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ESSAYS IN STRATEGIC SPATIAL PLANNING AND GOVERNANCE IN IRELAND'S CITY – REGIONS

Thesis submitted for the degree of PhD in the College of Arts, Celtic Studies, and Social Sciences, National University of Ireland, Cork

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April 2018

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DECLARATION

This thesis submitted is the candidate's own work and has not been submitted for another degree, either at University College Cork or elsewhere.

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DECLARATION AGAINST PLAGIARISM

"This is to certify that the work I am submitting is my own and has not been submitted for another degree, either at University College Cork or elsewhere. All external references and sources are clearly acknowledged and identified within the contents. I have read and understood the regulations of University College Cork concerning plagiarism."

SUMMARY

The aim of this PhD project is to develop an understanding of how strategic spatial planning is expressed and delivered as a specific mode of governance, in response to the particular challenges facing Europe's second-tier cities. It is concerned with how planning, as a particular form of public policy and a form of governance-in-action, materialises at certain spatial scales and how it is influencing patterns of territorial development. In addition, the research interrogates the ways in which planning practice applies its basic principles through planning policy, decision making, and by exploring the normative basis of the profession's activities.

The connecting theme relates to an interest in how planning is governed, how it is expressed as a specific mode of governance in urban settings and how decision-making around planning projects navigates through a variety of social, political and economic filters. These phenomena are explored in this thesis using a series of thematic empirical pieces, which relate broadly to the field of strategic spatial planning at city-region/metropolitan level. The PhD is presented as a series of discrete articles, submitted under University regulations as a *publication-based* thesis. These essays are concerned primarily with developing insights into the nature of contemporary strategic spatial planning and place-making as a mode of governance. The empirical work, which uses episodes of strategic spatial planning in Ireland and Cork as a master case study framework, addresses four core themes.

Firstly, it confronts the issue of central-local dynamics as part of strategic spatial planning at the national scale, using the experiences of Ireland's second-tier cities as part of the national spatial planning agenda. Secondly, it is concerned with understanding how strategic spatial planning frames policy and practice for metropolitan areas and the way in which it operates as a framework for articulating urban governance strategies. The third theme explores the transformative capacity of strategic spatial planning as an instrument for the promotion of sustainable development practices. The fourth theme addresses methodological concerns around the particular challenges associated with scholarly inquiry within the realm of strategic spatial planning.

The thesis outlines four sets of main findings relating to the core themes, which in different ways characterise the nature of change in strategic spatial planning in Ireland.

First, there has been an important shift towards place-based approaches under Ireland's national planning regime, whereby the city/metropolitan region emerges as a spatial unit with the potential to integrate a variety of spatial and sectoral policy strands. This however has not created new territorial governance patterns or a rescaling of power within the state and around city-regions. Although the case of Cork presents a case whereby strategic spatial planning has emerged as a clearly recognisable form of territorial management with distinctive governance dimensions, this proves to be an exceptional case. The move towards placed-based spatial strategies in Ireland has been limited to new frames of reference rather than new forms of governance, and place-based spatial strategies largely emerged within the soft spaces of governance. The research has established an absence of clarity about governance needs at the city-region and metropolitan scales, particularly at the second-tier city level.

Second, the analysis of these episodes of spatial planning illustrates the dynamic nature of governance as part of a rapidly evolving economic and social global order, which is characterised by flexibility, speed and innovation. Conversely, these episodes also illustrate the stability of established institutional and administrative structures and norms, and a degree of resistance to those emerging governance changes - particularly those expressed at the regional and metropolitan scales. In the absence of strong sub-regional or metropolitan governance structures, the rollout of spatial strategies at this scale in Ireland's second-tier cities was generally fragmentary and the kind of unified territorial, placed-based approach advocated in the National Spatial Strategy (NSS) never materialised. However, Cork exists as a particular exception in this regard; its experiences reflect a restructuring and rescaling of planning at metropolitan and sub-regional levels, where a mix of top-down and bottom-up forces are combining to produce a semi-formalised, non-statutory planning regime.

Third, the analysis of the post- NSS landscape in Ireland demonstrates clearly the limitations of strategic spatial planning as a transformative framework, with evidence of a divergence of economic and settlement patterns - with long-term sustainability implications. Recent experiences in Ireland's key gateway cities would suggest that

although the 'soft spaces of governance' are a necessary feature of the urban decision-making landscape, they are not conducive to making hard decisions. However, the kinds of strategic planning initiatives deployed in Cork certainly resonate with the concept of transformative practice as outlined in the planning literature. The rail strategy, for example, can be interpreted as an attempt to transform completely the economic and environmental trajectory of development in the city-region, using a series of arguments around environmental and social quality based on what can be considered a *grand place-making concept*. However, such projects are unlikely to acquire socio-spatial transformative characteristics unless established modes of governance are moderated and if public policy considers more actively the political-institutional landscape in which these efforts are situated.

Fourth, in the examination of national and sub-regional episodes of strategic spatial planning in Ireland, which evolved over the course of the four essays, it was necessary to adapt and extend the methodological framework. This involved extending the empirical investigations beyond the confines of an instrumentalist perspective, and engaging in a more comprehensive analysis of governance narratives. The research also relied on a mixed conformance-performance analytical mode of inquiry, based on the 'Dutch model' of planning assessment. Because of the complex and stratified research terrain, the analysis combined an instrumentalist *conformance*-based analysis with an assessment of its *performance* as mode of strategic spatial planning in practice. The evolution of analysis during the research process would suggest that a full understanding of the operation and impact of strategic spatial planning projects cannot be conducted without combining an assessment of both conformance and performance.

In conclusion, the case of strategic spatial planning in Ireland and in Cork demonstrates the ways in which strategic spatial planning has penetrated policy and practice discourses, and has served to deliver a comprehensive transformation in planning as a discipline and within the broader arena of public policy. Overall, we can see a remarkable consistency in how planning episodes articulate their basic premise, which relates to an enduring focus on the arrangement of development in territories and with the idea of spatial order. Although there has been a general reluctance to institutionalise planning units like city-regions or metropolitan areas as formal government entities, they are being deployed increasingly as *containers for strategic spatial planning.*

The research has also indicated that long term, coherent strategic spatial planning across administrative boundaries, based on consistent ideas about governing/planning spaces, can produce what may be understood as a *metropolitan consciousness.* This may be understood as a tacit project around an informal spatial construct, which, over time, gains legitimacy as a strong governance space (in which decisions are brokered) and as a metaphor (for articulating a collective vision for the urban area's long-term future). Strategic spatial planning also involves dealing with complexity, and as a result, deploys methods that encourage what may be termed *spatial-thematic selectivity*. This can be translated as the prioritisation of a limited number of high profile interventions that are spatially and sectorally integrative – manifesting in large-scale, geographically expansive and symbolic projects that are designed to reorient territorial trajectories and produce symbolic-political support across broad coalitions.

The research would also suggest that in Ireland's post-economic crisis period, and in a broader neoliberal political setting in which the state appears to have shirked its responsibility for managing and sponsoring urban affairs, we see the emergence of *strategic spatial planning as a proxy for urban governance.* As formal urban governing competencies are reduced as part of a clear centralisation agenda, and with city-regions assuming greater economic responsibilities, strategic spatial planning becomes an arena in which urban governance capacity is exercised. Consequently, strategic and fundamental decisions about urban development, infrastructure programmes and public investment are increasingly considered within the realm of strategic spatial planning – which performs as a substitute for traditional urban government, and in turn, as a proxy for urban governance.

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 RESEARCH APPROACH

The research conducted for this PhD addresses the theme of strategic spatial planning and governance challenges for city-regions and metropolitan areas - using a series of applied case studies. My research and teaching interests, combined with relevant experience as a planning practitioner, brought me towards a particular scholarly interest in the idea of how spatial planning is expressed and delivered as a specific mode of governance in response to the particular challenges facing Europe's urban areas in the context of a variety of spatial, environmental, social and economic forces. My experiences in planning are rooted within a mix of professional and academic contexts, and my research interests have emerged to reflect different strands from my career in practice and academia. With an academic background in urban geography, my introduction to the world of scholarly inquiry in planning research came about during my time conducting research as part of an M. Phil in Geography.

That research project evolved into a comprehensive study in urban regeneration, which explored the interface between planning and urban governance, and I became particularly interested in the academic discipline of planning. Following completion of the M. Phil research programme, I pursued a Masters in Regional and Urban Planning and subsequently practiced as a planner in the private sector in Ireland and England. In that professional environment, planning was increasingly forced to engage with strategic spatial concerns and the development sector became more actively involved with planning issues at this scale. On my return to an academic environment, I developed a scholarly interest in the idea of strategic spatial planning both as a mode of governance and as an expression of public policy. From the outset, I developed an interest in applied research, which had a particular public policy orientation; this led me towards a broad interest in second-tier cities, strategies for city-regions and metropolitan areas, national spatial planning strategies – all within the context of a European spatial planning framework.

One of the fundamental and distinctive characteristics of planning relates to the way in which it attempts to influence the location of land uses and urban activities through a public decision making framework that is by definition both *political* and *public* (Fainstein, 1990: Harvey, 1989: Thornley, 1977). My research interests evolved towards this general subject area and I have been exploring these themes in a number of different contexts. My

work in teaching and research in UCC's Centre for Planning Education and Research has created a wide range of research avenues and opportunities to explore the field of strategic spatial planning. Much of this work has resulted in direct engagement within a public policy arena and the research has allowed me to become closely involved in policy discussions around spatial planning at a national and local level. In particular, I have become interested in how strategic spatial planning is manifesting itself at national, regional and metropolitan levels in Ireland, and how governance processes are mediating and influencing territorial and environmental outcomes.

Regularly, the professional objectives of a planning system, which are often characterised by controversy, conflict and complexity, struggle in the face of public and political considerations (Allmendinger and Haughton, 2012: Healey, 1997: Haughton et al, 2010), and spatial planning projects become interesting governance spaces with unique methods, modes and approaches (Healey, 2006). Spatial planning policies generally attempt to secure a balanced and sustainable pattern of development of urban settlements by coordinating land use activity in certain locations to maximise social, economic and environmental benefit (Albrechts, 2004: Healey et al, 1997: Salet & Faludi, 2000).

The research aims to explore the ways in which planning interacts with decision making processes within and outside formal government structures to pursue basic spatial principles through policies, plans and other initiatives. It is argued here that the application of spatially-explicit and place-specific policy approaches is by definition a challenging and complex enterprise in political, social and economic terms (Healey, 2006). Consequently, it relies upon long term, incremental strategies with particular characteristics as governance activities (Faludi, 1973: Hopkins, 2001: Hoch, 2009). The subject can be explored and interrogated in detail through an examination of planning activities in a number of contexts.

The research addresses the theme of *Strategic Spatial Planning & Governance in Ireland's City – Regions* using a series of case studies, set at different spatial scales. It is concerned primarily with investigating the intersection of planning and public policy with a view to developing insights and theories on planning as a mode of governance. The papers/articles presented here have been developed specifically towards this broad field of inquiry. Although the focus of the different essays varies, in that the analysis at each level changes

in character and form, there is a common thread that unites the overall research and which allows for a coherent set of insights and conclusions around that common theme.

The purpose of the research will be to explore the dynamics of urban governance in spatial planning at various spatial scales. This involves exploring phenomena which provides insights into the way that governing arrangements have been changing in response to new economic and political circumstances, identifying processes behind these changing patterns, and qualifying these changes in terms of governance planning dynamics in metropolitan contexts.

Furthermore, the research will describe and define the ways in which planning practice applies its basic principles through planning policy, decision making, and by exploring the normative basis of the profession's activities. It will explore ways in which planning policy and practice continues to attempt to support a specific hierarchical-spatial development norm in the face of powerful market and environmental imperatives that constantly challenge that philosophy. In the past forty years or so, planning's core approach to land use management has been tested sharply as economic, social and environmental changes have tended to challenge its continued practicality as a means of regulating the urbanisation process (Breheny, 1991). These phenomena are encountered in this research using a series of thematic empirical pieces, which relate broadly to the field of strategic spatial planning at city-region/metropolitan level. These essays are concerned primarily with developing insights into the nature of contemporary strategic spatial planning and place-making as a mode of governance.

At the metropolitan and sub-regional scales, spatial planning policies are usually formulated to try to secure a balanced and sustainable pattern of development of urban settlement by concentrating and prioritising activity in certain locations to maximise social, economic and environmental benefit (Nadin, 2007: Schmidt, 2009). The research explores the nature of these strategies at a range of spatial scales – from a consideration of spatial equity at national level, through an analysis of the performance of the second-tier cities since the publication of the National Spatial Strategy, to a finer grain analysis of growth management strategies at the metropolitan scale.

The research examines the nature of planning strategies at a variety of spatial scales as a way of interrogating the dynamics of urban governance in a contemporary urban context. In essence, this involves a focus on decision-making, policy formulation, planning projects, strategies and outcomes. The connecting theme relates to an interest in how planning is governed, how it is expressed as a specific mode of governance in urban settings and how decision-making around planning projects navigates through a variety of social, political and economic filters. Social, environmental and economic challenges associated with rapid urbanisation are regularly portrayed in the context of dealing with *big* urban problems in *big* urban contexts, the rapid and extreme nature of the process of urbanisation and the associated issues of growth and development, poverty and wealth, congestion, infrastructure, environmental degradation, and quality of life.

Although half of all city-dwellers live in cities under 500,000 (United Nations, 2014), it would appear that much of the scholarly attention on these governance and public policy challenges relates to large, capital city-regions and cities of global scale. The lower tiers of the urban hierarchy are sometimes overlooked when considering contemporary urban governance challenges, and there appears to have been a bias towards developing governance and policy agendas that address concerns at the megacity or capital city scale. I consider this a significant gap in research and policy terms and that it is worth pursuing a scholarly project within this space.

Finally, in an Irish context, my research interests also reflect a desire to address a neglect of urban focus in the approach to territorial management and spatial planning in an Irish context. Until very recently, second-tier cities have been largely ignored in policy terms, and urban policies have been mostly absent within Irish public policy settings. Ireland does not yet have any explicit policy for its cities, and there has been a long established policy bias in favour of the dominant capital city one hand and on rural development issues on the other end of the scale. This particular level of the urban hierarchy is under-explored as a spatial and governing phenomenon and there has been very little research conducted which focuses on planning issues at this scale.

1.2 EXPLORATIONS IN URBAN GOVERNANCE

In studying manifestations of strategic spatial planning at the metropolitan or city-region scale, the concept of urban governance emerges as an important consideration. As a form of public policy, which has distinctive territorial - governmental traits, planning cannot be divorced from the politics of place as it is firmly embedded within the decision-making architecture of cities and regions.

The planning academy has provided a comprehensive set of teleological definitions of planning which help to address its theoretical and practical dimensions – and which is important as part of the wider discussions on urban governance. Many of these include explicitly instrumental approaches, which attempt to characterise the normative purpose of planning as a mode of practice and as a governance process. In Davidoff and Reiner's (1962) important contribution, planning is presented as a process of deciding, through rational choice, a course of action based on certain strategic goals. This is expressed as "a process for determining appropriate future action through a sequence of choices" (1962, 103) and because "action is the eventual outcome of planning efforts…a theory of planning must be directed to problems of effectuation". Theories in planning therefore need to acknowledge the substantive as well as procedural roots of the discipline. The authors claim that planning practice was often incapable of securing such 'desirable' outcomes because of the presence of externalities, political - institutional constraints and economic and social realities. This restricts the kinds of choices that planning can present as a way of developing 'courses of action'. However, the authors suggest that planning should be specifically employed to widen and to publicise the range of choice of future conditions or goals, and can serve as a vehicle for the portrayal of utopian solutions. This reflects the kind of a transformative instincts present in planning thinking which make a case for substantive societal-physical change, rather than incremental shifts, aimed at pursuing "…courses of action or end states involving fundamental change in values or environmental reconstruction" (Davidoff and Reiner, 1962, 106). Like Davidoff and Reiner, Wildavsky (1973, 128) characterises planning as an aspiration to control the future through efforts to manage the present, "Planning is the attempt to control the consequences of our actions. The more consequences we control, the more we have succeeded in planning". This is a more circumspect perspective perhaps than that offered by the previous authors, and he appears to indicate that planning's aspirational tendencies may in fact be futile.

