Community case study: Governance domain
ISCI Conference June 2017
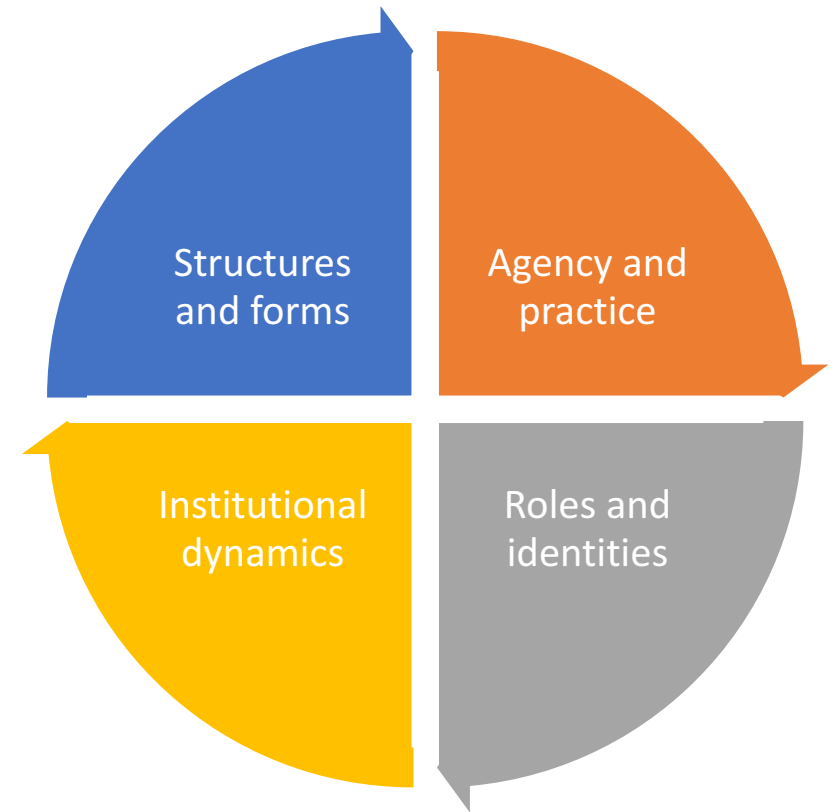
Governance domain: Outline

- Questions, approach and method
  - How do communities respond to the multi-level policy environment to develop local governance solutions and influence child development outcomes?
  - Are there measurable and modifiable community level governance indicators?
- A case study, the City of Greater Monocots, similarities and differences
- Analysis
- Findings, three themes
  1. Local leadership;
  2. Citizenship and democracy;
  3. Multilevel and networked governance
- Conclusions, some possible indicators

Questions

- Are there local community level factors that are consistently related to better outcomes for children?

