be they economic, cultural, social or environmental. The structural arrangements regarding the ownership, use, accumulation and distribution of goods are disputed areas. However it must be recognised that these arrangements have a major impact on how society is shaped and how it supports the well-being of each of its members in solidarity with others.

1.1.3 Responsibility and the Common Good

This discussion leads to the questions ‘who is responsible for producing and protecting common goods and what do we mean by responsibility? Lorenzo Sacconi defines responsibility as follows: “being responsible means having the capacity to be subjected to blame or praise due to an action or the outcome of an action in terms of some norm (legal or moral) from which a duty is derived”. He goes on to raise the question of what it means to have “the capability for being subjected to blame or praise.” He answers the question with the postulate “ought implies can” so “one cannot be attributed responsibility for an act if one cannot make a choice regarding that action. This is rather obvious, but nonetheless it

immediately raises a basic challenge to the definition of shared social responsibilities: we cannot share any responsibility with another (natural or legal) person if that person cannot make any choice in the matter.” (Sacconi, 2011:30)

Claus Offe notes (Offe, 2011) that “arguably, there was a time when the question of ‘who is responsible and therefore can be held accountable’ was comparatively easy to answer.” The answer was ‘the incumbent government’. However it is more difficult to locate responsibility today. Offe points to four developments that have led to this difficulty.

- a) Political elites have become “strategic agents that spend much of their time and resources on managing their mass constituency’s *perception* of responsibility. They do so in the three most common communicative modes by which elites address their constituencies: *blame avoidance* and finger-pointing (in the case of undesirable developments and outcomes), *credit claiming* (in the cases of favourable ones), and the rhetorical *taking* of (what they can safely assume on the basis of opinion polls) *popular positions*”. These activities make it difficult to attribute responsibility for outcomes.
- b) The opaqueness of the question of responsibility “has a foundation in changing institutional realities, having to do with the transformation of *government* into *governance*. While ‘government’ stands for the clearly demarcated and visible competency of particular governmental office-holders and parties in legislative chambers to make collectively binding decisions, ‘governance’ stands for more or less fleeting multi-actor alliances which span the divides between and private actors, state and civil society, or national and international actors.” The more such alliances are formed the more difficult it is to link decisions with outcomes.
- c) “...due to the endemic and seemingly chronic *fiscal crisis* that has befallen virtually every state in Europe (both as a consequence of them having transformed themselves into low-tax ‘competition states’ in an open global economy and as a consequence of the bail-

out-needs ensuing upon the financial market crisis), the range of matters that the state and political elites can at all credibly promise and take responsibility for, its very 'state capacity' has been shrinking quite dramatically."

- d) "...fiscally starved governments have for several decades ...resorted to strategies of shedding and re-assigning responsibilities. The basic intuition is that the government is not responsible, citizens themselves are 'responsibilised', with the only remaining role of government consisting in 'activating' and 'incentivising' citizens so that *they* live up to their *individual* responsibility rather than asking and expecting government to take responsibility *for* them."

Offe then goes on to examine the freedom of the individual to make choices. He notes the freely chosen action of individuals affect not just themselves, but others as well. "The freedom of choice of one person can be said to constrain the freedom of choice of others." Therefore in order for the "highest value of freedom to be universally enjoyed, it must be limited at the level of individuals through statutory regulation, rules of criminal law, etc."

Offe notes a second problem: the range of an individual's free choice is not just determined by legal guarantees securing it, but also by favourable or unfavourable *conditions* which can dramatically *expand* (e.g., through 'unearned' inherited wealth) or severely *restrict* (e.g., due to congenital physical handicaps or the fact of being born in a poor country) the range of choices individuals have at their disposal, particularly as these adverse conditions are due to 'brute luck' and can in no way be causally attributed to any behaviour that those benefitting or suffering from them are causally responsible for."

There has been little concern for the capability of citizens to make choices and cope with the outcomes. How do we relate capability to responsibility? There has been far too little discussion on how a level playing field can be put in place so that all people can interact effectively with the choices that

confront them, share responsibility for the decisions taken and work towards desirable outcomes.

This issue was addressed by, among others, the Nobel prize-winning economist Amartya Sen. He criticises Rawls' theory of justice (Rawls, 1971) because he sees this theory as too linear in its understanding of how just situations can be achieved. He claims the assumption accepted by Rawls, that active and critical citizens with a keen interest in promoting justice will be able to influence institutional structures and that those structures will reflect citizens' concerns, is not enough. It does not recognise or realise that a mechanism is needed for an open political space in which a public debate about such contentious issues can be developed. Sen concludes that "to prevent catastrophes caused by human negligence or callous obduracy, we need critical scrutiny, not just goodwill towards others." (Sen, 2009: 48). Such critical, public scrutiny based on the human capacity to reason will be a key aspect in addressing the question of how to overcome inequality and injustice. "The role of unrestricted public reasoning is quite central to democratic politics in general and to the pursuit of social justice in particular". (Sen, 2009:44)

However, such public scrutiny requires a safe space or mechanism to enable an open and public dialogue on key issues and challenges.⁵⁹ For three decades Jurgen Habermas has argued for a free public sphere that would allow an unrestricted dialogue about the core values of a particular society. (Habermas, 2001) Fiedler summarises Habermas' view: "Such a dialogue should be maintained by a civil society that sets their own agendas and which is only regulated by the state insofar as the state ensures that the dialogue about value and belief systems happens in a democratic and domination-free setting." (Fiedler, 2011:10) We will return to the topic of civil society later in this paper. For now it is sufficient to note that the authors have argued for many years that such a public space is required and that civil society should play a key role in its establishment, development, action and evaluation. (Healy/Reynolds, 2000)

⁵⁹ These paragraphs draw extensively on an excellent paper by Dr Matthias Fiedler (Fiedler 2011) which sets out his thoughts on development as shared responsibility.

There is one final issue we wish to draw attention to before moving from this discussion on responsibility, well-being and the common good. Sen's views on 'capability' have been developed in some detail by the philosopher Martha Nussbaum. (Nussbaum, 2000) She has argued that there is a basic minimum threshold that everyone should meet and she argues that the most urgent challenge for all societies today is ensuring that no individual falls below this threshold. She identifies ten capabilities which all should have and claims a society is unjust if anyone does not have these. (Nussbaum 2000:78-80) We simply draw attention to this as one example of the importance of capability. If a person does not have the capability to attain basic well-being then that situation is unjust. Society and the state have a responsibility to do what is required to ensure this injustice is rectified. This responsibility is not confined to one's own country or society; it extends across the planet. Where well-being is concerned we are all our brothers' and sisters' keeper.

The common good has not received the attention it should receive in recent times. People's well-being has not been protected during recent crises. There has been much controversy and disagreement about who is or is not responsible for this. These critically important limitations must be addressed if there is to be a just and fair future. To address them effectively requires the development of new forms of dialogue that will renew people's confidence in the ability of public institutions (a) to maintain a focus on the common good and (b) to secure people's well-being. Later in this paper we will address the question of how this might be done. Here we continue our discussion on why responsibility in shaping the future must be shared.