Healey's (2010, 18) contemporary definitions of planning offers a more affirmative view, which can be understood as somewhat instrumental, but which also contains substantive content; "The idea of planning as an enterprise of collective activity, of public policy, is linked to a belief that it is worth striving to improve the human condition as layers in particular situations in the context of interaction with others, human and nonhuman." Furthermore, planning, for Healey (2010, 21) "… centres on deliberative collective action; that is, on governance activity, to improve place qualities, infused with particular orientation." In this definition, planning is established fundamentally as a 'place-shaping' concern, but which exercises power through mechanisms and practices of governance. Unlike many instrumental definitions, Healey's definition is value-laden, and reflects a progressive agenda in favour of social and environmental justice. Another 'progressive-instrumental' definition is presented by Markusen (2000), who suggests that planning's distinctiveness is its blending of instrumental and aspirational dimensions. There are other instrumental definitions that see the purpose of planning as enabling decisions about future action, such as Faludi's (1987) early work where he provides a definition of planning as the framing of subsequent decisions, while Friedmann (1987) argues that planning ought to be directed towards the enhancement of society through radical practices. This inherent concern with societal transformation inevitably leads to a discussion about the processes which accommodate or impede such changes and the decision-making environment in which these practices are situated.

The phenomenon referred to as 'urban governance' has emerged in response to the rescaling and restructuring of the way in which the state, society and the market have been responding to the fundamental socio-economic challenges posed by globalisation and post-Fordist norms. From the early 1980s onwards, what may be understood as a neoliberal paradigm emerged in place of the Keynesian political economy regime, which has served to fundamentally reorder the relationships between market and state at various spatial scales. This has had substantial implications for the ways in which planning is expressed as part of the broad public policy framework, as well as for how planning is manifested as a professional activity. For most of the 20th century, these relationships were characterised by a framework in which the state's influence was generally dominant and which provided the institutions through which the political regulation of societies occurred.

In this context, national authorities governed their territories, and urban authorities governed their cities, through the formulation and implementation of policy via a hierarchical –institutional process of decision-making - characterised by democratic command-and-control functions. This conventional understanding of the process of government contrasts with the post-Fordist culture of governance, which is characterised by the introduction of a multiplicity of interests and fragmentation of decision-making at the realm of public policy at nation-state and urban levels. The disruptions precipitated by the transition from Fordism have had impacts, not only on the ways in which public policy was to be formulated and applied, but also on the nature of the relationships between the different levels of government (Jessop, 1997).

The shift from government to governance therefore reflects a blend of economic and democratic concerns which relate to the ability of traditional government institutions and policy environments to respond effectively to kinds of challenges presented by the forces of globalisation. These concerns related to the ability and efficacy of local and national statist structures to guarantee economic prosperity and social cohesion in the face of a fundamental reinvention of the operation of the capitalist system during this period. In response, formal structures of government have been joined by a collection of interests as part of the broad milieu of governance, which Le Galès (2002) describes as a process of co-ordinating actors, social groups, and institutions to attain particular goals, discussed and defined collectively in fragmented, uncertain environments.

As such, there has been a fundamental shift in the relationships between the state, society and the market. As Jessop has observed:

> *This implies that important new economic and social conditions and attendant problems have emerged which cannot be managed or resolved readily, if at all, through top-down state planning or market-mediated anarchy. This secular shift reflects the dramatic intensification of societal complexity which flows from growing functional differentiation of institutional orders in an increasingly global society – which leads in turn to greater systemic interdependencies across various social, spatial, and temporal horizons of action.*
>
> (Jessop, 1998, 32).

Governance, therefore, is proposed as an alternative decision-making framework which deals with such societal complexities and fragmented governing landscapes. The term 'governance' has been employed as a way to describe the new forms of decision-making within, outside and between established institutional-administrative organs of statehood. Borraz and Le Galès (2010, 2) provide a useful definition of governance as relating "…to all the institutions, networks, directives, regulations, norms, political and social usages, public and private actors that contribute to the stability of a society and of a political regime, to its orientation, to its capacity to direct, and to its capacity to provide services and to ensure its own legitimacy". This consideration of the issue of 'capacity' mirrors the political economy perspective on urban governance presented in classical regime theory thinking which emerged in US literature on city politics and governance during the 1980s. This approach to the interpretation of power relations posits that power is not an inherent condition encapsulated in institutions or laws but more akin to the concept of potentiality. In Stone's (1993, 15) work, this is developed through the idea of 'governing capacity' which is "…created and maintained by bringing together coalition partners with appropriate resources, nongovernmental as well as governmental". He suggests that power in urban contexts should be understood as 'the power to' (act or govern a city) rather than only as 'power over' (control or influence others). Hence, in a post-Fordist world, where flexibility and fragmentation characterise the urban political and economic landscape, effective governance of cities and city-regions relies on maximising governing capacity through the development of strategies and policies based on broad coalitions of interests and diverse communities of governance.

As a result, one of the important considerations is the capacity of the state to direct or influence policy or outcomes for their jurisdictions. This has had repercussions for states and cities, because as (Ohmae, 1995) argues, the impacts of globalisation fundamentally challenge how modern societies are regulated, suggesting that the nation-state's capacity to regulate (society and markets) has been diluted. This traditional regulatory function, according to Jouve (2003, 286), was manifested in three distinct ways; "…through the arbitration of conflicts between social groups and/or subnational spaces, the creation of a collective identity (national before anything else) and the diffusion of a dominant ideology linking social justice and economic efficiency within the heart of civil society." One of the key manifestations of this process has been the limitation of the traditional state in its ability to manage effectively those subnational spaces. Furthermore, those subnational

spaces – cities and city-regions, are themselves equally vulnerable to the disruptive effects of globalisation and are subject to substantial changes in how they regulate their territories.

The concept of governance in cities has been addressed quite comprehensively within and outside the discipline of planning over the last few decades. Scholars from a range of academic backgrounds – in political science, urban and regional/economic geography, sociology, and planning - have examined ways in which various interests have contributed to the evolution of decision-making environments in urban areas through an analysis of the capacity of various groups to exert influence over spatial outcomes. The term governance is used as an analytical concept in descriptive and normative terms to reflect the idea that 'the capacity to govern' has formal and informal elements. It is a useful concept according to Stead (2016, 1368), "…not only due to the fact that governments are constituted differently but also because non-governmental actors and cultural factors exert an important influence on the nature of governance." This invariably relates to the ability of different interests to shape and adapt urban society in response to economic and social transformations and changing environmental considerations (Lefèvre, 1998).

In an examination of the UK system, Rhodes (1996, 660) outlines the concept of governance as self-organising, interorganisational networks which are characterised by an interdependence between organisations, interactions between members of the network; and which involve trust, tacit, negotiated rules and with connections to, but autonomy from, the state. Similarly, Healey (2006, 302) suggests that governance is fundamentally concerned with a public policy landscape which "…encompasses all forms of collective action focused on the public realm… from those orchestrated by formal government agencies, to lobby groups, self-regulating groups and social campaigns and movements…" This suggests that the governance phenomenon, as distinct from government practice, represents a blurring of boundaries between public and private spheres, but is still oriented towards the development of public policy. Governance, therefore, is not an analytical concept used to represent all forms of public and private decision-making; it is distinguished by a focus on, and a core concern with, events in the public sphere.

The concept of *multilevel governance,* which has emerged as an analytical concept within the planning arena, can be traced to the idea of multilevel policy or multi-level government

within a broader European context. According to Faludi (2012), the recalibration and rescaling of regional policies and funding mechanisms within the European Union, accompanied by the development of a general supranational and sub-regional policy and political emphasis, has encouraged the concept of dispersed hierarchy as a key feature of the European policy discourse. Thus, in the context of a general commitment to cohesion within the European Union, a hierarchical system of government patterns emerge – invoking the concept of a neat vertical arrangement of decision-making authorities – from European, national, sub-national, regional urban and local levels. This reflects the redefinition of the nation-state's role as part of the European project and is associated with the twin impulses of politically inspired federalism and regionalism.

This analysis however simply describes the idea of multi-level government, and these structural and political changes do not infer a transition from government to governance. In a discussion about reform of EU Structural Funds for example Hooghe (1996) found that decision-making did not simply 'rest' within discrete pockets of the hierarchy. Instead, it was discovered that there were multiple layers of authority characterised by interdependence, collaboration and mutuality. This disrupts traditional conceptions of power and state authority. This dispersal of formal state authority within the context of the European project is still a matter of government rather than governance; however, the influence of the European Union as a political project has been extremely important in encouraging in a very concrete way the idea that power and decision-making was mobile, fluid and potentially fragmented.

The development of the term *multilevel governance* emerged largely from the work of Hooghe and Marks (2003), who present a comprehensive analytical account of the concept. One of their important contributions is an explanatory one; they illustrate quite persuasively that multilevel governance reflects the simple fact that centralised government is often ill-placed to govern many forms of policy. The authors argue that the dispersal of governance is much more efficient than concentration in many policy settings because economies of scale (which may favour concentrated forms of governance) do not materialise in many public policy settings. This simple but elegant deconstruction shows that 'power' is dispersed (through a hierarchy and across governance terrains) because it is necessary and efficient to do so. Their second important contribution to this discussion is the presentation of a basic multi-level governance typology with two types – Type One and

Type Two; "One type conceives of dispersion of authority to general-purpose, nonintersecting, and durable jurisdictions. A second type of governance conceives of task-specific, intersecting, and flexible jurisdictions" (Hooghe and Marks, 2003, 223). Type One refers to the federalist tradition and describes general-purpose jurisdictions that coincide with territorial units, organised into a nested hierarchy. In contrast, Type Two multi governance systems represent multiple, purpose specific governance spaces that have flexible and overlapping territorial patterns. One system is akin to the 'Russian Doll' approach, on the other has been described as a form of 'new medievalism' (Faludi, 2012). The typology was interesting from an urban governance perspective because it allows for a more nuanced understanding of the dynamics of decision-making within expansive hierarchical systems with different characteristics at different spatial scales. Faludi (2012), however, takes issue with some of its assumptions and argues that Hooghe and Marks' Type One multilevel governance typology didn't really constitute 'governance' as it describes government and that their Type Two version didn't represent a 'multi-level' structure because this describes diffuse rather than hierarchical systems.

These debates about multi-level governance systems inevitably provoked discussions around whether governance (dispersed or concentrated) should be designed along territorial or sectoral lines. Planners instinctively would tend to favour the Type One multilevel governance typology because authority is organised along territorial-jurisdictional lines which coincides with the kinds of governance spaces in which planning operates and comprehends. This of course is only one way of understanding the capacity of planning, and takes a traditional, Euclidean perspective on space and power. Faludi (2012) contends that in the multi-level governance discussions, there is a tendency to favour definitions of territory that favour traditional bounded interpretations of space at the expense of more relational perspectives which acknowledge fluidity and interconnectedness. Nevertheless, it is a useful generalisation in the context of relating Hooghe and Marks' (2003) typology to the field of planning and governance.

In a planning context, the idea of governance has become an important consideration as part of a European policy agenda, particularly with the introduction of the term *territory* in to political and bureaucratic language. Such discussions relate to the idea which emerged within political science that government dynamics can the best understood using a multi-level governance perspective. In simple terms, this illustrates the way in which decision-

making [within formal realms of government and as part of informal networks of actors] is dispersed across a hierarchy. This hierarchy can be represented in territorial terms, which introduces the idea of spatially defined layers of governance.

In his critique of these discussions, Faludi (2012, 19) argues that there is no distinction between multilevel governance and territorial governance because if "Territory is the area over which government formations exercise jurisdiction", multilevel governance is always 'territorial'. However, Davoudi et al's (2008, 50) conclusions from their examination of the ESPON 2.3.2 project would indicate that "…territorial governance is different from governance because, in brief, its object is the territory… and its aim is to regulate, to govern, to manage territorial dynamics through the pilotage of a multiplicity of actors." This is helpful because it suggests that whilst governance may inherently be related in some way to territory, it is not always deliberately or explicitly territorial in its formulation or application. What distinguishes territorial governance from governance is that it represents a system, structure or culture of decision-making that is crafted with a particular set of territorial or spatial outcomes in mind. In other words, territorial units (in a Euclidean sense) or territorial spaces (in a relational sense) are intrinsic governance elements, as opposed to canvases on which governance is applied.

In his discussions on whether the term 'territorial governance' is meaningful at all, Stead (2013, 2014), contends that there are distinctions, but that there is widespread conflation of territorial with 'plain' or 'regular' governance. For Stead (2014), much of what passes as territorial governance within the European Union context – policy coordination and integration, partnership and collaboration – is in fact closer to the concept of 'plain' governance. By distinction, he proposes that territorial governance can be identified using three characteristics – managing territorial dynamics, monitoring territorial impacts and defining boundaries for specific policy contexts. In this way, it is possible to relate territorial governance as a concept more directly to a spatially oriented understanding of governance. Indeed this distillation of territorial governance as an analytical concept contributes to a more meaningful application within the discipline of planning. The three identified characteristics of territorial governance, according to Stead (2014, 1383), have critical spatial imperatives and "might even be regarded as core values or fundamental principles of planning". Planning is fundamentally concerned with territories, and as a mode of public policy, it is also concerned with how planning policy is expressed at various

spatial scales. The concept of hierarchy is an important organising concept within planning policy and practice and the discipline seems attuned both to the analytical and normative representations of territorial governance. Within the multi-level governance debate, while planning might traditionally be associated with Euclidean interpretations in Type One systems, the emergence of strategic spatial planning would appear to encapsulate the more relational and jurisdictionally-fluid understandings of territory within the Type Two system. However, regardless of the interpretation of territorial governance, the issue of regulation – as a governance dynamic – remains important.

How cities are regulated becomes central to the discussion about urban governance. In a functional sense, cities are organised around the operation and interaction between markets and governments. Regulations, according to Borraz and Le Galès (2010, 5) can be understood as mechanisms of governance and may be defined as "…the mode of co-ordinating diverse activities or relationships among actors…the allocation of resources in relation to these activities or these actors, and …the structuring of conflicts (prevented or resolved)". Thus, a combination of state regulation, market and co-operative regulation are combined to produce the system of governance of cities. Because of these evolving institutional and operational dynamics, the politics and practices of planning have been subject to transformation. The urban government/governance debates have been quite useful when developing an understanding about the nature and impact of such transformations. In a European context, discussions around political economy, economic geography and urbanism have proved to be very useful in tracing the kinds of transformations in city governance and in particular on the role of planning.

Cities and city-regions have become important settings in which this restructuring and experimentation has been taking place. They have provided the context in which new relationships between state activity and market dynamics have played out (Brenner, 1999). Over a period of time, the formal managerial institutions of urban government were gradually denuded and then reshaped through fiscal-institutional reforms and the 'entrepreneurial turn' (Harvey, 1989), and through a process of 'hollowing out' (Rhodes, 1994) and a process of 'state rescaling' (Swyngedouw, 1992). These interlinked processes were invariably related to a crisis in capitalism and the subsequent manifestations in the operation of state activity at national, regional and urban levels. In contrast to government, then, governance becomes "…an arrangement of governing beyond-the-state (but often

with the explicit inclusion of parts of the state apparatus) organised as [apparently] horizontal associational networks of private (market), civil society (usually NGO) and state actors" (Swyngedouw, 1992, 2005). This recasting of state-market-society relations has changed planning's role as part of the formal regulatory instruments of the state. The style and content of planning evolved to reflect the increased emphasis on collaboration, entrepreneurialism and flexible modes of decision-making around spatial and territorial issues.

Furthermore, it is suggested that contemporary strategic planning represents a particular manifestation of new governance dynamics in urban settings – and the episodes of planning which have emerged at the city-region level constitute a specific mode of urban governance. Consequently, the position of planning within the apparatus of the state has altered, with an explicit realignment - away from its core concern with regulatory social practices - towards more proactive, economically oriented strategies, and which are distinguished by an emphasis on the politics and dynamics of place.

1.3 METHODOLOGIES: STRATEGIES AND EPISODES IN STRATEGIC SPATIAL PLANNING

This section outlines the principal research design considerations within the study and describes how the research was conducted. It presents the broad methodological architecture within which the four essays are constructed, and situates these within the broader research framework.