- What are the best measurable and modifiable community level governance indicators?
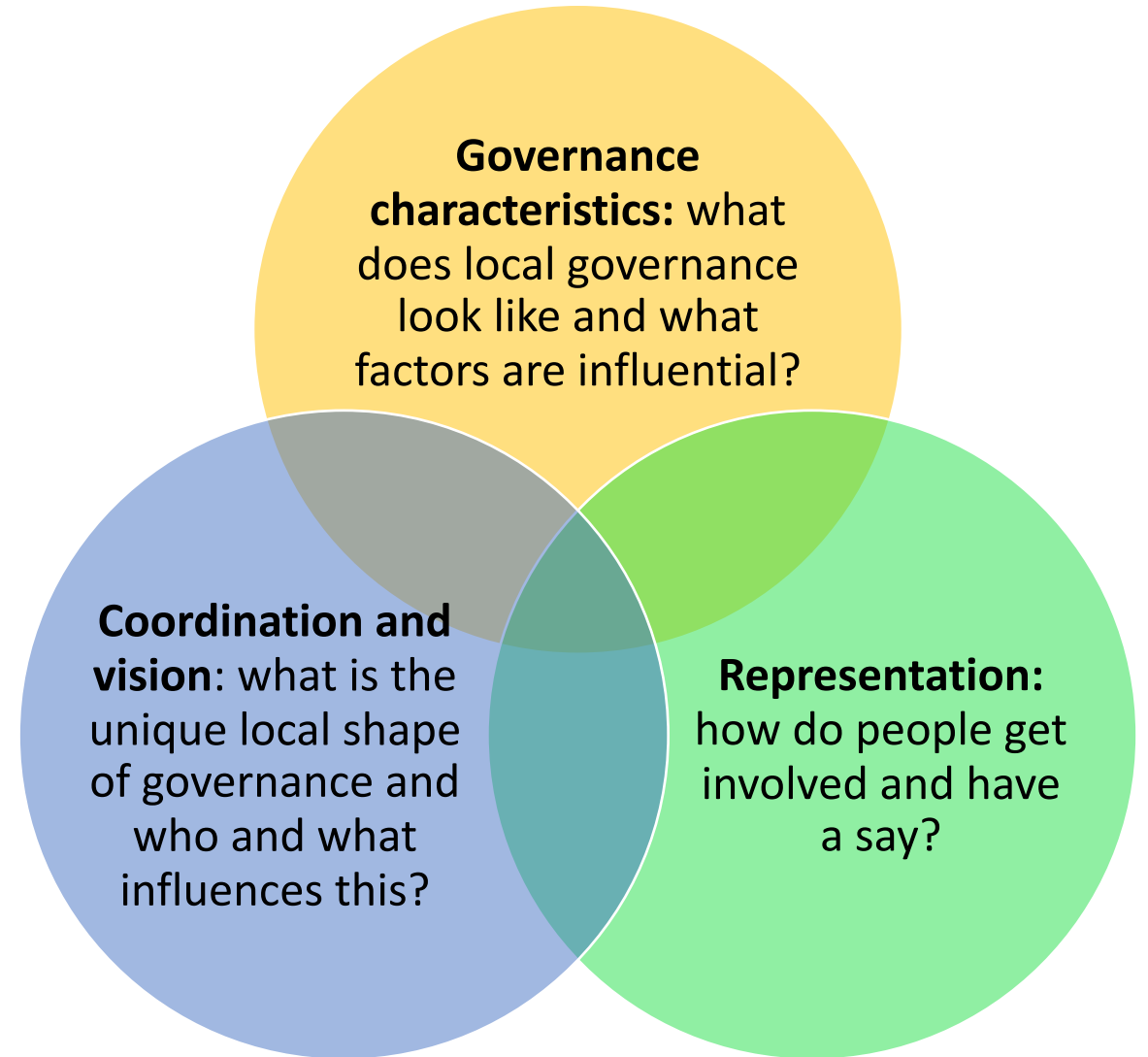
For the governance domain, explore the question through the understandings:

- Challenge the idea of determinants

- There may be multiple governance influences

- Differential outcomes within socio-economic groups may be the result of complex interactions between governance and other factors in the community