1.2 To deal with the challenges of markets and their failures

Historically, the market was seen as a civilising mechanism⁶⁰. For much of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries the generally accepted view

⁶⁰ For a detailed treatment of this and related issues cf. Hirschman, Hirschman AO, 1977, *Rival interpretations of market society: civilizing, destructive or feeble?* J. Con. Lit. 20: 1463-84; Marion Fourcade and Kieran Healy, *Moral Views of Market Society* in *Annual Review of Sociology*, 2007, 33, 285-311

was that markets made people friendlier and less inclined to fight one another. Marx, among others, rejected this view and believed that “capitalist society tends to undermine its own foundations, to the point at which it will ultimately self-destruct” (Fourcade/Healy, 2007:286). Those who believed in the market as a civilising influence revised their position to say that it was still performing this role, but in a rather feeble manner. This feebleness was attributed to cultural and institutional legacies from the past that made the market’s exercise of its role more difficult. The United States of America was seen as having moral character and economic success because of the lack of such legacies. These understandings were summarised by Hirschman (1977) as markets being seen as civilising, destructive or feeble in their effects on society.

A great deal of the research in the decades following Hirschman’s analysis fits within these three categories. Many economists are still arguing that the economy has a positive impact on civil society, politics and culture. This is the liberal understanding in today’s world. It believes that greed will not gain the upper hand because an individual’s greed will be kept in check by a similar greed in others, so self-interest will ensure that people will act in a polite and honest manner. According to this view in practice, commerce will promote cooperation. It is also seen as promoting freedom of the individual and of society. Likewise it is seen as promoting creativity and innovation.

Others are claiming that instead of cooperation the market produces coercion and exclusion. Sandel claims that severe inequality and/or dire economic necessity make a mockery of the formally free nature of market exchange (Sandel 2000). Some have concluded that “where the ideology of submission to the ‘free market’ has spread we observe a spectacular rise in the number of people being put behind bars as the state relies increasingly on policies and penal institutions to contain the social disorders produced by mass unemployment, the imposition of precarious wage work and the shrinking of social protection” (Wacquant 2001:404 cited in Fourcade/Healy 2007:293). Others claim that equating markets with democratic and personal freedom is simply a mechanism to provide legitimisation for free-market liberalism and is not based on objective analysis of the situation.

Others, again, believe that markets are embedded in, entangled with or otherwise dependent on other parts of society i.e. that they are not nearly as powerful, for good or ill, as some people claim (Beckert 2002).

Fourcade and Healy summarise today's version of Hirschman's three views as the liberal dream, the commodified nightmare and shackles/blessings. They go on to suggest a fourth dimension emerging in recent economic sociology literature which sees markets as moral projects. This understanding argues that markets are cultural because they are explicitly moral projects. They show this to be the case in three areas. Firstly, markets are seen as playing a role in establishing moral boundaries between persons or societies. For example, Max Weber in his classic study *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, (1958) has shown that money is central to the evaluation of the moral worth of individuals. The careful management of one's wealth is not just economically rational but is a measure of one's moral responsibility.

Secondly, social scientists constantly comment on the moral dimensions of markets. Economists in particular are regularly called on, as the supposed experts, to play a leading role in the design of institutions whether these concern national development, corporate management or organisational reform. In this they are not just describing reality but actually shaping it for some purpose or other. This has profound moral implications. In Ireland the establishment of the Irish Fiscal Advisory Council, consisting of economists only, who will set the parameters for Government's Budgets, is an example of this in practice. Only economists are included in this body which will decide and advise on what is a profoundly moral project i.e. making recommendations that will shape the future of Ireland based on what they consider to be the good of Irish society.

Thirdly, Fourcade and Healy argue that economic exchange and policy making are saturated with moral statements (2007:303-4). They point out, for example, that issues such as transparency and corruption are used to monitor corporations, international institutions and countries. Understandings of what constitutes fair prices, fair wages, fair competition

and fair trade are all based on moral views about what things are worth and what processes are just. What is most worrying in this context is that much of the rationalisation and moralising that takes place is dominated by economists and often is based on turning purely economic criteria such as efficiency or profit making into moral rules that must be followed.

It is clear that markets have failed dramatically on many occasions, most recently in the period following 2007. It is also clear that, following this most recent failure, political and economic institutions took action to protect market institutions such as banks. Governments and international bodies such as the IMF, the ECB and the European Commission made huge efforts and invested enormous resources in rescuing these banks which had gambled recklessly and lost their money. This was done at the expense of people who had played no part in causing the market's failure i.e. (a) taxpayers who had to pay through increased taxation and (b) all citizens, especially those who are poor or vulnerable, who paid through major reductions in services. A great many people were impacted on under both these headings. This was a process of systematic dispossession of those who were poor and/or vulnerable in which their resources were transferred to the banks and other market institutions through a series of political decisions. This process failed a great many people, especially those who were poor or marginalised. This process is deeply immoral. This is an example of where a few people made decisions but the burden of their decisions is forced on all members of society. In justice those who are expected to take responsibility for carrying the burden of decisions should have their voices and perspectives heard in making these decisions. It is one further reason why responsibility must be shared in the processes that shape the future.

1.3 To address other challenges in a manner most likely to succeed

Another reason responsibility needs to be shared in shaping the future flows from an analysis of how people tend to respond to great challenges or dangers. How people should respond was once a matter discussed in theology but today this issue arises widely as people face terror,

pandemics, environmental devastation, nuclear annihilation, and many other threats to their very existence. The planet itself, or at least the people who inhabit it, are at risk. Freud argued that the standard psychological response to an overwhelming danger is denial. But, far more convincingly, sociologist Robert Wuthnow, has argued the opposite. (Wuthnow, 2010) In his book 'Be Very Afraid' he argues convincingly that we seek ways to address the threats; we want to do something, anything. But too often what we do is wasteful and time consuming. His analysis builds on Max Weber's classic study on 'The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism' to which we have already referred.

Weber realised that the huge growth of the industrial revolution could not be explained by technological development alone. Such development was a necessary but insufficient condition for such growth. People needed to be motivated as well, they needed reasons to work long hours, to save, to invest and to plan for the future. Weber concluded that these reasons could be found in the profound uncertainty they faced about the fundamental realities of life because of their Puritan religious beliefs. Wuthnow analyses the responses that have been made to the nuclear threat, the international terrorism, weapons of mass destruction, pandemics such as bird flu and swine flu and environmental catastrophe. In each case he found that the response to an impending crisis was to take very high levels of action. But the problem is that very often the action is inappropriate and, to make matters worse, those responses are institutionalised in independent, relatively unaccountable organisations established to drive the response. According to Wuthnow

“The bias for action encourages people to act, but does not dictate exactly how they will act. That part is shaped more by what they have heard and learned about previous crises. If they learned that a big nuclear build-up during the Cold War was what saved the nation from annihilation, they are likely to imagine that a huge military budget will be the best way to deter terrorists”. (Wuthnow, 2010:215)

Significant amounts of money have been spent specifically monitoring and preventing dangers that have been identified. Such levels of

expenditure highlight why it is important to get the response right. Ireland has seen a classic example of failure in this respect. The Irish Government's response to the banking crisis of 2008 was on a huge scale and involved massive expenditure but it is generally agreed that it was based on poor analysis, was an over-reaction that resulted in excessive expenditure and additional damage being done. Action had been required but the action taken was very problematic and will have costs and consequences for Irish citizens for decades.