The aim of this research is to develop an understanding of how strategic spatial planning is taking place in practice and how it is manifested within the urban governance regimes of metropolitan areas and city-regions. It is also concerned with following up on this inquiry by determining the extent to which these strategies are shaping the process of territorial development in real-world settings. As such, the research is directed towards the development of insights into both the *processes* behind, and the *outcomes* of, strategic spatial planning. Thus, the core scholarly exercise is concerned with relating the ways in which transformations in spatial planning and governance emerge in real-world settings and in real place-making contexts. The inquiry is also directed towards addressing a mundane but fundamental concern in planning – assessing the efficacy of spatial planning policies in shaping places and influencing territorial development outcomes. This involves

conducting investigations to provide insights into the relationship between strategic planning policies and development patterns. As a result, the research includes a core empirical inquiry that involves an analysis of development, population, commuting and economic trends at different spatial scales, as a way of interrogating the extent to which policy is manifested in decision-making terms. The research therefore depended on a variety of methods, which were used to generate insights into both the procedural and substantive dimensions of spatial planning.

The decision to structure the thesis into a collection of essays using the 'publication route' was a pragmatic and personal consideration. The idea of assembling a number of discrete published/publishable articles was appealing because compartmentalised work packages were manageable within a demanding work environment. In addition, it was considered that producing individual research elements to a peer review standard would be constructive and pragmatic way to progress the research project. This presents a particular methodological challenge - maintaining a strategic outlook on the research and marshalling the individual essays' methodologies into a coherent whole. However, within a structured research programme, there was a regular conversation around the need to maintain a coherence in the evolution of the empirical pieces, and to maintain sufficient perspective whilst engaged in detailed comprehensive empirical studies.

Each of the four essays had a self-contained methodology; this included a mixture of literature evaluation, concept analysis, policy reviews, detailed quantitative analysis of population, housing and commuting data and a selection of semi-structured interviews [in the case of essay number four]. These methodologies were formed within the immediate context of each individual case and were emergent rather than heavily prescribed. However, the research design largely reflected the nature of the research challenges. Essay number one was an exploratory piece of work and relied largely on secondary sources and tentative mapping exercises involving key concepts. Essays number two, three and four consisted of separate but overlapping investigations into the nature of strategic spatial planning and urban governance – focusing on conceptual and substantive concerns. In these three cases, the research relied on a bespoke mixture of data collection methods and the broad thrust of the methodologies reflected the need to combine qualitative and quantitative approaches.

In this thesis, the phenomenon that is studied is at the interface of strategic spatial planning and urban governance, and is firmly rooted in its socio-political and institutional context. This is a complex research setting; the phenomenon under review is closely embedded with the research context and it is not possible to disentangle strategic spatial planning from this socio-political and institutional setting. For Campbell (2003), separating phenomenon from its broader context is particularly difficult in a discipline like planning because of its particular emphasis on the spatial. In many other disciplines, spatial variables can be controlled through random assignment. In planning, however, this spatial influence is an essential ingredient of the inquiry; thus, it should not be set aside.

The 'master' research design is based on a case study approach. The case study is a particularly useful research approach in planning as it allows an investigation of a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context (Yin, 2003), thus addressing the complex nature of the research setting. For Creswell (2013, 97), the case study method involves temporal and spatial limits and "…explores a real-life, contemporary bounded system (a case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time, through detailed, indepth data collection involving multiple sources of information." A case study, Gerring (2004, 342) suggests, should be "an intensive study of a single unit… a spatially bounded phenomenon – e.g. a nation-state, revolution, political party, election, or person – observed at a single point in time or over some delimited period of time". In this research, the case study may be understood as a meta-method, which combines a number of research strategies. As such, "The essence of case study methodology" according to (Johansson, 2003, 11) "is triangulation, the combination on different levels of techniques, methods, strategies, or theories."

It is also a particularly helpful method for dealing with complexity and addressing context. Yin (1984:23) defines the case study research method "…as an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context; when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident; and in which multiple sources of evidence are used." The case study approach, therefore, allows an investigation of contemporary real-life phenomenon through detailed contextual analysis of a number of events or episodes. It also allows a researcher to examine closely the data within a specific context.

Case studies are also particularly suitable for research in practice-oriented disciplines such as planning. As an applied discipline that engages with real-world public policy conditions, the units of analysis – the neighbourhood, the city, and the region – become, in a way, fields of policy experimentation. "In these arenas, knowledge results from studies that translate to and from practice, adding to theory that, in turn, informs other studies and practice " (Birch, 2012, 259).Therefore, they become important objects of research, and the case study approach is particularly suitable for producing the kind of in depth analysis and experiential knowledge required for such studies.

As a research device, the case study approach is regularly contrasted with inferential statistics in how it treats and deals with information. Unlike statistically-grounded methods, case study methodologies are open, fluid and emergent. Statistical methods are often characterised as being favoured based on their suitability for generalisation, their thoroughness and objectivity. According to Yin (1994), the difference between the two methods is the *statistical generalisation* from the sample to the population, and the *analytical generalisation* from the case study to the theory. Case studies are often (mis)represented as less objective and less suitable for generalisation.

Flyberg's (2011) contribution to this subject has been crucial in highlighting the paradox associated with such simplistic representations, and establishes a defence of the case study in terms of theory, validity and reliability. For Campbell (2003, 5), making comparisons between case studies and inferential statistics is not just unproductive – it is unnecessary – because "…the two are not just different approaches to answering the same research question, but instead two approaches that answer divergent sets of questions." In other words, each approach has a different function, and ideally, research would be in a position to make generalisations that are empirically and theoretically robust. Campbell (2003) suggests that compelling empirical and theoretical research would preferably combine both approaches. In urban research, however, this combination does not always produce effective research strategies because the empirical (quantitative) work is sometimes segregated from the case study (qualitative) elements.

In this research, it was decided not to separate the inquiry into neat methodological packages which are individually labelled. Instead, the inquiry is organised as a master case study into strategic spatial planning; within this case study framework, individual discrete

episodes of planning are investigated as sub case studies. These incorporate a number of overlapping and interrelated episodic 'events' around strategic spatial planning initiatives articulated at different spatial scales. This produces a sequence of episodes around strategic spatial planning at a national sub-regional and urban scale. The core concern in research terms was to explore the dynamics of urban governance within this context – and this relied on individual investigations into the manifestation of policies in real-world settings. As a result, the research needed to deal with the complexities associated with policy implementation, decision-making structures and processes, and nuanced interpretations of planning as a mode of public policy. The empirical work conducted within these sub case studies or episodes relied on a significant amount of data analysis and extensive analysis of material that was presented in quantitative terms. The purpose of these quantitative studies was not to produce generalisable data; instead, it was designed to foreground the analysis of planning policies by examining spatial and territorial processes and impacts. Based on thorough interrogation of development patterns, this investigation paved the way for a critical analysis of the governance dynamics being explored. Therefore, the combination of methods, which paired qualitative and quantitative data analysis, was an integrated and self-reinforcing approach.

In developing this approach, this research makes no particular claim about positivistic or postpositivist supremacy. The research design was driven by the nature of the research challenge rather than by preconceived methodological ideas. In this way, it has been influenced by Flyberg's (2004) use of the concept of 'phronetic social science', as a way of describing an approach based on practical wisdom. The phronetic researcher is able to combine analytical and instrumental rationality with what is referred by Flyvberg (2011) as value-rationality. The nature of the particular research challenge meant that a case study approach would provide the necessary richness, depth and insight required to address the research questions. Within the individual sub case studies (national spatial planning at the state level, the experience of second-tier cities, Cork's specific episodes of spatial planning), methods varied, but generally relied on a combination of qualitative and quantitative devices.

The research treats strategic spatial planning (as a mode of policy and practice) as an assemblage of policies, plans and projects which have a strategic purpose in planning terms, together with the forms of application, decision making and professional practices

that accompany such initiatives. They usually possess overarching social, economic and environmental objectives relating to different spatial scales of action, brought together under some form of a structural vision for a given territory. These spatially- explicit visions often constitute very long-term multi-sectoral policy developments relating to wholesale transformations in how territories are developed, planned and managed. Furthermore, strategic spatial planning initiatives are not simply 'implemented' as part of a linear process of plan making and implementation; rather, their strategic intentions are operationalised both within and outside the formal realm of governance, using what can be understood as strategic alliances and coalitions of interests. Although the formal planning system does provide the primary vehicle for leading and structuring strategic spatial planning efforts, the process is also dependent upon a whole series of formal and informal actions and influences outside this arena. Thus, strategic spatial planning is operationalised in the form of strategy making episodes within the soft spaces of governance (Healey, 2007: Olesen, 2012). These episodes of strategy 'roll out' can be observed and interrogated as strategic spatial planning in action.

Planning literature demonstrates how strategic 'place-making strategies' developed at a national or sub national scale, are usually operationalised quite selectively; and that this selectivity results in a somewhat discriminatory approach in respect of policy application and territorial coverage. In other words, strategic spatial planning manifests itself through the application of a limited number of policies for a limited number of places (Albrechts, 2004: Healey, 2007). This can be understood in the context of transformations in the political economy of places in a postmodern context, with states and regions invariably turning towards strategic rather than comprehensive planning approaches; this manifests itself as a form of strategic spatial selectivity (Jessop, 1990: Jones, 1997: Brenner 2004) and state action is prejudiced towards certain territories and particular forms of policy application.

Ireland's, and Cork's, experiences over the last 30 years provide a rich context for studying the kinds of phenomena that are emerging within the arena of strategic spatial planning in Europe. The evolution of strategic spatial planning practice in Ireland presents an interesting narrative through which questions about the nature of contemporary European place governance can be addressed. This may be understood as a long-term experiment in strategic spatial planning that represents a very specific strand of public policy formulation

in a European planning context. The period from the middle of the 1990s onwards represents a very deliberate transformation in the sphere of planning policy and practice in Ireland and Cork, which are treated for the purpose of the study as a series of *strategic episodes* of planning. This includes the establishment of an approach to territorial management that is distinctive in form and content as a particular expression of strategic spatial planning. This is characterised by a style of planning [policy and practice] belonging to what might be understood as a distinctly northwest European tradition of spatial planning and which can be understood as being part of a broad transformation of a planning culture in Europe.

By the early 2000s, the spatial planning landscape in Ireland had fundamentally changed. At a national level, the publication of the country's first National Spatial Strategy signalled an important departure for national spatial planning (Walsh, 2013: Ó'Riordáin & Egeraat, 2016), whilst the publication of the Cork Area Strategic Plan (CASP) in 2001 signalled an important moment for sub-regional planning in the state's second city (Counsell et al, 2014). These two key policy documents initiated an historically significant and substantial experiment in planning as a form of public policy. The NSS represented the first comprehensive spatial strategy for the state, which took an integrated approach to the various settlement, economic and environmental considerations that are playing out in the context of a rapidly growing economy. At the city-region level, the CASP approach signalled a new direction for strategic planning in the Cork region which took on an integrated approach to territorial, economic and social planning. Cork's experiences in attempting to plan at this scale, and within the soft spaces of inter-institutional cooperation, is quite unusual in an Irish context, and thus presents a valuable case study for strategic spatial planning in action.

The NSS and CASP were both established against the background of a strong growth narrative and a transformation of Ireland's entire economic landscape. The state had witnessed a transformation in economic fortunes, and had emerged as a high-growth and dynamic European economy with significant pressures in the form of development and infrastructure requirements. The Cork region had also performed strongly as a nationally important growth centre within the state, and had experienced significant development pressures throughout the late 1990s. Both of these strategic spatial planning initiatives were therefore concerned with the strategic challenge of managing growth in a manner

that was conducive to reflecting sustainable development principles. The NSS and CASP each provided a twenty-year framework designed to achieve a balanced approach to social, economic and physical development and population growth. Hence, they can be understood as strategic episodes in spatial planning, from which particular spatially-explicit outcomes can be discerned; thus, from a research perspective, these episodes provide points of departure for the sub case studies which are developed as separate essays.

These episodes in spatial planning have occurred within the particular institutional, political and cultural settings which relate to Ireland and Cork. The specificity of the circumstances in which the case studies and subsequent analysis is taken is acknowledged, however, the narratives which have framed and even shaped the context of planning policy and practice in Ireland and Cork emerge in an international setting. These episodes can in fact be interpreted as particular episodes in European spatial planning, which are articulated at various spatial scales in one jurisdiction. In particular, the story of national and city-region planning in Ireland, which emerge from the beginning of the 2000s, is situated firmly within a European context from a policy and practice perspective. The policy discussion within Europe about territorial development and spatial planning has had significant and explicit influence on policy making in an Irish and Cork context. The National Spatial Strategy and the Cork Area Strategic Plan were both clearly influenced by the key policy messages contained in the European Spatial Development Perspective (1999). This is evident from the spatial planning concepts, as well as the vocabulary and terminology employed by the ESDP; these two key strategic policies in Ireland transformed the entire policy landscape with the introduction of a novel suite of concepts and messages around territorial development. The NSS and CASP reflected a particular strand of European spatial planning, employing core concepts such as city-regions, compact cities, polycentric development, urban-rural partnerships, networks – which signified a distinctly 'Europeanised' approach to the development of planning policies. As such, the case studies, which are set within an Irish context, are intended to provide insights into policy and practice within a European spatial planning setting.

In methodological terms, the selection of a single master case study (with embedded sub units) means that descriptive generalisation from this case study is not automatically possible. However, the purpose of this research was not to generalise, but to allow for the development of a series of insights into the nature of strategic spatial planning in a specific

context. The value of this master case study approach is the richness and depth of the insights and observations. No explicit, direct comparisons are made with experiences in other jurisdictions; however, the research is situated within the broader spectrum of European spatial planning. In addition, the experiences of other locations in strategic spatial planning has been considered as part of the conceptual discussions throughout the study. The reflections within the individual essays and in the concluding sections of the thesis attempt to situate the research into the broader context of European strategic spatial planning.

Therefore, the case studies are presented as a series of analyses of strategic planning episodes at the metropolitan, sub-regional and national scales. These 'cases' provide insights into the nature of strategic spatial planning in these particular contexts, and can also be examined to provide more general reflections on contemporary European policy and practice. The specificity of the Irish and Cork context, because of the particular administrative and socio economic circumstances are recognised; however, the research contained within the individual case studies situates the analysis quite clearly in a broader international context and as part of a wider conceptual discussion of strategic spatial planning. Although the research does include a comprehensive analysis of all four of Ireland's second-tier cities as part of the analysis, there is also a significant in-depth focus on the case of Cork. The selection of Cork, as the principal 'embedded' sub case study was based on its exceptional rather than typical characteristics. It was concluded from an early stage that the cities of Limerick, Galway and Waterford represented typical cases in respect of their experiences of strategic spatial planning as second-tier cities in Ireland. Whilst these statistically may be better suited as proxies to represent and replicate wider patterns in urban development and urban governance, it was Cork's exceptionalism that proved to be an attractive research proposition.

According to Campbell (2003, 9), there are four characteristics of exceptional cases which he claims are "more effective for challenging existing analytical assumptions and pushing theory forward" - that can be quite useful. Such cases can be *prescient* (a city ahead of its time), *exaggerations* (a city experiencing urban phenomena not evident elsewhere), *critical* (a single case refutes an assumed theory) or *deviants* (using abnormalities to portray normality). Using Cork as an exceptional case therefore relied on a combination of the qualities referred above. This was an explicit decision based on preconceived

understandings about Cork's experiences in strategic spatial planning. Cork's exceptionalism in this regard is generally well understood as it has a long, well publicised history of spatial planning that has a visibility within academic and policymaking circles. This exceptionalism was considered an important resource in research terms. Although the more typical case studies are helpful for descriptive generalisation and illustrating universal patterns, their ability to contribute to conceptual development is limited. The exceptional case study on the other hand can produce analytical generalisations by challenging assumed positions and by demonstrating that something is possible in certain circumstances. In empirical terms, these exceptional cases are effective in proving that something is possible and in theoretical terms they tend to challenge or interrogate theory rather than prove them (Campbell, 2003).

The justification for selecting the case study method relates to two potential scenarios, according to Yin (2003). It is useful firstly when the research addresses a descriptive question or an explanatory question. In this instance, the research is concerned with describing and explaining policies, programmes, and decisions relating to planning episodes. A case study is also useful when there is a desire to illuminate a particular situation, so there is a need for observational proximity to make direct observations and collect data in natural settings. A key objective of this research is to use the case of Ireland and Cork to illustrate particular episodes of strategic spatial planning. As such, the case study approach is deliberately employed as a means of highlighting the experiences of this particular place. The emphasis is therefore very much on the particularity of the case study. The detailed qualitative accounts produced in case studies helps to explore and describe data in real-life environments, and helps also to explain the complexities of real-life situations which may not be captured through experimental or survey research.