Structures and forms

Agency and practice

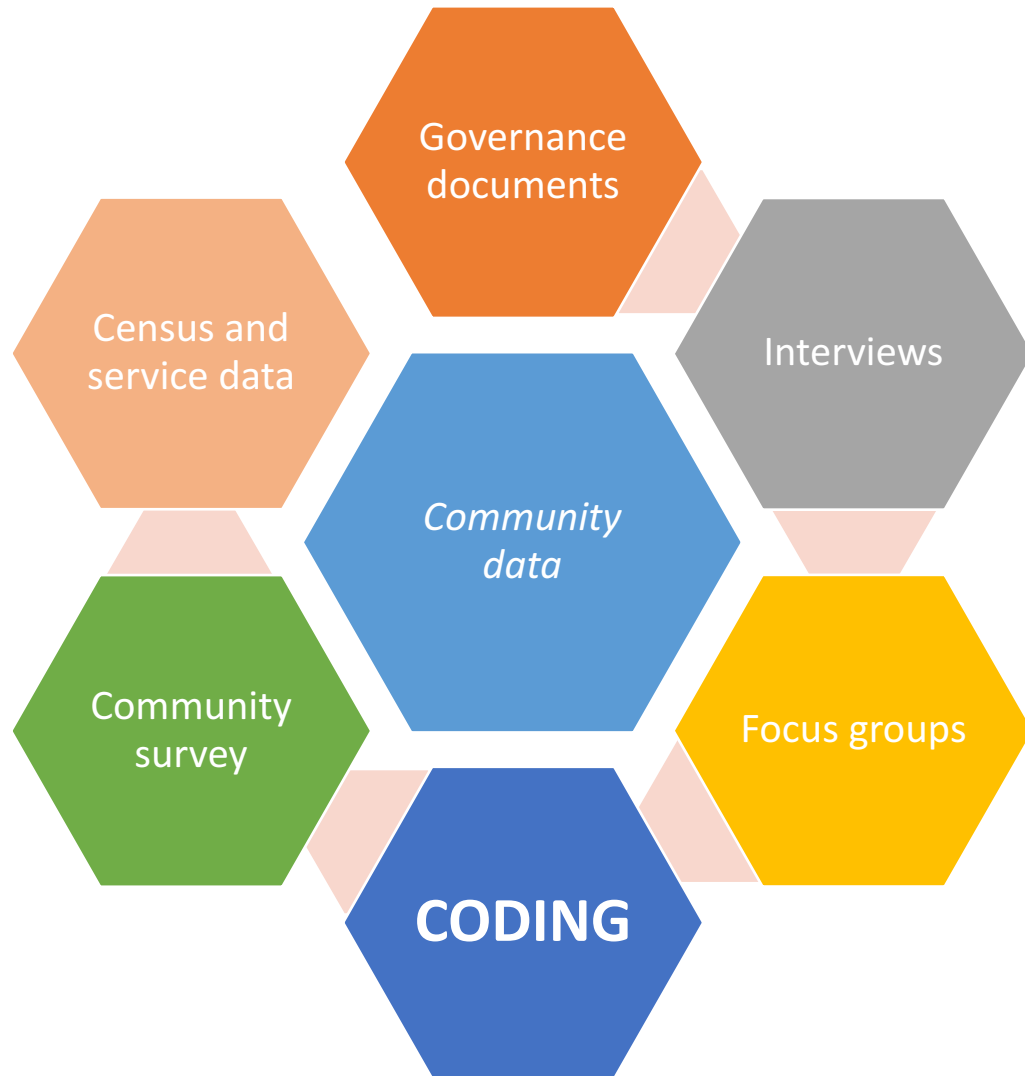Institutional dynamics

Roles and identities

Framework

- Governance characteristics
  - History
  - Multi level governance
  - Priorities, policies and programs
- Coordination and vision
  - Common agenda
  - Data for decision making
  - Key leaders
  - Resources and roles
- Representation and democratic effects
  - Citizen involvement in decision making
- Other

Governance characteristics: what does local governance look like and what factors are influential?

Coordination and vision: what is the unique local shape of governance and who and what influences this?

Representation: how do people get involved and have a say?

Method

Hexagon diagram: Governance documents, Interviews, Census and service data, *Community data* (center), Community survey, Focus groups, **CODING**

Sources

- Documents
  - Get to know the community: research, data, news clips, community planning documents
- Interviews (n=21)
  - Mayor, councillors, school principals, council staff, business leaders, neighbourhood houses
- Parent focus groups (n=4)
  - Parents, through schools, playgroups, ECEC and neighbourhood houses
- Professional focus groups (n=3)
  - Service providers, maternal and child health, early childhood education and care, schools
- Community survey
  - (Orchid Park, n=180, Orchid Downs, n=166)
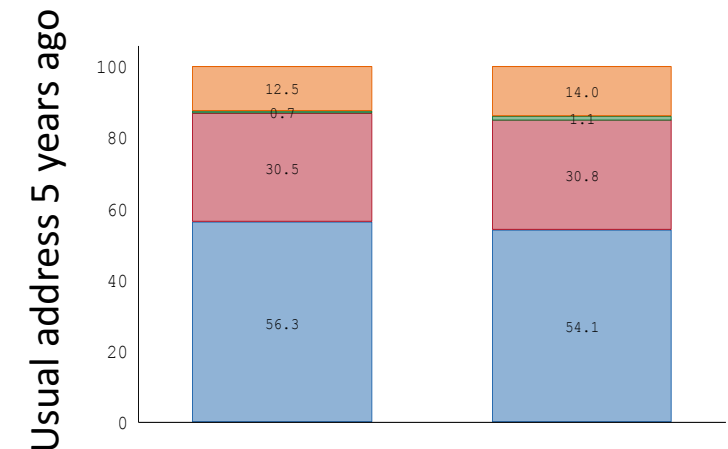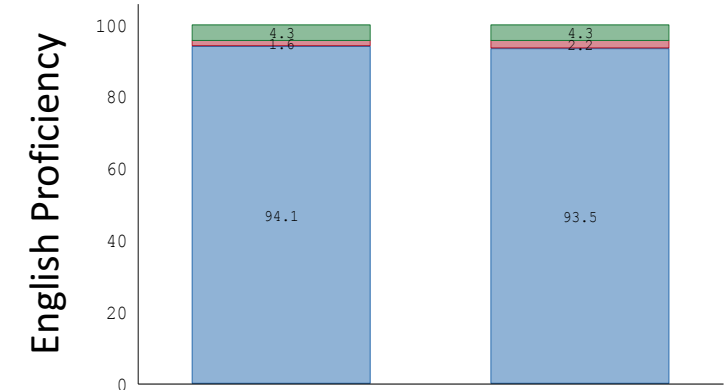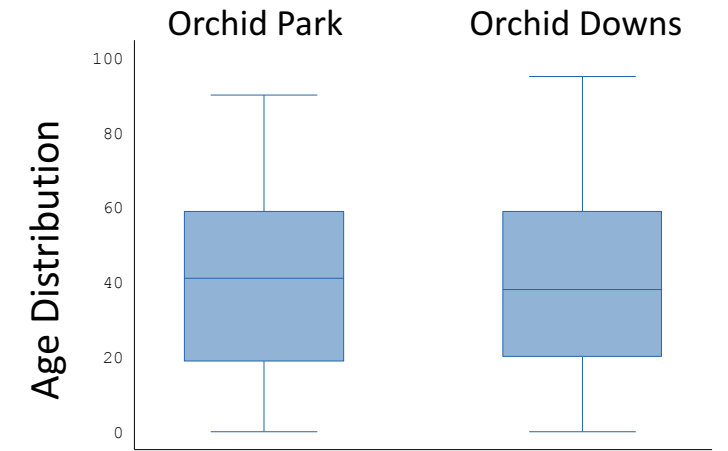- Census 2011 data
- Service provider data

