During the last two decades the word ‘globalisation’ has come to dominate discourses on the world’s political economy. While its economic dimensions often come to the fore in such debates, with Ireland characterised as one of the world’s fastest growing economies (Rios-Morales and Brennan, 2008) and African states contrarily the least (Castells, 2000), the concept embraces a wide range of interlinked economic, political, social, ideological and cultural facets (Munck, 2007). Of particular interest here are its implications for national political arrangements. Held et al. (1999: 16) define globalisation as ‘a process (or set of processes) which embodies a transformation in the spatial organisation of social relations and transactions ... generating transcontinental or interregional flows and networks of activity, interaction, and the exercise of power’. The works of McGrew (1997), Held et al. (1999), Castells (2000, 2004), Carnoy and Castells (2001) and Held and McGrew (2003) argue that contemporary globalisation invites a significant rethinking of democratic theory, most especially in respect of traditional accounts of liberal democracy and the role and influence of the state therein. Held and McGrew’s assertion that ‘The state has become a fragmented policy-making arena, permeated by transnational networks (governmental and non-governmental) as well as by domestic agencies and forces’ (2003: 11) draws attention to the extension of contemporary nation state’s field of action, in the form of complex webs of networks and political forces, which states mediate in their efforts to formulate policy and direct individual nations’ development. Thus, the shift from governing to governance, while remaining focused on national and local development considerations, is necessarily global in scope and extent. In this chapter I explore the implications of these shifts for state–civil society relations at national levels. I argue that the concepts of participation and partnership

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derive from the re-configured social relations necessitated by the global embedding of nation states within a global polity. By re-situating this context for participatory governance, the motivations for and dynamics behind participant agency within them become clearer.

I begin the chapter with an analysis of the implications of the extension of states’ field of action for their own legitimacy. With the ‘invisible government’ of international corporations, banks and aid agencies resulting in legitimacy crises for states back home, as their ability to carry out their traditional functions of goods and service delivery are undermined, the network state – operating in partnership with and fostering the participation of civic groups and individuals in addressing their own development needs – emerges. The apparent paradox of how states manage to rebuild domestic legitimacy through these groups while sharing power with them (i.e. surely power sharing and devolution result in reduced legitimacy?) is examined in the second section while, in the third section, I take a close look at the composition and motivations of network states’ new ‘partners’ in governance and argue that these groups constitute a normalised and idealised version of civil society, a ‘manufactured’ civil society as Hodgson (2004) terms it, rather than its diverse reality. In the final section of the chapter I turn to the form of leadership exercised by the leaders of this manufactured civil society as this becomes central to evolving power relations within these new governance configurations.

State legitimacy and the network state

In an increasingly interconnected and interdependent world, with transnational networks, agencies and forces vying with a range of domestic actors and influences for state attention and control, the arena of state activity and mediation has become significantly broad and complex. Two main implications arise from these developments. The first is that states’ roles and agency have significantly altered. While once states exercised exclusive political authority within their national boundaries, delivering fundamental goods and services to their citizens, they now share this authority with networks of international agencies and institutions including bodies such as the European Union (EU), World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF), transnational business corporations and international aid agencies. The second implication arises inevitably from the first. With state authority declining within this widening web wherein the ‘visible presence of rule’ is replaced with the ‘invisible government’ of corporations, banks and international