1.4 CORE RESEARCH THEMES

Using a case study based on the experience of second-tier cities in Ireland, the research is concerned with establishing the extent to which changes in the operation of planning policy and practice can be understood in terms of the broad transformation in strategic spatial planning. Using critical perspectives on the form and nature of strategic spatial planning, metropolitan governance, and city-region planning, the research aims to use the

experiences of planning practice and policy as a way to explore theories and concepts in contemporary planning.

RESEARCH AIM

The aim of this PhD project is to develop an understanding of how strategic spatial planning is expressed and delivered as a specific mode of governance, in response to the particular challenges facing Europe's second-tier cities in the context of a variety of spatial, environmental, social and economic forces. It is therefore concerned with how planning, as a particular form of public policy and a form of governance-in-action, materialises at certain spatial scales and how it is influencing territorial development.

CORE THEMES

The analysis of the main research question is guided by the following core structuring themes:

CORE-THEME I: SPACE, PLACE AND TERRITORY: CONSTRUCTING A NATIONAL PLANNING PERSPECTIVE FOR SECOND-TIER CITIES.

DESCRIPTION: This theme confronts the issue of central-local dynamics as part of strategic spatial planning at the national scale. It is concerned with exploring the phenomenon of second-tier cities within the evolution of a national spatial planning agenda.

KEY RESEARCH QUESTIONS:

- Is there evidence to suggest that planning strategies for national territories are evolving as part of a reconfiguration of strategic planning in the favour of place based territorial development?

- What are the prospects for second-tier cities as agents for the regional development agenda?

- How is the concept of territory being interpreted as part of contemporary episodes of strategic spatial planning?

CORE-THEME II: SPATIAL IMPERATIVES IN DECISION MAKING: STRATEGIC SPATIAL PLANNING AS A MODE OF METROPOLITAN GOVERNANCE.

DESCRIPTION: This theme is concerned with understanding how strategic spatial planning frames policy and practice for metropolitan areas. It explores the emergence of strategic spatial planning as a framework for articulating urban governance strategies.

KEY RESEARCH QUESTIONS:

- How is spatial planning expressed as a specific mode of governance in response to the particular challenges facing Europe's urban areas in the context of a variety of spatial, environmental, social and economic forces?

- How does spatial planning interact with decision-making processes both within and outside formal government structures in order to pursue basic spatial planning principles through policies, plans and other initiatives?

CORE-THEME III: THE TRANSFORMATIVE CAPACITY OF PLANNING: STRATEGIC SPATIAL PLANNING AND THE PLACE-MAKING CHALLENGE FOR CITY-REGIONS.

DESCRIPTION: This theme addresses questions around the efficacy and impact of strategic spatial planning initiatives as instruments for the promotion of sustainable development practices at the level of the city-region.

KEY RESEARCH QUESTIONS:

- To what extent does strategic spatial planning as a mode of policy and a form of practice succeed in delivering spatially-explicit territorial outcomes in favour of sustainable development?

- Does strategic spatial planning have the capacity to perform effectively as a framework for delivering transformative measures within city-regions?

CORE-THEME IV: PRAXIS, PRACTICE AND PROJECTS: THE CHALLENGE OF ANALYSING PLANNING IN ACTION.

DESCRIPTION: This theme concerns itself with a methodological reflection which emerged in the context of the empirical inquires. It refers to the particular challenges associated with scholarly inquiry within the realm of strategic spatial planning.

KEY RESEARCH QUESTIONS:

- What are the appropriate methods for the analysis of strategic spatial planning as a mode of policy and a form of practice?

- Is there an effective methodological framework for combining conformance and performance-based assessments of strategic spatial planning?

1.5 FOUR ESSAYS IN STRATEGIC SPATIAL PLANNING

A series of essays are presented to address the research into episodes of strategic spatial planning. This allows for the development of critical reflections of on how strategic spatial planning is permeating public policy spheres, and how it relates to processes of urban governance. These various planning episodes have been carried out against a background of changing governance contexts and evolving institutional and political structures at local and national levels. The case studies follow a number of key episodes in spatial planning in Ireland and include a number of overlapping themes. Four essays are presented to form the core empirical basis for the study, each including a different scale of analysis, a different set of core research objectives – all deliberately set out to address the core themes of the thesis.

Three of the four essays presented here have been published in peer review journals (Essays One, Two and Three). As a result, each of these represents a standalone scholarly inquiry with a particular set of research objectives, a distinct methodological approach, and with slightly different audiences. However, as many of the background themes across the four essays are shared, there is inevitably a degree of overlap in the material and perspectives covered.

ESSAY ONE: SCALE, GOVERNANCE, URBAN FORM AND LANDSCAPE: EXPLORING THE SCOPE FOR AN INTEGRATED APPROACH TO METROPOLITAN SPATIAL PLANNING

ABSTRACT

Based on the example of Metropolitan Cork, this paper looks at some different strands of planning thinking as they apply to the city-region: economic and political arguments about the scale of a city; landscape arguments about identity and place; spatial arguments about urban form; and environmentally grounded arguments about nature, ecology and the city. Bringing together the different theoretical contexts and disciplinary frameworks of these interrelated approaches and relating them both to the often contradictory principles of sustainable development and to the challenge of achieving appropriate systems of governance at this scale, it explores an initial argument for how holistic and mutually reinforcing approaches to the spatial resilience of a city-region might re-emerge.

CONTEXT

This was an early collaborative paper published in the *Planning Practice and Research* journal, which was developed as an exploratory piece about the idea of the city-region as part of a broad discussion around the sustainable development paradigm. The purpose of the paper was to consider the possibilities for combining those sustainable-city approaches concerned with physical form, scale and place with the integrative styles of the sustainable development paradigm within a broader framework that draws upon the holistic Geddesian tradition of planning for sub-regional and metropolitan spaces. It used the spatial planning narrative of a relatively compact city-region in Ireland [Cork] to explore possibilities for a more place-focused approaches to questions of sustainable cities. Cork's on-going sub-regional and metropolitan case study is used to illustrate ways in which diverse planning strands have been combined and layered to articulate a strong physical and representational space in which the planning and governance of the city-region takes place. As an exploratory piece of research, it offers a tentative position on how strategic spatial planning, as an integrative and multi-layered approach, might relate to a particular scale and style of planning within a metropolitan and city-region context. It was concerned therefore with the opportunities to relate contemporary strategic spatial planning norms with the long established place based approaches at these spatial scales.

ESSAY TWO: LOCAL GOVERNMENT REFORM IN IRELAND: AN OPPORTUNITY FOR METROPOLITAN PLANNING

ABSTRACT

In October 2012, the Irish government published its proposals for reforming the system of local government in the 'Putting People First' document and set out a comprehensive programme of administrative and functional reforms of the system of regional and local government in Ireland. If effected, these proposals will introduce extensive and far-reaching changes to the established system of sub-national government and address some of the institutional and structural problems associated with what is an outdated and inflexible model of local government in Ireland. It is proposed to radically alter the composition and character of Ireland's local and regional authorities, by reducing overall numbers, changing functions and realigning boundaries.

This paper explores the opportunities that these reforms present in the context of metropolitan governance in Ireland's cities. Although the reforms proposed would initially appear to relate most clearly to local and regional tiers of government, it is argued that the proposals are also potentially radical in that they finally attempt to address the issue of fragmented governance in Ireland's cities. Using Metropolitan Cork as a case study, it presents an account of how the current proposals may be advanced to create the institutional and administrative space for metropolitan government to emerge and argues that appropriately scaled and properly constituted metropolitan spatial planning in Ireland's second-tier cities is essential for sustained and balanced economic growth as a regional and national imperative.

CONTEXT

This was a joint-authored paper published in the journal *Administration*, the peer-reviewed journal of the Institute of Public Administration of Ireland. This paper describes the evolution of urban government and the approach to local government reform in Ireland. Following this, it outlines the changing nature of urban governance and strategic decision-making for urban areas as a common concern in a European and international context, presenting the idea of metropolitan governance as a national economic imperative. Finally, the paper presents a case study of the 'Cork Metropolitan Area', and based on its tradition

of integrated spatial, environmental and economic planning, proposes Cork as a location for testing a new model of urban governance in Ireland. The research was concerned with exploring the phenomenon of metropolitan governance; as such it attempted to situate the kinds of reforms in Ireland's local government system within a broader contextual discussion about forms of governance at a sub national scale. The reforms being advanced by the Irish government after 2012 provided a potentially important moment for metropolitan governance, opening up the possibility for the institutionalisation of new approaches to urban governance for Ireland's cities. The research used this reform agenda as a way of developing a discussion about the nature of strategic spatial planning at this spatial scale, and in particular to consider the extent to which administrative reforms might relate to the experience of city-region and metropolitan planning frameworks.

ESSAY THREE: TERRITORIAL DEVELOPMENT, PLANNING REFORM AND URBAN GOVERNANCE: THE CASE OF IRELAND'S SECOND- TIER CITIES

ABSTRACT

The increased emphasis within Europe on the role of second-tier cities has implications for the ways in which these urban centres are considered within national spatial planning strategies. In centralised, monocentric states like Ireland, there has been a general ambivalence towards urban policy for cities outside the capital city, and historically this has prevented the development of a strong, diversified urban hierarchy undermining prospects for balanced regional development. This paper examines the extent to which a new found emphasis on Ireland's second-tier cities which emerged in the 'Gateways' policy of the National Spatial Strategy (NSS, 2002) was matched by subsequent political and administrative commitment to facilitate the development of these urban centres. Following a discussion of the position of second-tier cities in an international context and a brief overview of recent demographic and economic trends, the paper assesses the relative performance of Ireland's second-tier cities in influencing development trends, highlighting a comprehensive failure to deliver compact urban growth. In this context, the paper then discusses the implications of current development plans for the second-tier cities and proposals for Irish local government reform for securing compact urban development.

CONTEXT

This paper was published in *European Planning Studies* and shifted the focus towards the phenomenon of metropolitan governance and territorial development within second-tier cities. The research was concerned with developing an understanding of how emerging national planning strategies, combined with local government reforms, might be influencing the patterns and processes of governance at the urban and metropolitan levels. Using the publication of Ireland's National Spatial Strategy in 2002 as a key policy moment, the empirical work was directed towards investigating the efficacy of the urban policy content contained in that strategy. This was based on a comprehensive analysis of demographic and territorial trends within the second-tier city-regions following the launch of the National Spatial Strategy. This analysis was complemented by an examination of the post 2010 planning and zoning regime for the second-tier cities to assess the impacts of the Planning and Development Amendment Act 2010. This legislation had been introduced to re- calibrate the entire zoning and development regime in favour of more sustainable outcomes in planning terms. Using population, land use zoning and development patterns as a proxy, this research was concerned with relating governance and reform processes with strategic spatial planning policies and practices at the level of the second-tier city-region.

ESSAY FOUR: STRATEGY, PROJECTS AND PLANNING IN A CITY-REGION: TRANSPORT AND LAND USE PLANNING AS MODES OF GOVERNANCE

ABSTRACT

Strategic planning at the city-region level regularly involves the formulation of large-scale, symbolic projects aimed at securing certain environmental, social and economic outcomes. These are often presented as key, transformative planning initiatives established as a means of delivering long-term strategic outcomes for a city-region. Often relying on broad coalitions of interests, and crossing various sectoral and administrative boundaries, these projects become core organising elements of sub-regional planning strategies. These types of initiatives often attempt to influence, and even shape, the way in which markets for residential, commercial and industrial development function in order to meet particular social and/or environmental objectives. This is an inherently interventionist approach, which

can produce significant tensions as a land use planning project. Considering the scale and importance of such projects, the overall success of a sub-regional planning strategy often depends on the extent to which these projects succeed.

Using the case study of the Cork suburban rail corridor project (2001-2017), one of the key ingredients of the CASP (Cork Area Strategic Plan), this paper analyses in detail the extent to which the project fulfilled the role as a strategic transformative sub-regional planning initiative. Through this enquiry, the research allows for some reflections on the issue of metropolitan governance by exploring the patterns and processes of decision making, policy development and project formation in a city-region setting. In addition, the research employs a bespoke analytical framework in order to appraise the project as a contemporary strategic spatial planning exercise - combining a traditional impact-oriented conformance test with an analysis of the performance of the project as part of a socio-spatial transformation within the city-region.

CONTEXT

The purpose of this essay is to provide further insights into planning processes, policies and outcomes associated with a major project using Cork's experiences of sub-regional planning. The purpose of the case study is to provide a rich setting which allows for the development of insights into the nature of strategic spatial planning in contemporary public policy settings. The Cork suburban rail project is treated as a deliberate attempt by a coalition of interests across the city-region to construct a transformative planning initiative, which became a key component of the entire city-region's planning. In this way, the project is understood as a large-scale and long-term episode in strategic spatial planning at the level of the city-region. The case study is concerned primarily with presenting a comprehensive and deep analysis of this project as a way of interrogating the nature of strategic spatial planning in a typical European second-tier city context. The inquiry is generally situated at the interface of planning and governance in a city-region setting. It concerns itself with the manifestation of public policy choices which have been created in an attempt to resolve fundamental social and environmental challenges; these challenges relate to issues around economic development, social accessibility, and environmental protection.

1.6 RESEARCH AND PUBLIC POLICY ENGAGEMENT

In the past forty years or so, planning's core approach to land use management has been tested sharply as economic, social and environmental changes have tended to challenge its continued practicality as a means of regulating the process of urbanisation. Market forces, transport technologies, climate and natural environmental change, new business and commercial models and evolving social and political priorities means that the very basic principles of planning are being continually tested. This is manifested often in a tendency to facilitate alternative development strategies and development patterns that encourage de-concentration of settlement patterns/economic activities, the suburbanisation of key commercial and retail functions and the realisation of the kind of spatial and functional urbanisation patterns that planning generally attempts to restrain.

Against this backdrop, using a series of case studies, the research examines how planning attempts to apply its basic principles through planning policy, decision making, and by exploring the normative basis of the profession's activities. It explores ways in which planning policy and practice continues to attempt to support specific hierarchical-spatial development norms in the face of powerful political and economic imperatives that constantly challenge that philosophy.

The research involves investigating ways in which governance dynamics are evolving in response to changing economic and political circumstances, analysing the processes behind these changing patterns, and qualifying these changes by ascertaining whether they reflect a shift towards new modes of urban governance. Researching these phenomena in contemporary settings presents a number of challenges and opportunities; as a result, the research setting, and the case study context, has been an important influence on the evolution of the thesis.

It is my view that this addresses a significant research and policy gap in the context of exploring a range of spatially relevant issues around the ways in which urban regions, cities, towns and neighbourhoods are planned, developed and managed. Recent events and future challenges in the area of urban governance, local government reform, development and planning controversies, town and city centre renewal and environmental and physical planning issues at various scales would suggest that there is a need to pursue academic

inquiry in this direction, and to explore the ways in which planning is interfacing with these issues in both a practical and theoretical sense. The combined essays will contribute to the advancement of knowledge of spatial planning as a particular governance phenomena. In addition, developing an understanding of how planning is governed represents a valuable research endeavour by producing useful insights into the nature of this important activity. Its originality relates to the absence of substantial applied research in this field and the dearth of scholarly focus on governance in medium-scaled urban centres. Its relevance as a public policy concern is also underscored by the political and policy environment in which the studies were conducted.

The particular research backdrop has provided an interesting dynamic. As the studies were being progressed in recent years, Ireland and Cork witnessed important changes to their planning and governance regimes, with the advancement of a number of important developments in the realm of planning and governance at national, regional and local levels. At a national level, Ireland is in the process of institutionalising a new national spatial planning strategy, National Planning Framework: Ireland 2040 Our Plan, which was launched in early 2018. This is being developed as a replacement for the National Spatial Strategy and its principal concerns around territorial development, environmental management, quality of life and social inclusion are largely consistent with its predecessor. At the same time, local government structures in the Cork region have been subject to a lengthy review process, following the government's publication of Putting People First - Action Programme for Effective Local Government 2012, which recommended a review of existing arrangements between Cork city and county councils. This led to a series of extensive discussions and debates about the future of local government arrangements in the region, including controversial proposals, now abandoned, to amalgamate the two local authorities into a single 'super council'. Following extended debates at local and national level, including highly publicised disagreements within the region's political and business communities, the government has signalled its intention (in December, 2017) to prepare legislation to give effect to a substantial extension to the city's boundary - resulting in a very significant reconfiguration of governing arrangements for the metropolitan area and the wider city-region.