Our case study neighbourhoods

Community: City of Greater Monocots

Neighbourhood 1: Orchid Park (off-diagonal positive)

Neighbourhood 2: Orchid Downs (off-diagonal disadvantage)

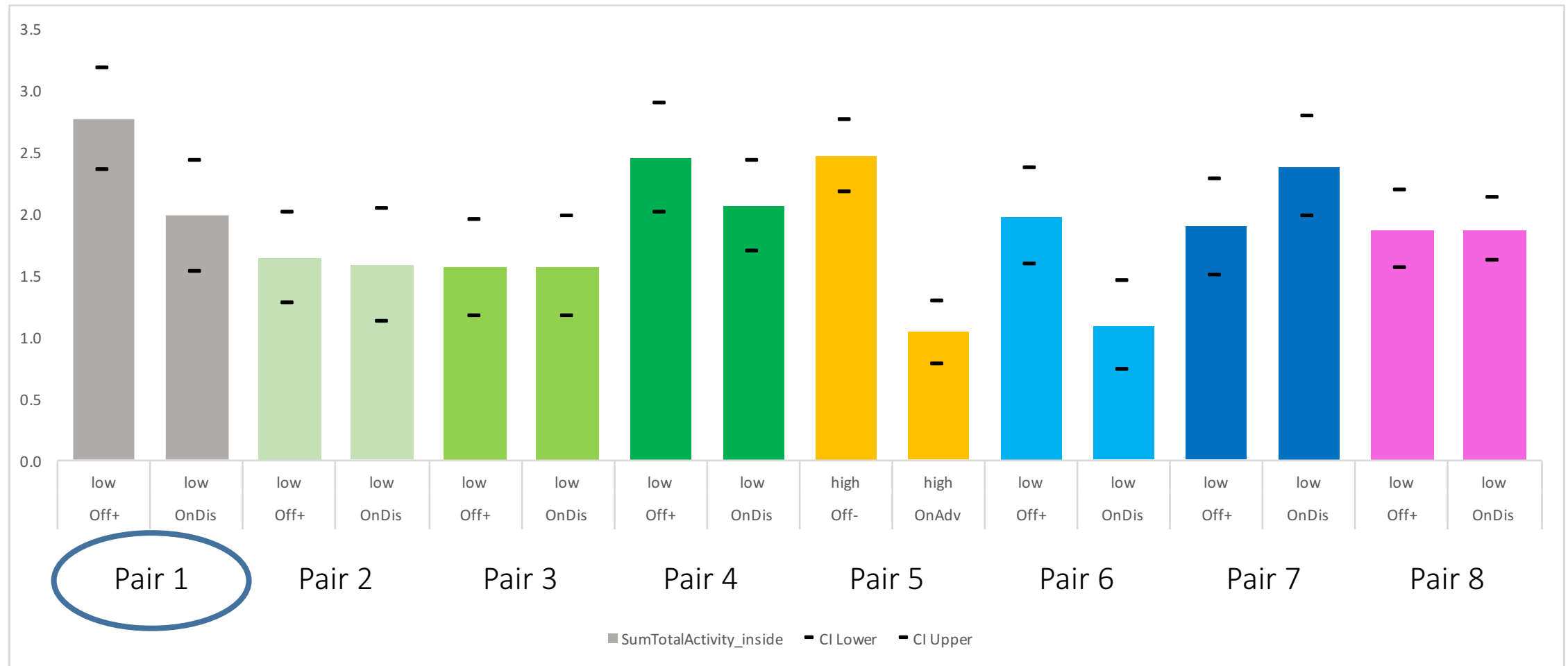|	Orchid Park	Orchid Downs
Socio-economic index for areas 2011	895 (Q1)	822 (Q1)
Gini-co-efficient 2011	0.35	0.37
Overall population 2011	4,810	3,338
Median age	39	38
Born in Australia	89.2%	88.9%
Household size	2.5	2.3
Public/Private Rental households	4.5% / 17.8%	10.2% / 22.2%
AEDC Population 2012	67	61
Vulnerable on one or more domains 2012	11.9%	31.1%
Vulnerable on two or more domains 2012	6.0%	21.3%