Reflecting on these situations we acknowledge that action is required to deal with situations that emerge. In particular action is required in addressing the challenges posed by major threats such as those identified above. However the lack of a clear social analysis, the failure to identify the consequences of actions taken, and the failure to address basic questions concerning meaning, concerning the future, concerning purpose, through sustained philosophical or theological reflection point to fundamental weaknesses that are likely to accompany inadequately thought-through responses. People jump into action because they convince themselves that engaging in such action is the best approach. But it is important that when actions are taken that they be as near as possible to the right actions. Very often mistakes are made because people base their action on what was done before. Governments are especially prone to this failure but many people make the same mistake. To counteract this tendency it is crucial that as many as possible be involved in providing social analysis and envisioning the future, in recognizing and addressing basic questions about values and meaning. The institutions created to address major problems should always be involved in these processes but so should those impacted on by decisions taken; these should always have their voice heard and their perspective included in this process. A sharing of responsibility is essential in these situations.

1.4 To link rights and responsibilities

There is an urgent need to have a calm and open discussion about the relationship between rights and responsibilities. From a historical perspective it is interesting to recall that

“In the debate on human rights in the French Revolutionary Parliament of 1789 the demand was made: if a declaration of the rights of man is proclaimed, it must be combined with a declaration of the responsibilities of man. Otherwise, in the end all human beings would have only rights which they would play off against others, and no one would any longer recognise the responsibilities without which the rights cannot function.” (Kung, 1997:99)⁶¹

In more recent times Professor Jim Ife⁶² noted that,

“One of the important aspects of human rights is that they are linked to human responsibilities. This has been a link that many have sought to deny or at least to minimise. For those on the political right, the idea of rights is regarded with some suspicion if not downright hostility, unless understood within very narrow liberal confines of individual freedom rights and property rights; anything beyond that, such as the right to education, health, housing, employment, job security, working conditions, income security and a clean environment sounds dangerously like socialism. For such people, responsibilities are much more important, and are the key to a stable society. To those in the political left, however, it is rights that are seen as important, while the idea of responsibility sounds like paternalism, social control and “mutual obligation” with all its punitive overtones.

“This political polarisation of rights and responsibilities has meant that many people, because of their ideological blinkers, do not treat both seriously, and choose to concentrate on one at the expense of the other, and this has resulted in something of a gap in human rights theorising. Yet the connection between rights and responsibilities is obvious. If I have a right, then that implies a responsibility on the part of some other person, group or institution to (i) allow me the freedom to exercise

⁶¹ In 1992 the Commission on Global Governance was established by the United Nations Organisation. Its report published in 1995 is entitled “*Our Global Neighbourhood*”,

⁶² 2004, A paper delivered to a conference on Community Development, Human Rights and the Grassroots in Deakin University, *Linking Community Development and Human Rights*.

that right, (ii) provide the mechanisms to protect that right, and/or (iii) make positive provision so that my right can be realised. The responsibilities associated with rights may lie with other individuals, with groups, with communities, or with governments. For example, the right to education requires some level of state action or policy to provide adequate educational institutions and structures, either by itself, or to ensure that others do it.”

Ife goes on to say,

“The responsibilities associated with human rights are often the most contentious part of rights discourse. We may readily agree on statements of rights, for example as described in the Universal Declaration, but when it comes to deciding whose responsibility it is to ensure the protection and realisation of those rights there can be major disagreement, for example, who should be responsible for ensuring our rights to health care are met: the Federal Government, the State Government, the private market, employers, the community, the family, or the individual her/himself? In reality the answer will usually be some combination of most or all of these, but then the question becomes what is the appropriate combination, and how much should each contribute? Responsibilities are usually more contentious than rights, and it is interesting to note that we seem to find it easier to draw up charters of rights than we do charters of responsibilities. Perhaps it is more appropriate to call human rights workers human responsibilities workers, as it is more often the responsibilities that are in question, and that need to be established.

“The necessary link between rights and responsibilities is the first indication that community might be important in human rights. The strict individualist notion of rights – “my rights” – makes no sense. A sole individual on a desert island has no rights – because there is nobody to recognise them and to accept the responsibilities that flow from them. Rights require some sort of group, community, collective or society, which is held together by a series of interlocking and reciprocal rights and responsibilities. For this reason it is better to talk

about “our rights” rather than the more traditional western liberal notion of “my rights”. (Ife, 2004:2)

Like Ife, Kung noted that “hardly ever has it been stated in an official international document that concrete responsibilities, human responsibilities, are associated with human rights”. Kung goes on to quote the report (Commission on Global Governance, 1995):

“At the same time, all people share a responsibility to:

- contribute to the common good;
- consider the impact of their actions on the security and welfare of others;
- promote equity, including gender equity;
- protect the interests of future generation by pursuing sustainable development and safeguarding the global commons;
- preserve humanity’s cultural and intellectual heritage;
- be active participants in governance; and
- work to eliminate corruption. (Quoted in Kung, 1997:226)

Kung discusses the relationship of law with rights and responsibilities and concludes that:

No comprehensive ethic of humanity can be derived from human rights alone, fundamental though these are for human beings; it must also cover the human responsibilities which were there before the law. Before any codification in law and any state legislation there is the moral independence and conscious self-responsibility of the individual, with which not only elementary rights but also elementary responsibilities are connected” (Kung, 1997:103)

One of the responsibilities that attaches to a right is the responsibility to exercise that right. There is no point in having the right to freedom of expression, or the right to education, or the right to vote, or the right to join a trade union, if nobody bothers to exercise that right...A society that respects and values human rights is one where people are encouraged to exercise their rights, and accept a responsibility to do so

where they can. This is an active participatory society, that requires citizens to be active contributors rather than passive consumers; and the promotion of such a participatory society has long been the agenda of community development. (Ife, 2004:3)

Ife argues that all human rights have both individual and collective dimensions. He goes on to say,

We also need to apply the same reasoning to the other side of the equation, namely responsibilities, and to insist that there should be both individual and collective understandings of responsibilities, duties or obligations. Responsibilities do not lie only with individuals, but to say this does not invalidate any notion of individual responsibility. Across both the rights and responsibilities dimensions, therefore, we can consider the relative place of individual and collective understandings. Here we are inevitably affected in our analysis by ideological factors, and different ideologies or value systems will suggest that the balance between individual and collective rights and responsibilities be understood in different ways. (Ife, 2004:7)

In Ireland there has been much discussion along the lines outlined here. In these discussions some have emphasised responsibilities while others focused on rights. There was much argument when Government substantially reduced the funding for various Human Rights bodies. There was also discussion concerning whether or not various human rights instruments such as the Universal Charter are being respected. There has been a fairly broad acceptance of political and civil rights but much dispute concerning social, economic and cultural rights. An example of the latter can be found in the endless discussion about how to address unemployment.