This presented a particularly dynamic context in which to study governance and planning processes in Ireland and in Cork, with fundamental changes being made to the policy and

institutional structures of the jurisdictions in which the case studies were anchored. The ongoing political and public discussions around governance and planning issues in Cork and in Ireland meant that the research was being advanced within a very active public policy environment. As the research progressed, important public policy developments were unfolding and the academic endeavour proceeded alongside these important experiments in planning and governance.

Consequently, I became actively involved in discussions around national spatial planning issues, strategic spatial planning concerns in Ireland's second-tier cities, and in the public debate around local government reform in Cork. This positioned me as an 'engaged observer' and I was engaged quite extensively in the discussions in a number of ways. During these times, I contributed to these dialogues at a national and local level, presenting formally to a number of seminars, briefings and debates and meetings about local government reform in Cork. In addition, I published a number of 'op-ed' pieces in national newspapers on national and local strategic spatial planning issues, and on the local government reform question. I was invited to meet with and present research to a number of political and business groupings, to advise on planning issues in the context of local government reform.

In addition, I consulted with government ministers, senior political figures, civil servants and local government officials on both the local government reform issue, and more recently on the research on second-tier cities. I have also been engaged as part of the formal consultation process on the draft National Planning Framework with the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government and the Irish Planning Institute. In addition, I was invited to present research findings on second-tier cities to an IMF/EU delegation conducting a Public Investment Management Assessment; this was part of a review of the institutional decision-making structures around infrastructure development and was specifically directed at the alignment of the government's new capital spending programme with its strategic spatial planning endeavours.

These large-scale experiments in planning and governance at national and local levels meant that the research was situated within a fluid, dynamic context. This presented something of a research challenge, because the various episodes of planning and governance were continually evolving, and in many cases, remain largely unresolved. In

addition, the immediacy and proximity of those episodes meant that it was necessary, from a methodological perspective, to be fully informed about events and developments, whilst also maintaining sufficient distance to preserve the integrity and coherence of the research. Therefore, the author's engagement with those real world public policy developments, as outlined above, was not part of a deliberate methodological approach to data collection or observation. Instead, it served as an interesting frame of reference for the research generally, an opportunity to test the findings of the empirical studies and a way to convey some of the concepts and ideas emerging from the inquiry. These public policy interactions and those experiences within the various realms of politics, business and the media were also insightful because they became important intersections between governance, planning and research, and from which various interesting public policy narratives developed.

The author's interactions with these various interests also provided some useful reflections on the nature of public policy developments, and on the role of planning research in these particular domains. There appeared to be an appetite within these settings for the communication of research around strategic spatial planning and governance issues, as well as a (notional) demand for the production of 'evidence-based policy' as part of the development of new planning and governance frameworks in local and national settings. It was apparent, however, that the demand for evidence-based policy is contingent and limited, and those engagements with public policy were not unproblematic. Notwithstanding this, the external context proved to be a fruitful one, providing valuable reference points for the studies and a mirror from which various reflections on the core research themes were made.

1.7 HOW TO READ THIS THESIS

This PhD thesis was written as a collection of individual essays in spatial planning, which has been constructed as part of a deliberate research programme, and which was guided by a core set of themes and an explicit set of research questions. The individual essays (presented as Chapters 3, 4, 5 and 6) are presented in chronological order, and the thesis should be read as a unified coherent piece.

The PhD thesis is organised as a master case study into strategic spatial planning. Within this master case study framework, the various 'episodes' of planning are treated as sub-case studies. This includes a series of interrelated episodic 'events' around strategic spatial planning initiatives articulated at different spatial scales. These various episodes can be associated with a period of transformation in the sphere of planning policy and practice in Ireland and Cork from the middle of the 1990s onwards. This period is treated within this thesis as a distinctive phase of strategic spatial planning policy and practice in Ireland, and the master case study is constructed to capture this broad transitional period.

The sub-case studies are therefore presented as a series of analyses of strategic planning episodes at the metropolitan, sub-regional and national scales. Individually, they explore different planning episodes - and address various issues of governance, development, policy and practice in a number of contexts. The enquiries conducted within these sub-case studies are intended to generate insights into the various aspects of strategic spatial planning, and they should be read as part of the broader analytical composition.

Finally, Chapter 7 is presented as a comprehensive set of conclusions to the PhD thesis, and these conclusions are presented in two tranches. Firstly, the individual research questions are revisited in detail as part of a critical analysis of the various processes and outcomes surrounding Cork and Ireland's encounters with strategic spatial planning initiatives. In this way, the broad empirical inquiry - set out in the individual essays – is situated firmly within the research framework, and the analysis is structured as a way of relating those key findings directly to the core research objectives. This is designed as a way to marshal the outcomes of the individual essays into a synthesised set of conclusions. Secondly, the final section follows on from the critical analysis of the empirical studies to present a tentative, emergent set of reflections about the nature of contemporary strategic spatial planning – inspired by the empirical work and subsequent consideration of implications for theory and practice.

2. THEORETICAL FRAME: STRATEGIC SPATIAL PLANNING AND URBAN GOVERNANCE IN EUROPE'S METROPOLITAN AREAS

2.1 TRANSFORMATIONS IN URBAN GOVERNANCE

The concept of governance has regularly been employed to describe significant changes that have occurred in the way that contemporary cities in western capitalist societies are developed, planned and managed. It is a widely used term in planning literature, which has been used to describe the collective activity that surrounds decision-making and public policy, which includes the formal institutions of government, as well as a variety of social, political and economic interests which reside outside the institutional architecture of the state. Interpretive policy analysis has served to illustrate that policymaking is not in fact the natural by-product of politics and formal representative democracy. This classical – modernist view of public policy has been replaced by a view that decision-making as a public activity extends well beyond traditional governmental structures and incorporates a complex network of actors, institutions and social economic and cultural forces (Hajer, 2003: Healey, 2006). It is proposed that that term 'governance' more accurately reflects the reality of collective action around public policy than the traditional interpretation of 'government'. For Healey (2006, 95), for example, it represents "a shift of the intellectual attention from the description and evaluation of government activity in terms of formal competence and laws to a recognition that the spheres of the state, the economy and daily life overlap and interact in complex ways in the construction of politics and policy." In addition, it has been suggested that there have been important changes in the nature of decision-making regimes in cities (and states) in the second half of the twentieth century.

These changes in how places are managed and governed have been explained using a number of theoretical and conceptual approaches. Emerging patterns of urban governance have been theorised in terms of a transition from Fordism to post-Fordism (Harvey, 1989: Tickell and Peck, 1992: Amin and Thrift, 1994: Painter, 1995: John and Cole, 1998: Pierre, 1999), in the context of 'de-nationalisation' or the 'hollowing out' of the state (Jessop, 1997: Brenner, 1999), and as part of changes in the political-economic interfaces within urban areas (Stone, 1989, 1993: Digaetano and Klemanski, 1993: Stoker and Mossberger, 1994, 2001: Harding, 1994). Consequently, when interpreting changes in decision-making environments of urban areas as part of a planning-oriented study, it has been necessary to address aspects of sociology and political science.

David Harvey's (1989) contribution to urban theory has been significant, and succeeds particularly in using a geographical lens to explore the characteristics of post-modernism through an examination of its outcomes in time and space. This is particularly useful in the analysis of urban change and when developing insights into the realm of 'place governance'. In addition, this is an especially valuable framework in the context of this planning research as it serves to explain changes in the ways in which places are governed and managed. Unlike many radical post-modernists, Harvey (1989, 328) highlights significant continuities between different regimes of accumulation and modes of regulation in history, suggesting post-modernism as simply another historical development of the capitalist system where "...the experience of time and space has changed, the confidence in the association between scientific and moral judgements has collapsed, aesthetics has triumphed over ethics as a prime focus for social and intellectual concern, images dominate narratives, ephemerality and fragmentation take precedence over eternal truths and unified politics." Therefore, the idea of unified politics under late capitalism is an elusive prospect in cities which are typified in postmodernity by fragmented, disordered governing regimes. Harvey in particular succeeds in describing how these changes also mirror a shift in the way urban places are governed, referring to a shift from traditional managerialist norms to more entrepreneurial forms of governance. This also reflected a general shift to more proactive approaches to urban government because of the need to support the revival of cities and regions and to become more competitive within an increasingly globalised and networked society. In this way, cities are interpreted as *actors* as well as *places* or *communities*, and the task of managing and developing those places was increasingly subject to a process of fragmentation, with the dispersal of power outside the realm of formal government arenas. This also reflected what may be understood as reflecting a general pattern of neo-liberalisation of city governance, whereby there was a general reduction in the size and scope of urban government accompanied by the increased role of business and community interests in decision-making and policy formulation.

Under Fordism, within a dominant system of economic production, consumption and associated socio-economic phenomena, the city, as "a locus of mass production and consumption, social interaction and institutional representation" (Amin and Thrift, 1995), emerged as a site at which 'Fordist' modes of production and organisation flourished. The

state represented the institutional 'guarantor' of the system providing stability and authority as the heart of governing systems, and though institutional transactions and linkages were certainly a feature, national systems, containing dynamic cities acting as industrial engines, dominated (Brenner, 1999). This was a relatively stable consensus – based socio-economic model, which had been characterised by a relatively well-balanced accommodation between politics, market and society. During this period, in Western Europe in particular, the response to repeated experiences of periodic market failures manifested itself in a Keynesian style of economic management. By the middle of the twentieth century, there had been a number of global depressions and this encouraged a demand for new ways to manage the market and its adverse consequences. The solution proposed by John Maynard Keynes was broadly accepted in Western economies in the 1950s and 1960s. Essentially, the Keynesian model offered a robust, productive, employment-based economy- reinforced with a strong welfare dimension that provided housing, education and health. This mixed-economy approach represented a rational interpretation of the needs of the economy and society, and contributed to a political environment that promoted intervention and facilitated planning. In Britain, many heralded this as an inevitable triumph, because,

> *Capitalism was a fundamentally irrational and wasteful process. As the natural world had succumbed to the march of scientific rationalism so must the human world - with socialism succeeding capitalism. Planning and public ownership were expressions of rationality in economic affairs. British free-market capitalism was therefore doomed.*
>
> (Hutton, 1996, 47-48)

Capitalism, however, was not doomed- it was merely suppressed. A brand of social capitalism had succeeded in satisfying the demands of capital accumulation and social consumption. Under the system of Keynesianism, economic and physical planning developed as a key instrument in the drive towards consensus. Hence, during the 1950s and 1960s, planning went through a period of legitimisation, whereby its role in regulating the market forces of development and expansion in order to meet the needs of society became firmly established. In addition, planning became increasingly characterised as a rational, scientific and apolitical activity that strived to fulfil the public interest (Thornley, 1991). The role and status of planning is closely related to the position of local government

and urban politics in political society. In both centralised and decentralised countries, planning is often a governmental tool that is exercised at a local level and operates with a certain degree of local autonomy. During the 1960s and 1970s, urban politics re-asserted itself, as the role of local government expanded under the mixed economy approach. Within this system, urban and regional planning became politically fashionable, as intervention and control mechanisms became more consolidated.

This consolidation of the role of planning in society may be conceptualised as an outcome of the Fordist system that emerged following World War Two and prevailed until the mid-1970s. Fordism essentially characterises the distinct form of accumulation and regulation that developed as governments in Western societies introduced institutions and mechanisms to ameliorate the failures of market-led economic development. Under this system, mass production and mass consumption proceeded and was complemented by a distinct mode of regulation. The mode of regulation, according to Painter (1998, 278) "is the set of social, cultural and political supports which promote the compatibility between production and consumption in the regime of accumulation." Under Fordism, this mode of regulation was an integral element of the management of the economic system and operated as an instrument for alleviating the problems associated with market failure. Hence, intervention could be justified as an economic and political necessity, and was not perceived simply as ideology. A crucial expression of this intervention or mode of regulation was urban planning. Therefore, the purpose and status of planning was strengthened significantly under the Fordist system and this manifested itself in high levels of local autonomy, strong development control functions and explicit social objectives.

It was the state that represented the most suitable political and economic space for accumulation and regulation under Fordism. Within such a system, the urban arena was necessarily subject to tight central control, and for most western European countries became a point of service delivery for the state. From the late 1960s onwards, production and consumption systems in western societies began to reconfigure themselves in order to respond to the intensification of international trade, new technologies and market fragmentation. The increasing pace of internationalisation of industry and trade in turn distorted the Fordist norms, and began to alter the role of the nation-state as the 'guarantor' and 'regulator' of production and consumption. Under the Post-Fordism/Neo-Fordism paradigm, the economic fortunes of urban areas were no longer exclusively

determined at the state and this has had significant consequences for the way cities are governed and developed.

It has been predicted that due to the two key characteristics of post-Fordism, *specialisation* and *fragmentation*, the way in which cities are governed, planned and developed has undergone fundamental change (Harvey, 1989: Mayer, 1994: Jessop, 1997). Mayer (1994, 317) for example, has suggested that local politics have become increasingly involved in more proactive economic development strategies, because it is "increasingly impossible for particular production conditions to be organised or coordinated by the central state." This has occurred through what Harvey (1989) describes as a transition from managerialism to entrepreneurialism, differentiating between Fordist forms of urban government and post-Fordist modes of urban governance. These are related to changes in the macro economy and have introduced proactive, speculative functions into urban government. Urban entrepreneurialism is a response to the post-modern political and economic environment, where locality, uniqueness, specificity, fragmentation, flexibility and change now characterise urban government and governance processes that have spatial dimensions.

The emergence of neo-liberal approaches to planning in the 1980s in particular may be understood as a by-product of wider political and economic processes at international and national levels. Its origins may be traced to the early 1970s, when the Keynesian system began to be seriously tested by global economic forces and technological changes. Improved technologies began to distort the relationship between production and consumption, whilst the increased pace of the internationalisation of capital shifted the boundaries of economic space. These processes re-shaped the political space within which planning existed, in a number of ways.

Decreasing profits and increasing levels of structural unemployment became more common features of European and North-American economies as two oil crises in 1973 and 1979 delivered fatal blows to the relative economic stability of the 1960s. Many western multi-national corporations transferred production overseas in a search for reduced labour costs. The pool of finance from which governments drew their finance began to rapidly shrink, while demands on welfare instruments from those facing economic distress grew significantly,

> *In many countries, this placed strains on the urban political system as local government struggled to meet increased demand for welfare services, sometimes in the face of fiscal stringency. In addition, urban policy and the urban political process increasingly became dominated by the need to deal with economic restructuring and the social effects of these changes.*
>
> (Painter, 1995, 286)

One consequence of the transition from Fordism to Post-Fordism was the re organisation of the operation of the nation-state. The nation-state's functions were no longer coterminous with natural economic space and the instruments of the state that regulated capital within these political boundaries were becoming increasingly redundant. In terms of economic organisation, the locus of power moved from the national level upwards to the international level, and from governments outwards to international corporations. At the same time, responsibility was devolved downwards to local government as the effects of global economic change began increasingly to materialise at the urban scale. The tasks of urban government became more concerned with dealing with the immediate social and economic consequences of recession, and planning became preoccupied with crisis management and social control. As a result, planning activities concerned with large-scale redevelopment and urban renewal were de-prioritised because "*when economic crisis pushed the private sector into recession and indirectly produced a major retrenchment in the state's direct role on development, there was little left to plan for."* (Brindley, Rydin and Stoker, 1989, 5). This served to illustrate the condition of dependency in planning, whereby the role of urban planning had become closely linked to economic growth and decline. Similar patterns of change in the planning discipline emerged in most Western nations on both sides of the Atlantic.