Orchid Park   Orchid Downs

Age Distribution

English Proficiency

4.3   4.3
1.8   2.2
94.1   93.5

Usual address 5 years ago

12.5   14.0
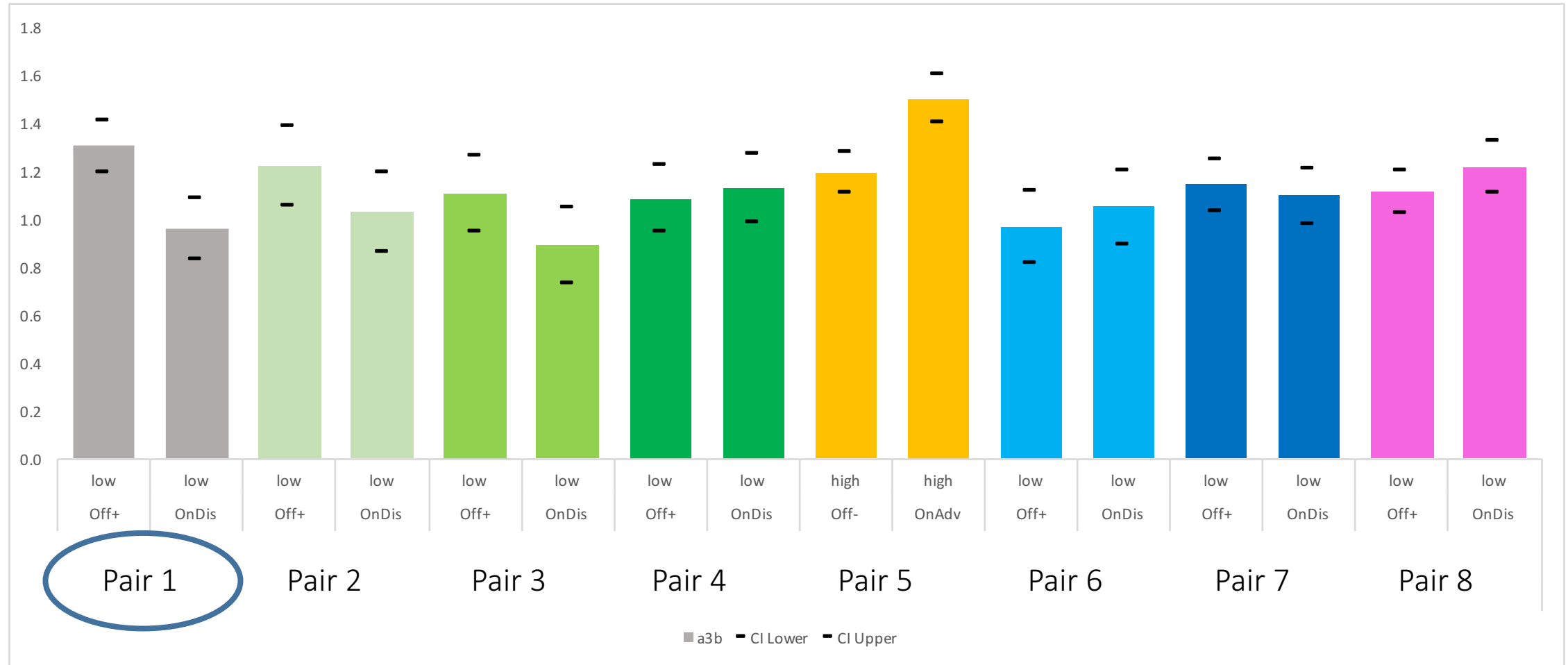0.7   1.1
30.5   30.8
56.3   54.1