People have a right to work yet for much of its history Ireland has been unable to provide paid employment for many of its citizens. While the right to work is not contested there has rarely been a discussion on where the responsibility to provide work lies. The question of how people's right to work can be secured if there are insufficient paid jobs available is not

addressed by most commentators. There has also been a profound failure to recognise that much work is being done but is not paid employment. Much work done in the home, in the community, in the wider society, in the development of people themselves, is unpaid but is real work. There is an urgent need to take a much more imaginative approach to ensuring that people have meaningful work and sufficient income to live with dignity when paid jobs are not available for all who seek paid employment. The introduction of a Basic Income system and the recognition of work that is not paid employment could form two components of such a strategy. Instead of seeking creative ways in which rights such as these could be honoured Ireland has seen much fruitless debate focused on blaming different institutions (government, employers, etc.) for not honouring their ‘responsibilities’ to produce jobs for all. The authors strongly believe that social, economic and cultural rights should be respected and delivered. But creative approaches would be required to secure these rights in practice. We believe that such approaches are much more likely to be identified, promoted and acted on if there was a much broader engagement of all groups in Irish society, especially by those who are most affected by the reality of unemployment. Such a process, if it was genuinely deliberative, would be much more likely to ensure that rights and responsibilities were recognised, balanced and vindicated.⁶³

1.5 To work towards a new paradigm more appropriate for the 21st century⁶⁴

A further reason that responsibility in shaping the future needs to be shared far more widely has to do with the need to develop a new paradigm of development for our world, a paradigm that is more appropriate for the 21st century. We live in a world that promotes constant economic growth.

⁶³ These issues have been addressed by the authors in a wide range of publications. Some are listed in the references at the end of this chapter.

⁶⁴ Much of this section draws on our previous work. The references are contained at the end of this paper. Our most recent work on this will be elaborated in a forthcoming edition of *Trends in Social Cohesion* to be published by the Council of Europe.

The world's present development model requires constant, economic growth and without growth the wheels come off as has been obvious in the period following the 2007 economic upheaval. In previous published work we have pointed out that conventional economic wisdom argues that continuing on an economic growth path for the foreseeable future will produce a world where everyone has a stake and where the good life can be accessed by all (for example, cf. Healy/Reynolds 2006, 1993). It is presumed that everyone, in a world population twice as large as now, can reasonably aspire to and achieve the high-consumption lifestyle enjoyed by the world's affluent minority at present. This is seen as progress.

This conventional economic vision of the future is unattainable, however. Environmental degradation, encroaching deserts, unemployment, starvation, widening gaps between rich and poor, exclusion from participation in either decision-making or development of society, these are the global realities confronting decision-makers today. Economic globalisation and environmental stress are accompanied by social inequality, endemic deprivation, an unstable financial system, social unrest and violence. Millions of people in the richer parts of the world recognise these problems and are seriously concerned about the plight of the billions of people on all continents whose lived experience is one of constant exclusion from the resources and the power that shape this world.

People feel powerless. The media present one vision of the future and assume it is the only desirable or viable future. Politicians, more concerned about the next election, rarely discuss the fundamental causes of, or long-term solutions to, the issues and problems they confront every day. It is crucial that questions be asked concerning the world's future and particularly, how a viable, sustainable, desirable future can be attained.

Previously we argued that the source of many of the problems the world currently faces lies in the development paradigm being followed and in its view of progress (Healy/Reynolds 1993; 2006:2-8). Capra generalised Kuhn's definition of a scientific paradigm to that of a social paradigm, which he defined as

‘a constellation of concepts, values, perceptions, and practices shared by a community, which forms a particular vision of reality that is the basis of the way the community organises itself.’ (Capra 1996)

A paradigm contains core beliefs and assumptions. It is a model or framework from which analyses, decisions and actions flow. ‘The world is flat’ is a good example of a paradigm. If one accepts this, then one holds certain values, takes certain actions and expects certain results. On the other hand if one’s paradigm is that ‘the world is round’ then one holds different values, takes different actions and seeks very different results. Moving from a framework which sees the world as flat to one that sees the world as round is a paradigm shift.

Paradigms are extremely powerful as they determine one’s ‘world view’. They underpin decisions concerning what constitutes a problem, how it should be approached, what action should be taken and what the desired outcome might be (Healy and Reynolds, 1993). History shows that if a paradigm is producing negative results, however, it is not always changed immediately. Thomas Kuhn (Kuhn, 1970) analysed how paradigm change was effected in the natural sciences. Changes did not occur through a process of cumulative research which brought people ever closer to a final solution to the problems encountered. “Rather it happened through a ‘revolution’ in which a small group of scientists recognise that the existing frame of reference is inadequate for the resolution of newly emerging problems” (McCabe 1996). They seek out a new paradigm. Change, however, is resisted and the transition is never smooth (Dunne, 1991). As the existing paradigm becomes more recognisably inadequate the new one attracts more and more support until the old one is finally abandoned. Tension and conflict are usually part of the transition process as are rearguard actions in defence of the outdated paradigm. Total acceptance of the new paradigm can take a long time as was the case for example in the world of science in the shift from the Copernican paradigm to the Newtonian one and again in the later shift to the Einsteinian one.

We believe that resistance to change at present fits into this pattern. Much time is being consumed defending an outdated and discredited paradigm.

The old paradigm is broken. A new one is needed urgently. All members of society should be encouraged to participate in the formulation of this new paradigm. Decisions on the shape of the future should be open to all groups in society so that subsequently responsibility will be shared among all stakeholders and not be confined to any one grouping in society.

1.6 To protect the interests of future generations

One group that has no voice at moments of great challenge and change, such as the present, is the next generation. Yet their voice must be heard in this context. Many of the decisions made in today's world will have significant impacts on people not alive today. The level of debt we take on, the education systems we support, the damage we do to the environment, these are just a few examples of areas where we are making decisions that will hugely impact on future generations. The chapter in this book written by Mary Cunningham raises key issues in this area. Here we wish simply to highlight a few items we consider to be of crucial importance on this issue. The Brundtland report entitled 'Our Common Future' published in 1987 by the World Commission on Environment and Development, warned that the world was living on the credit of future generations. (WCED, 1987) In the decades since this report was published the world has become much more conscious of the destruction of the world's eco-systems, the reality of climate change and the impact these and similar developments are having on the sustainability of the planet. The limits to growth are being recognised more clearly. Slowly but surely there is an emerging recognition of the need to consider the rights of future generations when decisions are being made.

A decade later the United National Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) in 1997 produced the *Declaration on the Responsibilities of the Present Generations towards Future Generations*. It opens with the statement: "The present generations have the responsibility of ensuring that the needs and interests of present and future generations are fully safeguarded". It has articles on freedom of choice, maintenance and perpetuation of humankind, preservation of life on Earth, protection of the environment, human genome and biodiversity, cultural diversity

and cultural heritage, common heritage of humankind, peace, development and education, non-discrimination and implementation. We list these here to highlight the range of issues that must be addressed if future generations are to be protected at the present time.