According to Jessop (1993), neo-liberal strategies adopted by most western governments were a response to the transition from Fordism to post-Fordism. The role of the state at central and local level was restructured and the mode of regulation under the Keynesian Welfare State of Fordism was altered completely. In place of the Keynesian model, a Schumpeterian workfare state would "promote product, process, structural competitiveness of open economies mainly through supply-side intervention, and to subordinate social policy to the demands of labour market flexibility and structural competitiveness" (Jessop, 1993, 19). In such a scenario, where workfare replaced welfare as a political priority, the focus of urban politics also had to change.

Urban entrepreneurialism, according to Harvey (1989), is a response to the post-modern political and economic environment, where locality, uniqueness, specificity, fragmentation, flexibility and change all characterise urban governance. Consequently, planning, as a key feature of urban government, has become increasingly concerned with local economic growth, place promotion, civic boosterism, speculation and the construction of place rather than the amelioration of conditions. Therefore, gentrification, cultural innovation, consumer attractions and entertainment have become prominent facets of urban policy, and spectacle and display become instruments in the search for urban dynamism and commercial success. Harvey (1989) is particularly critical of the way planning has been recruited as an agent of capital accumulation because it has led to a change in its inherent values, and the way these influences tend to prioritise image over substantive concerns.

Hall and Hubbard (1996) are cautious however in defining this general shift as one which has seen a complete transformation in the role of local government. They maintain that an increased effort on the part of local governments to become 'entrepreneurial' does not necessarily require a withdrawal from managerial redistributive functions. In support of this, Mayer (1994) views the changing role of local government, not as a redirection of political function, but a consequence of a blurring of the traditional distinction between economic and social policies. Thus, in contemporary urban settings, a link has been identified between the operation of the local economy and the operation of the local welfare state such that "welfare becomes increasingly redefined in the direction of the economic success of the local area" (Mayer, 1994, 32). Hence, the concept of welfare is reconstituted under the Post-Fordist economic model, recruited as another agent of the entrepreneurial mission.

Another important trend in urban governance is the expansion of the sphere of local political action to involve a range of private and semi-public actors. Harvey (1989) and Mayer (1994) indicate that these 'actors' increasingly involved themselves in both the provision of services such as waste disposal, and in creating economic and development strategies at the urban level. Hall and Hubbard (1994, 155) describe this as another example of the "line between the private and public sectors becoming blurred". This has manifested itself in the form of privatised public services and public-private partnerships,

which illustrate both the increased privatisation of the public sector, and the politicisation of the private sector.

Urban governance is therefore characterised by a more cooperative style of policymaking, where the relationships between the local authority and the private sector are based on bargaining systems rather than conflicting hierarchical structures. The mode of regulation of the post-Fordist system has reduced emphasis on welfare and redistribution and turned attention towards facilitating and encouraging local economies that are suitable to innovation, technological change and flexible production. These economies are no longer regulated primarily from the higher levels of the central state, but from cooperative institutional relations at the urban and regional level. This is also reflective of changing economic strategies in Western Europe on the part of national governments who have redirected strategy away from traditional interventionism and inducement-led industrial growth to one where new forms of competitive advantage are exploited and encouraged.

As a consequence of the increased focused on competition within global urban networks, cities increasingly concerned themselves with bolstering competitive and comparative advantage; this involves the development of entrepreneurial strategies and which includes a focus on livability, quality of life and cultural assets in their quest for global investment (Rogerson, 1999). As a result, many of the contemporary urban governance discourses are encouraging strategic spatial planning efforts to address place marketing and investment priorities, in addition to more traditional concerns around land-use, transportation and environmental management. This restructuring of urban governance in response to globalisation has also been affected by processes of reterritorialisation (Brenner, 1999) which involves a reconfiguration and rescaling of forms of territorial organisation within states, regions and city-regions.

2.2 RESCALING URBAN GOVERNANCE

In examining forms of governance at various spatial scales in Ireland, its wider institutional and political context needs to be considered. There are a number of non-local structural and institutional forces which have produced what may be understood as a rescaling of the process of urban governance and decision-making more generally. This refers to a

reorganisation of the geographies of governance with the emergence of differentiated structures of decision-making; this is often manifested as multi-level governance – with a layering of decision-making structures and practices across spatial scales. This is not a uniform process, and the experience of urban areas in Europe is extremely diverse with parallel processes of upscaling and downscaling of competencies with different regions and states following often-diverse trajectories. At the same time, however, it is possible to detect some important patterns in how governance is being expressed at the scale of the city and city-region, and there are some interesting trends emerging across Europe's urban landscape. In the European context, it is also important to consider the role of the European Union project which has encouraged various dynamics which influence how places are managed, planned and developed.

The concept of a 'Europe of Regions' or a 'Europe of Cities' presents a potentially compelling alternative for cities and city-regions, where powers and competencies are increasingly devolved towards urban centres as part of a grand vision for a polycentric continent reflecting Klaus Kunzmann and Michael Wegener's (1991) 'bunch of grapes' territorial-functional vision. It symbolises a reconstituted political and economic space in Europe whereby the nation-state has become decreasingly relevant as an economic-political space, and has been substituted by the city-region as an ideal territorial and political unit. According to Delamaide (1995, 14), the nation-state faced the twin challenges of an intensification of European integration and the increasing salience of sub-national representation; "the nation-state, pundits have begun to say, is becoming too small for many tasks, and too big for others." The internationalisation process underway in Europe has challenged some of the institutionalist generalisations about urban politics (John, 2000), and the region or the city-region therefore emerges as an alternative unit of economic and administrative convenience as part of a reorientation of political and economic space.

This vision has received criticism, however, and has been described as being ideologically motivated and functionally weak. For Keating (1992, 10), "The Europe of the Regions scenario ignores the very real power of the nation-state, the resilience of their bureaucratic elites and the powerful private interests which have been vested in them." This form of regionalism, for Hooghe and Marks (1996), is marked by huge variation in levels of organisation, finance, autonomy and political influence of subnational governments across

Europe. Supporters of the Europe of the Cities and Regions scenario, however, suggest that national sovereignty has been diluted in the area of economic and monetary policies, and that numerous examples of interregional cooperation and city networks support this position.

The Committee of the Regions (C.o.R.) was established in 1994 under the Maastricht Treaty. Its powers are relatively limited in that its primary role is advisory and its decisions cannot be enforced through legislation. The C.o.R. was founded by the European Commission to increase the participation of sub-national actors in the formulation and implementation of EU policy. However, Jeffrey (1997, 256) has described it as "one of the less significant players in the I.G.C. (Intergovernmental Conference) game, and is still viewed with suspicion by a number of member states and, by implication, the Council". For Loughlin, however, it is significant not because of the actual extent of its power, but because it gives a political legitimacy to cities and regions, "The setting up of the Committee of the Regions despite its limited status and function, is an important breakthrough in the institutional architecture of the Union, allowing for the first time the representation of the sub-national level at the highest level" (1994, 157). The C.o.R. does not offer a concrete expression to a 'Europe of the Cities and Regions' concept, however, Loughlin (1994) considers it a significant development in the governance of the EU, emphasising its importance for shaping urban and regional policies.

In addition, numerous transnational local authority networks have emerged which have encouraged horizontal flows of information and exchanges across a European network of cities and regions. This has been complemented by bottom-up initiatives such as *Eurocities* and *Club de Eurometropoles*. *Eurocities*, founded in 1986, is based on the premise that cities are engines of economic growth and cultural, social and technological innovation. It has become a significant lobbying tool and its principal objective is the creation of an explicit urban policy. *Club de Eurometropoles* was created in 1990 by 20 noncapital cities and focuses particularly on economic issues, promoting cooperation between actors within the network such as chambers of commerce, research centres, municipal authorities and universities.

These Europe-wide urban networks facilitate the institutional representation of cities and regions. Furthermore, they present local and regional authorities with an opportunity to

become politically engaged alongside national governments and European institutions. Such networks benefit urban areas, not because of network membership per se, but because of active partnership (Ercole, Walters, and Goldsmith, 1997, 223). Structural Fund reforms in 1988 and 1993 placed emphasis on the concept of 'partnership', whereby close consultation between the Commission, member-states and authorities at local and regional level is essential. This 'communicative triangle' and the concept of partnership is underlined by the principle of subsidiarity which arose out of the Maastricht Treaty. Whilst there are different perspectives on the political meaning of the concept of subsidiarity and what it entails, for the European Commission, it refers to the increased involvement of local and regional actors in the decision making process, particularly in relation to the coordination and implementation of Structural Funds.

The growth of formal and informal urban networks, urban and regional institutions such as the C.o.R. and the increasing emphasis on partnership and subsidiarity has contributed to the development of an urban and regional salience within the EU context. This has been supported by the EU's funding models and its territorial cooperation agenda more broadly, which have been directed more explicitly towards the principle of cohesion. This is expressed for example through various applications of high-level policies such as the ESDP and funding mechanisms like INTERREG. However, it is apparent that a pan-European form of urban governance has not yet emerged (Jones and MacLeod, 2004) and there are significant variations between member states.

It is important instead to acknowledge that new forms of governance occur as part of the ongoing process of the restructuring and subsequent rescaling of urban, regional and national institutions and governing arrangements within the context of global and European forces. Key actors and players in European cities, at the same time, have more potential for proactive engagement with a range of economic, social and environmental issues, in relation to urban development, funding and decision-making. At both state and EU level, there has been an increasing awareness of the important role of cities and regions in securing economic success. As a result, they are beginning to respond to a reconstituted political and economic arena and assert their credentials as important players within a global and European setting. These developments, which have been facilitated under a broad globalisation/Europeanisation agenda, have reconfigured the territorial framework

of governance for city-regions in Europe – establishing a wider institutional context in which urban areas operate.

According to Christiansen (1999), there has been a move away from the simplistic dichotomies such as Europe of nation-states/Europe of the regions, towards a 'New European Regionalism' which signifies a strengthened political and economic position for European cities and regions, without suggesting the functional redundancy of the nation-state. This has been characterised as a "third level of government in Europe" (Jeffrey, 1997, 45) and representing "patterns of multilevel governance" (Benz and Eberlein, 1999, 331). Both of these perspectives declare that the nation-state remains a central political 'hub' within the European system, but as only one component within multiple layers of authority. Describing this new regionalism in its simplest form, O'Sullivan (1995, 3) defines it "in terms of a shift from traditional forms of regional policy based on central government intervention to one where sub-national authorities take a greater responsibility in promoting economic development." This definition describes a combination of two processes, firstly a 'top-down' influence arising out of E.U. policy changes and, secondly, a 'bottom-up' approach indicating an assertiveness on behalf of cities and regions.

At both state and E.U. level, there has been an increasing awareness of the important role of cities and regions in securing economic success. In many European states, the development and enhancement of political institutions active at a regional level encouraged urban/regional interests to become more proactive in the development of strategies aimed at attracting international investment and securing financial aid from European institutions. In addition, the acceleration of European integration processes combined with decentralisation initiatives created opportunities for those regional interests – including municipal authorities at city and regional level, regional associations and regionalist political groupings - to promote what may be understood as a regionalist agenda within Europe (Hooghe and Keating, 1994). These dynamics created opportunities for regional and national interests to mobilise and become more active as agents within the sphere of international governance and more influential as locally-constituted governing institutions.

The influence of globalisation on the re-scaling of urban governance is also well documented. According to Brenner (2003, 299) the transformation of urban areas in

response to globalisation can be understood using an approach "that is explicitly attuned to the intimate links between urbanization processes and the continually evolving spatialities of state power under capitalism." For Brenner (2003), capitalism, and its continually evolving character, provides the context for a rescaling of power within states and around cities and city-regions. Changes in the nature of capitalism, the modes of production and consumption and the regimes of accumulation, have produced a system of governance that is inherently shaped by globalisation tendencies. This has encouraged the development of new institutional and regulatory frameworks, and has generated substantial changes in the socioeconomic and functional operation of cities. According to Brenner (1999, 2003), rescaling within states is a product of capitalist globalisation, and the subsequent reordering of governance comes about as a consequence of power transferring away from the state and state institutions.

This has territorial as well as political implications, with opportunities emerging for places (constituted by coalitions of public and private interests) to enhance their capacity to strategise, to plan and to develop. State power, on one hand, is transferred upwards to supra- national institutions such as the European Union and on the other hand, it is transferred downwards to regional and city-region levels. This rescaling has produced governance dynamics which have empowered subnational, regional and metropolitan entities. These entities are now regularly engaged in the kind of strategy development and policymaking which was commonly undertaken by centralised state governments and their institutions. "Contemporary local and regional states no longer operate as the managerial agents of nationally scaled collective consumption programs but serve as entrepreneurial agencies of 'state-financed capital' oriented toward maintaining and enhancing the locational advantages of their delineated territorial jurisdictions" (Brenner 1999, 440).

Hence, it is proposed that the redistribution and fragmentation of state power, precipitated by the advance of globalisation, has served a new regionalism agenda; accordingly, metropolitan governance no longer functions as a way of managing national level Keynesianism, and its rationale now is based on enhancing the locational and place-based advantages of metropolitan areas in an increasingly competitive global context. This competitive tendency is expressed as a form of 'civic boosterism' (Boyle, 1997), with cities and regions increasingly becoming preoccupied with securing economic prosperity against a background of intense national and international competition for investment. It is

important to note however that the increased salience of cities and regions as relevant and influential governance entities has not been based on the wholesale redistribution of formal competencies from the centre downwards. The political autonomy of metropolitan areas in Europe varies significantly across states, and there has not been a consistent, universal pattern of devolution which has empowered cities. Instead, these metropolitan areas have widened and deepened their scope for action through a gradual strengthening of their governance capacity.

The scope and impact of this rescaling for urban areas has been experienced in different ways, and urban areas respond according to their political and administrative traditions, their economic and social circumstances and the extent to which those places perform local, regional or international functions (Savitch et al, 2002). Therefore, the rescaling processes, and its manifestations at the scale of the city or city-region will vary depending on local specificities. For Storper (2011), globalisation has brought about a renewed territorial order, which has introduced new spatial dynamics and fundamental changes to long-established social, political, and economic relationships. Although the influence of globalisation may be expected to have undermined the importance of both distance and locality, the phenomenon of place and the importance of territory does not appear to have dissipated. Urban locations have retained and perhaps even consolidated their important central positions within global economic networks. In addition, the ongoing integration of urban centres into global economic systems has changed the relationship between regions, nations and cities, which has contributed to the emergence of new forms and scales of governance. This has served to increase the relevance of cities as part of global economic networks.

These transformations are also extremely fluid. Swyngedouw (2000, 68) contends that "the production of space through the perpetual reworking of the geographies of capital circulation and accumulation junks existing spatial configurations and scales of governance, and produces new ones in the process". These processes can produce wholesale transformations in the spatial scales of governance, and in how the various levels of governance interact with one another. Therefore, the re-scaling of urban governance is not a neat linear process of devolution and empowerment; rather it is part of a complex reordering of governing conditions and dynamics which produces differentiated outcomes in different urban contexts. However, there is a consistent theme evolving as part of these

changes – that is the new compositions of power and governance capacity at the level of metropolitan areas. As urban areas are increasingly presented as the building blocks of national economies, these new governance patterns and processes are usually focused on the development of urban competitiveness within a global setting. This research attempts to situate the changing nature of decision-making and city governance within this broader structural and institutional framework, and is concerned with determining if the way in which spatial planning projects, policies and programmes are being managed reflects these global influences.

2.3 THE CITY-REGION AND GOVERNANCE DYNAMICS

Significant changes have occurred in the decision-making environments of European cities over the past few decades; these changes highlight the increasing importance of territorially-coherent governing spaces at an extra-urban and sub-national level. The increased movement of goods, services and information across borders has caused regions to become increasingly vulnerable to what would have previously have been considered external processes (Christopherson, et al, 2010). Greater international competition and the hypermobility of capital and investment have meant that the fortunes of urban areas have become increasingly dependent on international investment and on decisions made beyond the local and national context (Buck et al, 2005: Harding, 1997: John and Cole, 1998: John, 2001). These structural economic dynamics and new political challenges indicate clearly that in an era of competitiveness, flux, mobility and technology - place and space still matter, and the way that metropolitan areas are managed and developed can have important implications for their resilience and economic prospects (Harding, 2005).