Orchid Park

Orchid Downs

Community survey: Governance activity or involvement in the community

Which, if any, of the following community groups or activities have you been involved with in your suburb? Options include early childhood, arts, sporting, professional associations, community action group, political parties, rallies etc.

Community survey: Opportunity to have a say

Do you feel there are opportunities to have a real say on local issues that are important to you?

Analysis: Local leadership

Differentiating factors

- Champions and boundary spanners

"They make things happen on a systemic level, like services are available and there's opportunities"

- Thinking at the boundaries, developing more integrated approaches

[He is asking] "what else can we do? What can we do beyond the school gate?"

"A community driven initiative to support and empower citizens in Orchid Park so there's more access to services"

- Using data and evidence

"Evidence based practices are the prime agenda"

Challenges

- Lack a national framework and universal approach, leading to short term activities

"People are tired maybe or maybe a little bit cynical of the short term ... until the funding runs out type of approach. I think that's a very strong underscore. There's fabulous community activists."

"You build a lot of time and a lot of emotional investment ... and then ... well this is a six-month project"

- Legitimacy of individuals and groups

"They have lots to say but they don't really reflect the views of the broader community"

Analysis: Citizenship and democracy

Differentiating factors

- Historical traditions, shared citizenship, amalgamation of Orchid Park

"Lost the sense of identity in terms of their government or structure … but kept that sense of identity in terms of the community"

- Inclusive participatory approach

"… done a lot to redress that patronising sort of attitude … more grassroots representation …"

"We do a listening post … to invite people to have a say"

- Shared experiences

"Involving [citizens] in the process and the trust to look after those assets … it's theirs and not ours"

Challenges

- Hierarchy and privilege

"… our leaders in Orchid Park … might not necessarily reflect the needs of everyone, basically"

- Structures and processes that are impervious to citizen views

"Government is very urban and country people generally don't feel they have the capacity to make much influence … that's the way it is"

- Problematize and question community efficacy

"…they have no interest. They live with what they get rather than trying to change something"

"Our community can't do [consultation] groups … we would have to monitor which families could actually be in a group"

Analysis: Networked governance

Differentiating factors

- Action plans for change

"That shared vision, that commitment to the common agenda"

"The place based ECD program … [has been] the biggest driver by far"

- Working together to overcome barriers

"Those with lived experience in an equal power situation …"

"No governments can operate in isolation"

- Horizontal and vertical alliances

"We've got direct service delivery projects, but we also have lots of projects that are about system change"

Challenges

- Churning and duplication

"Well actually, well we're sort of working on that … it's sort of the same people"

- Structural deficiencies, for example relationships are based on individuals rather than organisations

"If I was to leave …"

- Horizontal and vertical blocks

"The biggest shortcoming is that it's all government agencies and authorities"

"I've noticed from my years as a general manager, when it comes to federal government lining up with state government around policy initiatives, well … it's a tough gig"

How do communities respond to the multi-level policy environment to develop local governance solutions and influence child development outcomes?

- Local leaders acting as policy champions

- Following the evidence and forging creative policy solutions.

- Building on a collective identity and an environment that fosters "having a say" and popular participatory culture

- Designing physical and social infrastructure that involves and facilitates multi-level relationships and networks.

- Facing the considerable challenges related to the lack of a national framework, local capacity, legitimacy, social hierarchies, and institutional rigidity

Are there measurable and modifiable community level governance indicators?

From the case study, there are areas to pursue

1. Local champions

2. Evidence based action

3. Innovative solutions

4. Collective identity

5. Participatory culture

6. Coordinating infrastructure

7. Policy framework

8. Vision and planning

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Thank you!

Please contact us if you have questions or comments