Interestingly enough this declaration has not been ratified. Most of the discussion on these issues and their implications for future generations takes place in the disciplines of philosophy and law. It is clear that, in a world dominated by an individualist world view, consideration of future generations has not been a priority. Likewise, in a democratic system, citizens of the future don't have a vote so their voice is most rarely heard. Both of these problems are exacerbated by the short-termism that characterises most political processes in the modern world. There is great institutional and cultural inertia on this issue. Maja Gopel has proposed that "if we wish to strengthen a long-term point of view in our current institutions, a good solution would be the creation of guardians for future generations." (Gopel, 2011:105). She points out that actual progress on policies that would protect future generations are rare, arguing that "We have built institutions that encapsulate extreme competitiveness and individualism, but also a structural short-termism. Thus, even if individual actors are convinced of the ethics of obligations to future generations, it is very difficult to act on it." (ibid) She points out that some governments are now establishing institutions that seek to provide a perspective of intergenerational equity, institutions such as parliamentary committees, commissioners and ombudspersons who analyse policy proposals from a long-term, perspective. Some of these have an advocacy role.

Given these realities it seems very sensible that a voice for future generations be part of decision-making processes today. They, more than most, have an interest in how this world develops in the decades and centuries ahead.

Conclusion to section 1

We have identified six areas which demonstrate why responsibility for shaping the future should be shared. This list is by no means exhaustive.

Given these developments and reflections and the scale of the challenges currently emerging there is a profound need to empower all members of society to share responsibility for shaping the future. There is a growing recognition that governments cannot do everything required to secure the common good and ensure the well-being of all. Likewise there is a growing realisation that markets cannot be relied on to achieve both these outcomes. There is an urgent need for new approaches to governance, regulation, conflict management and redistribution of resources which enable all to contribute to developing and working towards a viable vision for the future.

There is also a need to restore the ability of public institutions to rectify democratic deficits and to settle social and distributive conflicts. To achieve these ends there is a need to develop effective forms of dialogue based on an impartial search for the common good and the well-being of all. It is crucial that agreements made are fair and just and that those who are poor and/or vulnerable are recognised and protected from the harmful consequences of decisions in which they have had no part. The world is dominated by economic, political and technological forces that work closely together for their mutual benefit and very often at the cost of the ordinary citizen. These trends will continue and issues such as the common good and the well-being of all will not gain their rightful place on the world's agenda unless decision-making includes the voices and perspectives of all those impacted on by the decisions made. The case for sharing responsibility in shaping the future is very strong. What is not so clear is what this entails. We now move on to address this issue.

2. HOW?

If responsibility for shaping the future is to be shared then many issues arise concerning how this is to be done. We now address seven of these issues here. These are:

- Requirements if responsibility for shaping the future is to be shared
- Deliberative democracy

- Government – What is required of Government?
- Social Partnership in Ireland
- The local level
- The Corporate Sector
- The Community and Voluntary Sector

2.1 Requirements if responsibility for shaping the future is to be shared

The Draft 'Charter on Shared Social Responsibilities'⁶⁵ being considered by the Council of Europe provides an excellent summary of the fundamentals that are required if responsibility is to be shared in a fair and just manner. It states:

An effective strategy in the field of shared social responsibilities presupposes:

- a. recognition of the full range of stakeholders, their demands and possible contributions in terms of action or suggestions, their rights and obligations, and their role in a social system based on close interdependencies;
- b. deliberative processes, making it possible to refine the preferences of the stakeholders and establish priorities through exchanges of different arguments and viewpoints and through the impartial arbitration of differing interests;
- c. multi-stakeholder, multi-level and multi-sectoral innovation and skill and knowledge-acquisition processes making it possible for all involved to evaluate the consistency between the decisions taken and the European frames of reference in the field of fundamental rights, and paving the way for the equitable and democratic management of common goods;
- d. forms of partnership and governance broadly involving the stakeholders at different levels and making it possible for a plurality of players to become involved and co-operate in a sustainable way;

⁶⁵ The full text of this Draft is contained at the beginning of this publication.

- e. institutional mechanisms offering confidence in the fact that each partner will act in accordance with the decisions taken and will refrain from any harmful behaviour or acting solely in his or her own interest to the detriment of the interests of others;
- g. recognition of material and non-material common goods. Among the objects of rights, common goods are those which express a functional utility for the exercise of fundamental rights and the development of the individual, and which contribute to the feeling of belonging to the human race. Common goods include natural resources, the cultural and historic heritage, social protection, social cohesion, democratic institutions and the sharing of knowledge.

In a footnote it adds:

“Proximity is a crucial factor. Within regions, towns, neighbourhoods, local institutions, public services, enterprises and the work place it is possible to bring together all the stakeholders required to share social responsibilities. Proximity also encourages the setting up of partnerships and networks, strengthening reciprocity and the stakeholders’ confidence in joint action.”

These fundamental requirements sit very well with the parameters set out in part one of this chapter. We wish to reflect a little on one of the critically important requirements identified by the Council of Europe above i.e. “deliberative processes, making it possible to refine the preferences of the stakeholders and establish priorities through exchanges of different arguments and viewpoints and through the impartial arbitration of differing interests”.

2.2 Deliberative democracy

The idea of deliberative democracy goes back millennia. However, its modern support springs from the idea that for a Government to be legitimate it must embody the will of the people. It adopts elements of both representative democracy and direct democracy and differs from traditional democratic theory in that deliberation, not voting, is the

primary source of a law's legitimacy. How such a process is to be carried out in practice has been discussed extensively. There is no such thing as a common good on which everyone would agree so some have argued that governance and decision-making should be left with leadership elites. However most would agree that political engagement requires citizens to have some focus on the common good when making decisions.

In terms of sharing responsibility in shaping the future the authors believe that without a 'deliberative democracy' process there will be little real sharing of responsibility and little focus on the common good. A deliberative decision making process is one where all stakeholders are involved but the power differentials are removed. In such a process stakeholders are involved in the framing, implementing and evaluating of policies and measures that impact on them. Given the analysis provided in the first part of this paper it is clear that there are many reasons why responsibility in shaping the future should be shared. However, for that to be achieved a deliberative process is required. We agree with the Council of Europe's assessment that "the failure to take adequate account of the possible areas of complementarity between representative democracy, deliberative democracy and participatory democracy acts as a break on innovation in all fields in which the reciprocal nature of commitments and joint decision-making based on impartial reasoning are essential in order to guarantee the principles of social, environmental and intergenerational justice." A deliberative approach is also recommended by the Council of Europe in its Social Cohesion Plan launched in 2010.