These changes have been explained by the need for urban areas to foster an economic dynamism to guarantee future success within an increasingly competitive global economy, and a broad appreciation of the importance of geography in development dynamics (Diamond, 1997). This has been occurring alongside an increasing fragmentation of decision-making and a proliferation of institutions at local and regional levels (Kearns and Paddison, 2000: Rodríguez-Pose, 2013) and has introduced challenges of complexity and compatibility due to the multitude of decision-making structures, interests and the emergence of multi-level governing environments (Benz and Eberlein, 1999).

This has occurred alongside the emergence of the city-region as an important governance phenomenon. City-regions, in a remarkably simple definition provided by Harding et al, 2006, 5), "…are the enlarged territories from which core urban areas draw people for work and services such as shopping, education, health, leisure and entertainment". These enlarged functional territories have become interesting governance spaces as urban expansion and new geographies of development increasingly disrupt established administrative-political norms. The expansion of urban centres has created new dynamics between cities and their hinterlands (Sellers and Hoffmann-Martintot, 2005), which suggests that the challenges of fragmentation and coordination demand a strong response from governments.

The complexity of the institutional landscape and the density of agencies and actors operating in the urban arena have also encouraged sectoralisation in the way urban issues are being addressed. Whereas traditional urban planning models usually attempted to integrate a variety of policy strands as a way of tackling urban and regional planning issues, increased specialisation has tended to encourage the segregation of policy activity into discrete silos (Carley, 2000). As a result, economic, environmental, social and physical issues around urban areas tended to emerge within highly complex and often incoherent policy settings, with incongruous spatial and temporal frames and scales of operation.

The relatively recent, renewed academic attention on the city-region can be traced to Scott's et al's (2001) edited book on global city-regions. This work put forward the idea that city-regions at this scale in particular were becoming an important territorial and institutional phenomenon and would define a new phase in the development of capitalism at a global scale. The concept has subsequently emerged as a popular normative concept within academic and policymaking circles and it has been used, not unproblematically, as a way to understand new dynamics of urban and regional change in a globalised economic and social order. Harrison (2015) identifies three analytical conceptions of this new regionalism. Firstly, city-regions are understood as agglomerations of productive economic and social activity concentrated and scattered over extensive metropolitan areas; secondly, city-regions are presented as a strategic level of policy-making and administration extending beyond traditional administrative boundaries to include wider hinterlands;

thirdly, city-regions are invoked as part of relational geography and are presented as part of a system or network of settlements across space.

For Jones et al (2015) there is a close association between the emergence of city-regions and new expressions of economic development. This suggests that the prominence of city-regions can be attributed to a scale at which economic development is understood to be derived. It is sometimes argued that existing administrative and policy boundaries fail to reflect adequately these economic spaces. This is associated with "the Neo-liberal loosening of economic territorial boundaries" (Jones et al, 2015, 15), and with urban areas actively seeking new ways to secure competitive advantage as part of a global economic landscape. However, the authors criticise the overly deterministic understanding of city-regions in practice and the narrow economic perspective from which this is formulated. Instead, there is an argument for a diversity of understandings of territorial models and a more pluralistic interpretation that allows for considerations in terms of social and political administrative institutional innovation.

This also serves as a reminder that the city-region concept is not very new. It can be traced to the work of Patrick Geddes and his work as the founding father of city and regional planning. This was an important development of an analytical concept in planning that encouraged that the idea of thinking beyond the city edge and to consider hinterlands as part of the urban question. The city-region concept as a relatively modern phenomenon however was also inspired by the work of Robert Dickinson. Dickinson (1967) suggested that the city-region concept should be considered as a mental construct rather than a standardised normative methodological instrument, suggesting that its definition and extent can only be prescribed when the purpose of the exercise is understood. In essence, the extent of a city-region will vary depending on the task. The city-region, therefore, can be understood as a technique for governing and planning places. City-regions however are being constructed in political and practical settings as normative objects of economic and territorial governance. Harrison (2015) critiques this new city-regionalism, and suggests that there are multiple ways of dealing with and constructing what has become a 'chaotic concept'. Since the emergence of the most recent phase of interest in city-regions after Scott et el (2001), the concept has been advanced with extensive spatial and scalar flexibility and a high degree of definitional uncertainty. Despite this, Harrison (2015) contends that the concept is a useful tool for conceptualising transformations in

metropolitan areas, but argues persuasively that it needs conceptual and empirical certainty as part of scholarly enquiry and practical application.

There appears to have been a conscious move towards the formulation of spatial strategies at city-region level as part of the response to the increased complexity and fragmentation of metropolitan areas. This, according to Healey (2007, 265) means "shaping place qualities through conscious attention, through some kind of strategy, which embodies and expresses a conception of the place of an urban area." These may be described as 'place-governance and place-making strategies' and are devised as part of wider economic and environmental objectives, involving the creation of institutional and administrative frameworks that reflect the functional realities of metropolitan areas. This is part of a rescaling of planning at metropolitan and sub-regional levels through the use of semi-formalised, non-statutory planning strategies (Haughton et al, 2009). This rescaling process has resulted in the emergence of so-called 'soft' spaces of planning which supposedly give consideration to the functional and economic realities of metropolitan areas by circumventing the kinds of institutional and political obstacles which often characterise conventional planning and governing regimes.

These 'soft spaces' bordered by 'fuzzy boundaries' therefore allow for a focus on strategic and coordinated approaches to the planning of city-regions. This highlights the increasing importance of scalar issues as well as "a greater emphasis upon the building blocks of sub-regions and city regions" (Haughton et al, 2009, 235). According to Christopherson et al (2010, 4) this encourages an explicit connection between governance concerns and local political/economic processes, which "…are at the core of regional resilience, creating capacity, including governance capacity, and determine how vulnerable a region is to events outside the control of regional residents." In this way, urban/regional resilience assumes a governance dimension which highlights the role that cities play in supporting local, regional and economic development - focusing attention in particular on the need for places to actively develop strategies aimed at enhancing their economic resilience and sustainability. This suggests a deliberately proactive tendency on behalf of many European cities and their governing coalitions whereby they become agents of, rather than merely stakeholders in, local economic development (Meijers et al, 2003).

The process of globalisation, combined with the increasing importance of regional economic development approaches, encouraged European city-regions in particular, to consider how best to operate at an international scale. This has encouraged the emergence of strong city-regions that are becoming increasingly proactive in developing and implementing strategies for economic development. This has occurred in response to inter-metropolitan competition with cities "…increasingly seek to measure their own economic performance against their counterparts throughout the E.U." (Salet et al, 2003, 30). At the urban level "…cities strive after an improvement of their competitiveness and hence, a better positioning in the European or national urban system" (Giffinger et al, 2007, 4). Competitiveness and economic resilience are now key parts of the urban development and spatial planning agenda as urban leaders realise that they can no longer depend on traditional political-economic structures and norms guaranteed by the nation state to ensure success or survival.

Parkinson et al (2004, 8) suggest that although the impacts of globalisation creates enhanced levels of social and economic mobility, which might challenge the traditional territorial and political norms for urban areas in Europe, "…cities still do matter - and probably more rather than less…and it can be argued that place, space and community have become more - not less - important for identity and action in an increasingly globalised and insecure world." Their study emphasises in particular the importance of cities to national economic development suggesting that decision makers need to understand the concept of cities as drivers of national and international growth. This study explains that the economic advantages associated with urban development are usually associated with the presence of agglomeration economies, whereby urban centres benefitting from critical mass are advantaged by the concentration, size and interconnectedness of political, administrative and economic activities in space (Parr, 2002). The ESPON 2013 (European Spatial Observatory Network) 'Second-tier Cities' report has been influential in establishing a strong policy narrative around urban policy in a contemporary European context. It concluded that urban policy at national and EU should acknowledge and support the potential of second-tier cities within national economic planning agendas. It also argues for the pursuit of explicit and economic place-based urban policies that support city-regions as well as distinct 'territorial place-based strategies' aimed at developing a strong urban hierarchy which considers the role of governance and urban policy for primary and secondary cities.

The city-region concept been subject to a variety of academic and policy interpretations, ranging from economic governance to political regionalism (Storper, 1997: Kunzmann, 1998: Jones and MacLeod, 1999). Usually, it is deployed as an attempt to overlap a place's territory with its function; describing a relationship between a core city and an associated hinterland in terms of housing, retail and employment markets, travel-to-work catchments and which are sometimes overlapped with physical and landscape features, administrative boundaries or co-operative arrangements (Rodríguez-Pose, 2008). For Healey (2006, 7), the concept is useful for capturing a place's intrinsic milieu of urban life and economy, "…the urban region seems to offer a functional area within which the interactions of economic relations, environmental systems and daily life time-space patterns can be better understood than at a higher or lower level of government."

For Rodríguez-Pose (2008, 1033), the rise of policy-making at the city-region level has also served to "accelerate the shift from sectoral to territorial policies", where social, environmental and economic issues can be considered more effectively. The city-region concept is used as a territorial-economic device that is deployed at a particular spatial scale in order to deal with the complex array of economic and social forces which characterise contemporary globalisation. In this way, it is portrayed as a suitable scale at which to address the environmental and ecological challenges that emerge in the context of dispersed settlement patterns, complex commuting and the suburbanisation of housing, employment and commercial activity. These changes suggest a need for a reconsideration of the way in which cities are managed to reflect the new governance demands, and shifting environmental and economic imperatives.

Thus, the notion of city-region or metropolitan governance is based on a blend of social, economic, environmental and political forces which encourage an urban management policy that is spatially and functionally more sophisticated than traditional city government mechanisms which have discouraged territorial and sectoral integration. For Le Gales (2002) the city-region concept provides a mode of action and a framework for articulating a governance agenda for medium-sized cities as an alternative to the very large metropolitan urban centres in Europe. This is not, however, solely a technical economic and environmental management system; it is also concerned with the operation of local democratic systems. The city-region has also been portrayed as a way to enhance local

government efficacy by acknowledging the functional and everyday social/cultural experiences of citizens, addressing the inherent disconnect between how people live and how they are governed.

Much of the emphasis in the field of urban governance has tended to downplay the importance of fixed administrative boundaries and of institutional factors in shaping the future of cities and regions and in influencing the success of planning strategies. Despite this normative focus on the democratic politics of planning practice, the role of formal institutions and structures of governance in shaping and framing planning practice and planning and development outcomes has received much less critical attention. This is expressed in the literature in a number of ways.

Firstly, it is claimed for example by Nadin (2007) that strategic spatial planning, characterised by strategy and policy, has largely replaced traditional forms of comprehensive land-use planning based on regulation and control. This has emphasised the importance of establishing long-term strategic visions for places, collaborating across fixed administrative borders and operating in the fuzzy spaces [territorially and politically] between city and region and between politics and economics. As a result, it seems popular now to argue that planning should favour policy actions that can transcend traditionally defined units of administrative organisation and bridge the gap between government and non-government. For some planning theorists, strategic spatial planning is defined in terms of the use of *informal* strategies and a deliberate shift away from the constraints of formal structures and procedures of governance (Waterhout et al, 2009: Allmendinger & Haughton, 2007). Nevertheless, spatial planning practice as a state interventionist activity, in the main, continues to be firmly embedded within long established structures of democratic governance and political decision-making.

Secondly, since the 1980s, developments in political science and sociology have focussed on the importance of institutions in determining the relative success of places. This has challenged more embedded forms of neo-classical economic theory around development which exhibits a reluctance to explore the role of institutions in economic development and in explaining growth. The neo-classical economic growth model would argue that urban and regional development depends on three factors; physical capital, innovation and education. Therefore, it is suggested that in order to succeed in economic terms, regions

must invest in physical infrastructure, innovation and in education facilities. However, Rodríguez-Pose and Ezcurra (2009) suggest that the influence of institutions is neglected in this perspective and has argued that in order to understand the dynamics of regional and urban economic development, the role of institutions must be examined closely.

The study of planning and governance in city-regions/metropolitan areas therefore needs to recognise that institutions and their territorial-political architectures matter. One of the key characteristics underlining these trends in recent decades has been the reluctance to moderate administrative/political boundaries or governing practices to reflect functional fields of metropolitan areas and to prompt political interest in this governance issue. There is also an absence of clarity about governance dynamics at the city-region and metropolitan scales; indeed, governance at these spatial scales is a contested and fragmentary concept, which remains elusive as an identifiable political exercise. It is through practices such as strategic spatial planning –which can be interpreted as a particular mode of governance – that we can identify and observe manifestations of urban governance occurring at this scale. These strategic spatial planning efforts can be interpreted as attempts to govern, plan and manage contemporary economic and environmental issues - promoting quasi-political processes with particular spatial and substantive dimensions.

2.4 PLANNING AS PLACE GOVERNANCE

> *We need to understand what the 'planning project' is about in a broader way. In my understanding, the focus of the planning idea is on places and their qualities. It is infused with the concern to shape place qualities to promote better trajectories than by otherwise occur. It involves the efforts of many people, not just those trained as 'planners'. And it can take a place in many different arenas, not just in planning offices and planning committees. In this conception of the planning project, planning activity is located as part of the governance activity of a political community, meaning collective endeavours to manage spheres of activity in ways that would not otherwise occur, if left to individual initiative. Formal planning systems provide arenas and resources for place governance, but do not encompass all of such governance activity. Nor do such systems always cultivate the values that the 'planning project' has promoted. Understood in this way, the idea of planning promotes a particular way of realizing place governance.*
>
> (Healey, 2010, 106)

Strategic spatial planning is often understood in terms of the use of informal strategies and projects, and as a shift away from the constraints of formal structures and procedures of institutional decision-making (Haughton et al, 2009: Allmendinger & Haughton, 2010). However, spatial planning is still characterised as a practice of formal interventionism, and remains firmly embedded within the established structures of democratic governance and political decision-making. The idea of the 'planning project', outlined by Healey (2010) above, provides a useful organising concept – where the notion of place governance is operationalised as a way of understanding how political and institutionally grounded decision-making processes can capture, and even nurture, normative spatial planning ideas. In this way, the 'planning project', as both an object (of place-making) and a process (of decision-making), represents a distinctive mode of governance, from which various environmental, social and economic objectives are advanced. This interface, between planning as a professional activity, and governance as a political process, has become a very important arena for investigating the nature of contemporary planning as a normative public policy concern. Strategic spatial planning initiatives, for instance, become valuable testimonies for, and indeed manifestations of, the twenty-first century 'planning project', and represent valuable artefacts in the investigation of urban change and development.

There has been a substantial transformation of European spatial planning policies and practices over the last 30 years; these have occurred as part of a wider process of political/administrative re-scaling, a restructuring of territorial organisation within nation states and the emergence of new forms of governance at various spatial scales. For Brenner (1999, 2003), these changes have been precipitated by economic globalisation and increased capital mobility – contributing to the disruption of traditional administrative and political norms within nation-states. In place of centrally administered public policy structures, regions and city-regions have emerged within the governance landscape, increasingly involving themselves in attempting to shape economic pathways within an increasingly fragmented and competitive space. This has contributed to the emergence of metropolitan governance which is "increasingly being mobilized as a mechanism of economic development policy through which national and local political economic elites are attempting to enhance place- specific socio-economic assets." (Brenner, 2003, 297-298). As a response to both the challenges and opportunities associated with these changes, city-regions have been encouraged to become active agents of governance and

have become key contributors in the development of spatial planning strategies at regional, national and international levels.

This produces what can be understood as a rescaling of territory and governance (Brenner, 2003: Swyngedouw, 2004) which encourages the regionalisation or metropolitanisation of planning policy and place-making. The role of the nation-state is therefore reconstituted as a key player in, rather than the sole contributor to, the development of spatial planning strategies at the level of the city-region. However, the transformative nature of the 'hollowing out' of the role of the nation-state described by Jessop (2000) should not be overstated. For Cremer-Schulte (2014, 289), power is recast rather than dissipated and the state takes "…the role of a meta-governer who shifts powers and responsibilities to lower existing or new scales, through re-territorialisation and rescaling." As a result, there has been significant interest in the emergence of forms of urban/regional governance that respond to this re-territorialisation agenda; it has been suggested that these governance regimes can transcend administrative and political boundaries to focus on city-regions and metropolitan areas.