Elster claims that a deliberative approach would produce better outcomes for four reasons. These are:

1. The emphasis placed on open dialogue may unlock untapped knowledge about the strengths and weaknesses of existing methods of doing things.
 2. Those involved in the policy-making process have the opportunity to acquire new skills and greater know-how about particular policy methods.
 3. The promotion of collaborative and joint action may induce a richer
-

mode of decision making, by encouraging participants to justify the positions they adopt with high quality reasoning. More informed, better thought-out decisions not only foster shared understandings between the different participants, but also deepen the wider legitimacy of policies.

4. The encouragement of consensus building and trust-enhancing modes of interaction may atrophy the boundaries between the different constituencies that are involved in a policy network. New relationships of interdependence may emerge that strengthen the collaborative ethos of the process. (Elster 1998)

Deliberative processes do not displace representative democracy; rather, they have the capacity to strengthen it and should be seen as an essential and complementary approach which brings citizens, stakeholders and public authorities into closer alignment. Using a deliberative process makes it possible for everyone to put forward their own visions and subsequently to reformulate their preferences in light of the discussions, analysis and testing of views that takes place. In this way all can contribute to the development of shared knowledge, shared objectives and shared projects. According to the Council of Europe's draft Charter, a deliberative process would:

- a. bring to the fore and examine in a public, transparent setting the different interests put forward by citizens and stakeholders highlighting their interrelations;
 - b. reconcile individual preferences and demands with common priorities in the field of social, environmental and intergenerational justice and the well-being of all and reach agreements acceptable to each stakeholder;
 - c. construct shared visions and knowledge capable of reconciling the aspirations of present and future generations;
 - d. conclude agreements acknowledged as being fair and which will encourage each stakeholder to honour and implement them in practice;
 - e. reduce imbalances of power between strong and weak stakeholders on the construction of knowledge and on decision-making;
-

- f. renew the sense of specific responsibilities and broadening the scope of individual and collective choices;
- g. reactivate the stakeholders' moral and social resources, forms of collective intelligence and democratic skills;
- h. highlight the key role of social citizenship in countering the fragmentation of responsibilities of individuals as workers, consumers, savers, investors, etc.; (Charter: Section 20)

To achieve this the Council of Europe suggests that deliberative processes must be structured in accordance with well-defined methodological principles. They claim that each stakeholder must be able to:

- a. interact on an equal footing with other stakeholders, all present and duly represented;
- b. have an equal right to information and freedom of expression;
- c. hear the viewpoint of others in the context of impartial discussions, seeking a consensus that is as equitable as possible;
- d. take part in choosing alternatives and taking decisions;
- e. discuss differences of opinion openly and publicise the agreements reached;
- f. clarify and take into account the long-term effects and interests of decisions on objectives and means of action, including their impact on the weaker players and on future generations;
- g. make commitments and receive guarantees about the implementation of decisions and the respective contributions of the other stakeholders;
- h. take part in the construction of criteria to assess decisions and initiatives regarding the well-being of all and in the design and implementation of evaluation procedures. (Charter: section 21)

The authors believe that a deliberative process is essential if there is to be a sharing of responsibility in shaping the future. We agree with the Council of Europe's draft Charter which identifies the core elements of such a deliberative process.

2.3 Government

2.3.1 Initiatives at national Government level

Governments, for the most part, are well aware of the growing interdependence of the various institutions in their countries and beyond. They also realise that the impact of actions taken by people or institutions have far-reaching effects. Consequently, they have tried in a variety of ways to involve various stakeholders.

One type of approach has been to involve all the key actors addressing a particular area of policy such as health or poverty or energy. Views are sought from all stakeholders and discussed. Some decisions may be made by those participating in this process. Such decisions tend to focus on actions to be taken by participants in the process. However, this process is most often limited by a set of parameters set by Government that may not be breached. The group may well believe, for example, that a particular approach to a problem may be most effective but if that approach is outside the parameters set then it may not be pursued. On the other hand the group may make proposals for Government action but these proposals may be ignored by Government for ideological or other reasons.

A second type of approach involves actors who are equal such as nation states. Authority does not rest with any particular individual participant. These draw together the information on the particular issue being discussed and make decisions on what is to be done. One example of this would be the development of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). In response to the challenges faced by the Third World the UN Millennium Declaration was adopted in 2000 at the largest-ever gathering of heads of state. It committed countries - both rich and poor - to doing all they could to eradicate poverty, promote human dignity and equality and achieve peace, democracy and environmental sustainability. World leaders promised to work together to meet concrete targets for advancing development and reducing poverty by 2015 or earlier. Emanating from the Millennium Declaration, a set of Millennium Development Goals was agreed. These bind countries to do more in the attack on inadequate incomes, widespread hunger, gender inequality,

environmental deterioration and lack of education, healthcare and clean water. They also include actions to reduce debt and increase aid, trade and technology transfers to poor countries. Some countries took these commitments very seriously, others simply ignored them. Progress on achieving the MDGs has been far behind schedule.

A third type of approach at national Government level is the sharing of responsibility by means of a contract between the stakeholders involved. One example of this is the Shared Responsibility Agreements between the Australian Government and Indigenous Communities in Australia. The Government's responsibility is to provide services, including infrastructure. The Aboriginal communities' responsibility is to identify the issues they want to address and what they will do in response to the Government's investment.⁶⁶

The fourth type of approach is the engagement of different parts of the same entity such as Government departments in the discussion of a particular issue. In Ireland, the establishment of a Senior Officials Group on Social Inclusion (SOGSI) to ensure coherence and increased capacity in Government's response to the various problems posed by social exclusion. It is an attempt to manage the sharing of responsibility between different Government departments. This approach to sharing responsibility may be effective at times but unless it's very well managed it can easily lead to a diffusion of responsibility to a point where there is no real accountability.

A fifth approach to sharing responsibility is the engagement by Government of the various sectors of society in a process aimed at producing a national agreement on a wide range of policy areas over a period of time. This is a far larger and challenging enterprise. In Ireland this approach was used to produce a series of national agreements starting in 1987 with the most recent, signed in 2006, setting out a series of 23 high-level goals to be achieved over a 10-year period. Detailed proposals for implementation were set out for the initial years of this agreement.

⁶⁶ These issues are addressed in a much more detailed way by Arne Scholz in Scholz: 2011.

Ireland's economic crisis intervened however. Government continued to use this structure to address issues of pay and conditions. However, it has tended to approach issues of social policy in a different manner during the crisis. We shall return to this particular structure later in this paper.

2.3.2 What is required of Government at national level

If there is to be a real sharing of responsibility in shaping the future then Government has a responsibility to make this happen. What does that require of Government? The Council of Europe's draft Charter sets out what it considers to be required of Government as follows:

State and governmental authorities are encouraged to promote the sharing of social responsibilities by adopting appropriate legal rules. To this end, they are required to

- a. encourage and legitimise forums for negotiation and discussion between the many stakeholders;
- b. motivate stakeholders to comply with the principles relating to the sharing of social responsibilities and the implementation of decisions;
- c. make interaction with stakeholders a key opportunity for learning, so that representative democracy and deliberative democracy become mutually reinforcing;
- d. communicate information so as to explain the thinking behind public policies enabling a sharing of social responsibilities, and to encourage action to that end;
- e. where convincing data are available, promote and publicise the positive results of innovation in the field of social, environmental and intergenerational justice
- f. set up institutions specialising in mediation and conflict resolution, facilitating the exercise of shared social responsibility;
- g. reassess the role of public servants as mediators between different stakeholders who may have different interests, bearing in mind the constitutional principles and democratic procedures in force;
- h. encourage multi-lateral and cross-border activities, including the networking of territories committed to implementing the Council

of Europe's Action Plan for Social Cohesion;

- i. exchange, develop and codify positive results, in the context of the Council of Europe and with other international organisations.

These appear to the authors to be a comprehensive list of what is required of the State and of Government. The need to legitimise this process is crucial. So too is the need to learn from stakeholders in the process as it develops. A deliberative process is the best protection against taking inappropriate precipitous action that a more reflective process would guard against. Ensuring such a process takes place is of real benefit to Government. The obligation on Government to establish institutions facilitating the exercise of shared responsibility would also be a welcome development. Taking action along the lines identified above would also be likely to result in the problems underpinning the current dominant paradigm of development being exposed and a more appropriate paradigm being adopted.

2.4 Social Partnership in Ireland

We have already referred to Ireland's social partnership process. It draws together five 'pillars' of social partners i.e. employers, trade unions, farming organisations, community and voluntary sector organisations, and environmental organisations. These have worked with Government over the years to produce national agreements. As noted already Ireland's economic crisis intervened. Government continued to use this structure to address issues of pay and conditions. However, it has tended to approach issues of social policy in a different manner during the crisis.

Social partnership was a major development in governance in Ireland. The basis of social partnership was a process of shared reflection, analysis and policy development followed by negotiations within mutually understood frameworks. The National Economic and Social Council (NESC) played a crucial role in this process, on each occasion producing a strategy document to form the basis of the subsequent negotiations. Once an agreement was in place the monitoring process facilitated the

involvement of the social partners in the on-going implementation of the commitments contained in the agreement.

This process produced a substantial network of policy design, monitoring and evaluation involving both government and social partners. In theory there was a concerted effort to apply the policy learning developed at a strategic and national level to a wide range of problems that had been identified. In practice this did not always happen. We have documented this in some details in a range of other publications (e.g. Healy/Reynolds, 2002). This process involved substantial levels of civic engagement by a wide range of actors. Their voices were heard to a greater or lesser degree in various arenas on a wide range of policy issues. The inclusion of the Community and Voluntary Sector in this process in 1996 was significant in this regards. So too was the inclusion of the Environmental Pillar a decade later.

A major issue that was raised from time to time concerned the role of the Oireachtas (Parliament) in the social partnership process. Some argued that the exclusion of elected deputies and senators from the process was a drawback. This is a viewpoint with which we agree. At the same time we reject the claim sometimes made that social partnership in Ireland undermined the democratic process. Such a claim fails to appreciate the process through which these national agreements were developed. The agreements were signed off by the pillars of social partners and by the Government. There would be no national agreement unless the Government of the day signed off on the agreement. The Government is the choice of the electorate. They have the final say on whether or not a national agreement is to be implemented. Consequently, to claim that those who were the elected choice of the people were excluded from the social partnership process is simply untrue. However we argued for years that further involvement of the Oireachtas would be desirable and we made proposals on how that might be achieved.

The democratic consequences of social partnership in Ireland have been interpreted in two broad ways. One view is that social partnership has been a malign influence on Irish democracy as it undermines the role of

representative democracy and, in particular, elected politicians. The other view is that social partnership has enriched Irish democracy by deepening deliberative democracy in the country. The authors believe that the social partnership process meets many of the challenges posed in trying to develop a deliberative democratic process. However we also believe that the deliberative nature of the process was not always honoured by Government or by some members of the Pillars engaged in the process. There were many occasions when the power differentials were very obvious and the weak and vulnerable were not always protected as they should have been in such a process.

A social partnership process that operated in a genuinely deliberative manner would go a long way towards strengthening governance in Ireland. It would also provide protection against any repetition of Ireland's recent series of crises. Not alone would it have to be real deliberation, it would have to be seen to be a real deliberative process. Since its inception in 1987 the social partnership process has adapted to the demands placed on it as Ireland's development and the reality of the wider world experienced seismic change. To become a genuinely deliberative process that would meet the criteria identified in this paper would require some changes to the processes involved. It would also require a change in mindset among participants. The authors believe both of these requirements can be met. However it should not be the only deliberative mechanism in Ireland's governance structure.

Deliberative democracy should be a characteristic of governance at all levels of government and across other sectors as well. We now take a short look at some of these other areas where deliberative processes are desirable and do-able.

2.5. The Local Level

Deliberative democracy can also be applied at local level. Denters noted that "With regard to local development the deliberative governance framework promotes a form of networked governance which involves local inclusive bodies engaging in problem-solving activities to the

betterment of disadvantaged communities and groups in the area". (Denters, 2003) The Council of Europe's draft Charter on Shared Social Responsibilities sets out some very useful guidelines on what is required of municipal, local and regional governments. In Article 11 it states:

Local and regional authorities, and especially, city, neighbourhood and village authorities, are encouraged to promote the sharing of social responsibilities. To this end, they are required to:

- a. strengthen consistency between the objectives of social, environmental and intergenerational justice, decided by common accord, and individual and institutional choices;
- b. introduce mechanisms of participatory and deliberative governance, making possible the sharing of social responsibilities;
- c. conclude agreements with other administrative tiers facilitating the establishment of local participatory structures;
- d. foster the involvement of residents in projects of general interest, through the preservation and enhancement of common goods, the landscape, the cultural heritage and all local resources contributing to the strengthening of capital, motivations and shared confidence, while including the diversity resulting from immigration;
- e. frame local policies which acknowledge and take into account the contribution made by everyone to strengthening social protection and social cohesion, the fair allocation of common goods, the formation of the principles of social, environmental and intergenerational justice and which also ensure that all stakeholders have a negotiation and decision-making power.

Many local areas in Ireland have local partnerships in place. These vary in terms of the areas and issues addressed. Where there has been a genuinely deliberative process in place they have been very successful. The Northside Partnership in Dublin is a good example of this in practice in an urban area. IRD (Integrated Rural Development) Duhallow is a good rural example. There are many more examples that could be cited. All of these are community-based development organisations that combine the efforts and resources of state bodies, local authorities, local communities and individual

entrepreneurs for the benefit of the local areas. These partnerships establish and support initiatives directed towards the generation of enterprise for the benefit and welfare of communities in their areas who may be deprived for whatever reason. An interesting part of their approach is that they support geographically based communities but they also support issue-based groups focusing on issues such as youth, women, lone parents, mental health, sport, education, culture, the environmental and many more. A regrettable part of recent Government policy in Ireland has been a series of initiatives that forced the amalgamation of partnerships without the willing agreement of many and with little real dialogue. In some cases such amalgamation may have been a positive move. Overall however the approach was a real failure of government to respect a deliberative process that, in many cases, if it had been given the opportunity would have found much better solutions to the problems identified by Government.

2.6. Corporate Sector

The corporate sector is another area where deliberative processes would have a positive impact. Companies' activities often have big impacts on social, environmental and intergenerational justice. In their search for competitive advantage they may well ignore the values and needs of local communities. The corporate sector has developed the area of 'corporate social responsibility' (CSR) to keep these issues on its agenda when decisions are made. However there are many doubts concerning CSR. Companies see CSR as part of their marketing and branding strategies. They argue that 'doing well by doing good' is a good approach to which they subscribe. However there is little accountability in terms of how companies select their CSR priorities. Likewise they are not answerable in any meaningful way concerning the quality and continuity of services they provide; they are totally free to discontinue services whenever they see fit.

In this context the Council of Europe's Draft Charter states:

Companies are encouraged to adapt their forms of governance to incorporate the general principles of shared social responsibility, so as to:

- a. rethink their aims and operational principles in a context of social, environmental and intergenerational justice, bearing in mind all the costs and impacts of their activity;
- b. seek lasting competitive advantages by taking into account societal values and social and ecological needs and adapting production processes, rather than focusing exclusively on reducing labour force costs and the socialisation of environmental harm;
- c. comply with national legislation concerning working conditions and make sure they are compatible with international working standards in force;
- d. integrate further in decision-making the viewpoints of workers, consumers, those who experience the harmful consequences of production, institutions and the relevant civil society organisations;
- e. develop ways of managing relationships and conflicts, both in-house and with the stakeholders in the communities and areas where they are located, in a spirit of dialogue, confidence and mutual respect.
- f. make the life cycle of products transparent, from the origin of the raw materials to the management of waste;
- g. publish periodic reports on the social and environmental impact of their activities, including those of a financial nature;

Any reasonable analysis of the world's crises in the period 2007 and following would recognise the major role the corporate sector played in causing these crises. Development of an approach along these lines would mark real progress.

2.7. The Community and Voluntary Sector

A healthy and vibrant Community and Voluntary (CV) sector is an essential component of any modern democracy. Effective, democratic governance in the twenty first century requires active engagement from all parts of society. One of the contributions the Community and Voluntary Sector makes is towards maintaining the essential balance between the government and its services on the one hand and the market on the other hand.

Such a safe space between the state and the market could be an enabling framework that would allow people to address a range of issues. Civil society is not there to replace the state or its institutions. The chapter by Ivan Cooper in this publication addresses the potential of the CV sector to play a meaningful role in the coproduction of public services and to ensure positive outcomes are produced. But the production of services is only one of the many areas in which the CV sector is involved. It also plays a key role in areas such as social analysis, advocacy, developing, monitoring and evaluating policy and many more. In the process of social partnership already discussed in this chapter the CV sector the CV Pillar played a substantial role from its inclusion in the process in 1996.

The Council of Europe's draft Charter sets out what it believes this sector and the trade union sector should do. It states:

Trade unions, associations and non-governmental organisations are encouraged to participate in the sharing of social responsibilities. To this end, they are required to:

- a. incorporate the principles of shared social responsibility in their aims and organisational structure;
- b. take part in forums for deliberative and participatory democracy which enable shared social responsibility to be exercised;
- c. take part in multi-stakeholder, multi-level and multi-sectoral processes;
- d. exercise, particularly in the case of trade unions, the right to be informed and consulted and defend the employment rights established by the ILO;
- e. subscribe, particularly in the case of NGOs, to the code of good practice for civil participation in the decision-making process, adopted by the Council of Europe's Conference of INGOs on 1 October 2009 [CONF/PLE(2009)Code1].

Many organisations and bodies within the CV sector already espouse a deliberative approach in their working. Many have developed methodologies they follow to make such an approach a reality. Anna

Coote (Coote: 2011) has set out some very useful practical guidelines drawing on work done with healthcare organisations in the UK. She lists the following ground rules for engagement:

- Know what you can change and be sure you can take account of what people say.
- Engage early and plan ahead; find out who is likely to be affected and who is supposed to benefit.
- Embed engagement in the work process so that service users and the public are informed and involved at all key stages.
- Include all the right people and make special efforts to reach out to those whose voices are seldom heard.
- Choose your methods to suit your purpose by being clear what it is you are trying to achieve.
- Provide clear information so that people have all they need to participate in a discussion.
- Make sure you have adequate resources and time, and work out where your resources will come from.
- Keep things in proportion so that the scale of the project fits your timescale and budget.
- Act on what you learn so that what matters most to service users and the public informs and shapes your work.
- Always give feedback by telling participants what you have learned from them and what action you intend to take in response. (Coote, 2011:199)

She suggests that these ground rules can be adapted for businesses and other non-governmental organisations interested in sharing responsibility with their employees and/or intended beneficiaries.

Coote also addresses another problem often experienced by those seeking to develop more deliberative processes i.e. the process becomes dominated by the usual suspects and those on the margins are not really engaged. Those who are poor, vulnerable, on the margin are the most difficult to engage in these processes. Coote states:

The challenge is greater still because there are so many people in this position; they are hugely varied socially, economically, culturally and widely spread.

Experience suggests that, to achieve more equal participation, certain steps must be taken. These include:

- Identify those whose voices are seldom heard and locate them, using outreach and other community development techniques.
- Meet marginalised groups on their own territory and on their own terms, rather than trying to include token representatives in other participative exercises.
- Let marginalised groups define their own agendas and own ways of working – respect their wisdom and experience and treat them as equals.
- Share their language – literally and metaphorically.
- Consider more creative methods of communicating and working together – for example using artwork, theatre, song instead of the normal stuff of meetings.
- Invest in co=ordination and facilitation and in building and sustaining networks.
- Keep on reaching out – one-off gestures won't help.
- Feedback, reflect, learn and continue to improve ways of sharing responsibility. (ibid:200)

This is not an easy process for many people or institutions. It requires change of people and institutions.

2.8. Conclusion

There is a great need for new understandings, new approaches, new processes, new models and different outcomes if a viable, sustainable future is to emerge. The authors believe a new paradigm is required as the foundation for such developments. Deliberative democracy is another essential component and should be developed, supported and strengthened. It is essential that responsibility in shaping the future be

shared. The voices and perspectives of all sectors must be heard and respected. Power differentials should be removed from this process. Decisions should be made on the basis of good analysis and viable proposals, not on the basis of the power a particular sector or group commands.

However if these changes are to occur society at large needs to understand and internalise these realities; accurate and relevant information is needed. Education is required to enable everyone to be part of these processes.

Coernilogar and Coertjens spell out some of the implications for education of a move towards greater participation and the sharing of responsibilities (Cernilogar/Coertjens, 2011). A starting point for such education could be a focus well-being and the common good. These are not universally accepted priorities yet they are essential if there is to be a sustainable future for this planet and its inhabitants. The challenges of real participation, of deliberative democracy, of intergenerational justice need to be addressed in an ongoing educational endeavour.

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