This has produced renewed academic and policy interest in the city-region concept (Davoudi and Stead, 2002: Davoudi, 2008) which have served to revive an interest in metropolitan governance, including a renewed focus on the reciprocity and interdependence of urban-rural relations. For some, the city-region represents an opportunity to overcome the challenges associated with administrative and political rigidity when dealing with planning issues at the metropolitan scale. The focus on the city-region concept, according to Rodrigeuz-Pose (2008), also represents a shift from sectoral to territorial approaches to development, which suggests a particular role for spatially-oriented place-shaping policy approaches. The role and purpose of spatial planning as a public policy activity has broadened in scale and scope of the last 30 years, with an increased emphasis of the need for strategy development, long-term thinking, place-making, policy integration, and public engagement (Albrechts, 2006: Healey, 2010). The discipline of spatial planning has also been tasked with responding to the structural economic and environmental challenges of globalisation, sustainable development, global economic competition and the increasing diversification of social and cultural life. This has been facilitated by what may be understood as a Europeanisation of planning policy and

practice which is created an important quasi institutional context in which new forms and expressions of planning and governance have emerged.

Major changes in the political economy of Europe, which have precipitated fundamental economic restructuring towards a post-Fordist system of flexible specialisation (Jessop, 1995), has meant that place governance becomes an important economic instrument. Place governance, however, is not merely a policy challenge for state authorities; the transition from government to governance has expanded policy-making spaces beyond state interests to a wider range of actors and interests. This has contributed to the increased importance of market forces in the spatial distribution of economic activities, and in turn, an increased focus on economic concerns within planning thinking. Within an integrated, global network, where decision-making, public policy and economic activity are increasingly fragmented and mobile, the importance of place and place quality is increasingly emphasised. According to Davoudi and Strange (2009), the increased focus on place and space as part of public policy has resulted in a new emphasis on the role of territory within governance practices and policies. The spatial turn in planning, for Davoudi and Strange (2009), represents an important moment because this return to spatiality represented a rediscovery of an essential domain for planning. Space and place are the heart of planning's disciplinary focus, and the prioritisation of territory as part of the general shift within economic-environmental realms of public policy, meant that planning has been positioned right at the centre of the place governance agenda. This has involved the application of strategic spatial planning as a key policy instrument which combines economic and environmental policy development, and which uses territory as a way of bounding and organising policy and action. Alongside this rediscovery of territory and spatiality, the city-region has emerged as a governance space into which various strands of economic environmental and social policy has been located.

The emergence of strategic spatial planning in Europe has occurred alongside an increased interest in the city-region concept. This has emerged in the context of an increasingly integrated European economy and political space which has restructured the relationship between cities, regions, nation-states and European institutions. This has encouraged a form of new regionalism. This new regionalism however is not merely reflecting an increased concern within established national institutions about the fate of regions and cities; it has become increasingly apparent that the role of the region itself in economic

development has changed and there has been an increasing awareness of the important role of cities and regions in securing economic success. This has resulted in what can be understood as active city-regionalism where cities and regions have responded to the kinds of opportunities associated with the globalisation and European integration. Mawson (1996, 14) for example, highlights the changing status of cities and regions, by noting that "the single market has undermined traditional national regional policy and promoted the region to 'player status' in the global market game." In addition to the enhanced position of regions at the international level, cities and regions have begun to realise that they cannot rely on traditional diversionary policies, and instead are focussing increasing attention on the possibilities for indigenous development and new ways of influencing national and European policies. "Simply stated, localities have something to compete with" (Harding, 1997, 295).

From the middle of the 1990s, the E.U's competence in urban affairs has strengthened considerably, but without very significant legal or institutional changes. Through the advancement of urban issues within the broad categories of environmental and spatial policies, the E.U. has raised its profile as an important 'player' in the governance of Europe's cities. In addition, the significance of the E.U. as the context within which urban governance occurs has changed. This is the result of renewed efforts to create a distinct E.U. urban policy, as well as an emphasis on the concept of partnership at various levels of governance. Europeanisation of policies and actions does not, however, replace national-level policies or influence, but rather suggests that the European scale is becoming an increasingly recognisable and influential context.

The Green Paper on the Urban Environment (C.E.C, 1990) signified a more explicit approach to the development of a distinctly European policy for the development and planning of urban areas, and the Europe 2000 (C.E.C., 1991) and the Europe 2000+ (C.E.C., 1994) reports advocated a spatial policy framework for more integrated and systematic co-operation in the field of spatial planning. The European Commission has been actively encouraging the use of functional rather than administrative definitions for urban areas since the 1990s, and the European Spatial Development Perspective (CSD, 1999) makes strong reference to the concepts of urban-rural relations and polycentric urban regions, promoting functional understandings of space and place rather than relying solely on traditional administrative divisions (Davoudi and Stead, 2002). The focus on strategic

rather than comprehensive planning strategies (Albrechts, 2004) has undoubtedly enhanced the profile of the city-region concept in policymaking. This has encouraged an approach to place-making, environmental management and economic planning which considers actively the relationship between governance spaces and functional areas.

The city-region thus provides a vehicle for operationalising the kinds of action that strategic spatial planning initiatives envisage (Healey, 2010). Accordingly, the foundations of strategic spatial planning 'episodes' are based on a particular approach to place governance and spatial planning, which generate new territorial identities, collective governance and engagement processes, strategic visions and an integration of sectoral approaches in cities and their constituent regions (Albrechts, 2006: Healey, 2006). The city-region can be understood as a context for the conduct of strategic spatial planning episodes, and is now a well-established normative policy concept in planning practice and policy making, where it is being employed as a means of long-term place-making and for enhancing economic competitiveness at an international level (Scott & Storper, 2003: Turok, 2004). Furthermore, it is also contended that the city-region provides an appropriate scale for planning and decision-making because of globalisation, economic competition and the inability of nation-states to secure territorial development priorities and effectively manage the interests of cities and regions.

The concept of soft spaces of governance has also been an important thread in the narrative around city-regions and spatial planning in Europe. The planning and governance of cities and city-regions involves dealing with complex and overlapping socio-economic, political and economic concerns and at a spatial scale which challenges the capacity and scope of established decision-making parameters and political institutions. The concept of soft spaces and fuzzy boundaries has emerged from the literature on strategic spatial planning (Allmendinger & Haughton, 2010), which suggests the need for governance arrangements to cater for uncertainty, complexity and spatial flexibility means that rigid administrative territorial approaches are increasingly ineffective and are being replaced by looser and more strategically focused governance practices at the level of cities and regions. Place governance, therefore, occurs when governance coalitions concern themselves with formulation of strategic long-term place-making strategies for functional-territorial spaces which have 'fuzzy' boundaries.'

2.5 ANALYSING AND CONTEXTUALISING STRATEGIC SPATIAL PLANNING

"Strategic urban or city-region planning is usually about spatial physical matters of land use development and major infrastructure, underpinned by social and economic considerations and community involvement. The decisions to be made are about actions for physical things or policies leading to them" (Hyslop, 2004, in Friedmann, 2004, 58). Spatial planning practices in Europe especially have experienced considerable challenges as a result of changing public policy priorities, environmental and technological change and increasing socio-economic disparities, and this has been subject to extensive discussion and critique (Albrechts, 2004, 2010: Nadin, 2007: Schmidt, 2009). There have been extensive discussions in recent decades about the evolution of contemporary planning policy and practice, which is represented in simple terms as signifying a shift from regulatory to strategic modes of planning.

Traditionally, spatial planning was mainly understood as a control-based form of municipal bureaucracy whereby legal instruments such as land use plans, formalised rules, prescriptions and byelaws defined and controlled land use and infrastructure development. Traditional land-use planning is generally represented as being a passive and localised planning activity which attempts to control development through a prescribed land use zoning system. One of the defining characteristics of land-use planning is its comprehensive nature - meaning that it aims to provide full policy cover for entire territories. With limited resources and constrained power, land use plans are regularly critiqued for poor performance and delayed implementation. Furthermore, land-use plans generally focus on providing physical solutions to social or economic problems and are not equipped as public policy instruments to deal with decision-making, politics and prioritisation in an effective manner.

These modes of comprehensive or regulatory planning are considered to have been supplemented by new forms of policy formation and new modes of professional action. The term *strategic spatial planning* has been used to characterise the form that planning practice takes today. It is suggested that this has emerged in response to the increasing complexity of interconnected, large-scale urban issues associated with rapid and haphazard

development. For Breheny (1991), this was a pragmatic as opposed to an ideological development and was necessary because of the nature and scale of the urban challenges being faced by the early 1990s. However, Carmona (2009) suggests that planning also needed to reinvent itself because it had failed to live up to the grand expectations and ambitions of the 1970s period.

The roots of strategic planning, according to Kaufman and Jacobs (1987), lie in the corporate world of the 1950s. This emerged in response to need for large corporations to deal with uncertainty caused by the energy crises, demographic shifts, changing values, unstable economic conditions, and they needed to plan and manage uncertainty and instability in a systematic way. One of the key features of strategic planning - the SWOT appraisal - a version of the Harvard policy model - became popular in public policy circles in the USA as a methodology for formulating strategies to achieve certain goals and objectives. In Europe, however, the idea of strategic planning is linked much more closely to the idea of the nation-state, where it has been employed to coordinate the activities of different authorities, sectors and private interests.

The development of strategic spatial planning can also be understood as part of the response to the deep crisis in cities and states followed by the interruption of the Fordist system of accumulation in the 1960s to the 1970s. From the late 1970s onwards, production and consumption systems in western societies began to reconfigure themselves in response to the intensification of international trade, new technologies and market fragmentation. The increased internationalisation of industry and trade distorted the Fordist norms and significantly altered the role of the nation-state as the guarantor and regulator of production and consumption. Post-Fordism has been used to describe this new paradigm, within which, the economic fortunes of urban areas are no longer exclusively determined at the national level - with significant consequences for the way cities and governed and developed.

Harvey (1989) described these developments as representing a shift from managerialism to entrepreneurialism within local government, with the emergence of a civic boosterism amongst the local business base and a collaboration between the public and private spheres. As Healey (1997) demonstrated, these patterns introduced a collaborative style of planning cities of many Western nations, whereby governmental authority combined with

private resources to establish informal partnership networks, urban regimes (Stoker and Mossberger, 1994: Stone, 1989) or growth coalitions (Harding, 1995: Stoker, 1995). The move from managerialism to entrepreneurialism involved a more proactive role for the planning discipline as part of the established local institutional regime. As a key player in the field of local socio-economic development, planning authorities were drawn increasingly into strategies aimed at stimulating local development and facilitating economic activity.

For Friedmann (2004), strategic spatial planning is not merely a technical or incremental response to spatial or environmental challenges; it represented a paradigm shift which required very long-range planning for territorial development, which created pressures for new modes of governance and comprehensive, integrated approaches to policy development and practice. This was, according to Friedmann (2004, 52) reflective of an ideology about planning – by planners, because "The integration of 'everything' in policy terms has been a cherished dream of planners for as long as I can remember." The idea that the advent of strategic spatial planning constitutes an important shift in planning is also proposed by Healey (1997), who documents a transformation in what planning and planners were doing and why they were doing it. This form of practice, for (Healey, 1997, 245) "… aims to change cultural conceptions, systems of understanding and systems of meaning. It is more than just producing collective decisions. It is about shifting and re-shaping *convictions*." This also shaped *how* planners were going about the business of *doing* planning. Planning became concerned with shaping and influencing policies and decisions made by non-planning interests and Healey (1997) argues that strategic spatial planning needed to involve creating and reaching consensus with stakeholders.

The emergence of strategic spatial planning in Europe also reflects the evolution of European spatial planning policy. In 1990, the Green Paper on the Urban Environment (C.E.C, 1990) was published, and can be taken as representing the beginning of a more proactive approach to the development of a Europe-wide policy for urban areas. The Europe 2000 report (C.E.C., 1991), in particular, represented the initiation of a spatial planning framework which sought to promote an effective spatial policy that would be able to confront the disadvantages of peripherality, through a strategy aimed at improving infrastructural and economical accessibility. Thus, although it did not create a detailed strategic spatial planning framework, it did identify important spatially- related themes that

needed to be addressed. The analysis presented in Europe 2000 was extended in Europe 2000+ (C.E.C., 2000), and argued for more integrated and systematic co-operation in the field of spatial planning.

The publication of the European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP) (Committee on Spatial Development, 1999) and the foregrounding of the principle of territorial cohesion into policy has highlighted the increased importance of spatial thinking and socio-economic development in the context of the European Union (CEC, 2008: Faludi, 2007, 2010). The gradual emergence of a European competence in planning, favouring integration in spatial equity and sectoral policy terms, has served to encourage an approach to spatial planning that emphasises strategic thinking, long term planning, policy coordination and spatially explicit policies at the city-region and regional scales.

In his conclusions on strategic planning efforts in London in the 1960s and 1970s, Hart (1976) suggested that many of the typical planning aspirations of that era were politically or economically unrealistic because the traditional 'hard' planning approaches tended to focus on outcomes at the expense of processes. The comprehensive nature of planning in that era related to the plans, but not the planning and implementation. To reflect the need for a more strategic approach to the delivery of planning ideas, Hart (1976, 206) argues that "A much looser-woven planning strategy supplemented by a regularly and systematically up-dated set of documents would seem to be useful in the near future and would take cognizance of planning's iterative character. Disjointed incrementation might then be replaced by a kind of 'joined incrementalism'. Here, the emphasis lies very much in the need to consider the *processes* of planning - with Hart (1976) advocating an approach that combines the hard and comprehensive planning mechanisms with softer and more strategic modes of practice and policy formulation.

Strategic approaches and perspectives for cities and city-regions have become widely popular across Europe by the 1990s (Albrechts, 1999: Albrechts et al, 2003: CEC, 1997: Healey et al, 1998: Healey, 2003: Faludi and Salet, 2017: Kreukels, 1999: Salet and Faludi, 2000). It is commonplace to reflect nowadays that there has been an orderly shift from regulation towards active sustainable development based upon visioning, action and collaboration (Van den Broeck et al, 2010). However, it is overly simplistic to conclude that strategic spatial planning has simply replaced traditional land use planning as a new and

different form of professional and public policy practice. Instead, it may be conceived of as an alternative approach to planning that takes a more integrative and strategic focus to place-making and territorial development. The simple dichotomy of traditional land use planning (short term and comprehensive) and strategic spatial planning (long term and strategic) is also questioned by Wievel (2004, 62) who contends that "Planners have always used distinctions between comprehensive and strategic planning to acknowledge that some things have to be done with current means, in the context of current circumstances (strategic), while we simultaneously have to analyse long-term trends, constraints and opportunities—be comprehensive." This suggests a more sophisticated representation of strategic spatial planning is necessary, and that it is useful to think of strategic spatial planning as a method or mode of planning as opposed to a discrete planning philosophy.

Albrechts (2004, 747) emphasises its specific institutional and territorial characteristics, suggesting that "strategic spatial planning is a public-sector-led socio-spatial process through which a vision, actions, and means for implementation are produced that shape and frame what a place is and may become." This definition is expanded by Oosterlynck et al (2010, 3) emphasising a normative purpose, suggesting that strategic spatial planning should also be "transformative and integrative." Again, in characterising the subject in this way, overly simplistic comparisons with land use planning are possibly unhelpful. Traditional, comprehensive land use planning systems historically have allowed for grand and ambitious cross-boundary and cross-sectoral planning visions like the Copenhagen Finger Plan (1947) and the Greater London Plan (1944) and can be said to be strategic, socio-spatial and visionary – attributes usually reserved for contemporary expressions of strategic planning.

For Bryson (2004, 57), strategic spatial planning cannot be understood as a single object or process, "…but a set of concepts, procedures, and tools that may be used selectively for different purposes in different situations". Furthermore, he suggests that the objective of strategic spatial planning is not necessarily the production of a plan, and that its primary objective is to help influence decision making amongst various stakeholders and guide what organizations and institutions do. This approach can be considered as a transformative practice (Albrechts, 2006: Van den Broeck et al, 2010) which pursues spatial interventions as a means of delivering social and environmental objectives. These are often

expressed as integrative, cross-sectoral policy arenas which aim to influence decisions and shape places through concept and visions, coordinated actions and political action.

A comprehensive review of strategic spatial planning is provided by Albrechts (2004) which includes a consideration of what is distinctive about this form of planning practice. The following key distinctive features of strategic planning are identified Albrechts (2004, 747);

- It focuses on a limited range of strategic issues;
- It adopts a critical review of environmental capacity and sensitivities using a SWOT approach;
- It considers the influence of externalities;
- It considers the scope of existing resources;
- It assembles a diverse range of interests and at multiple levels of governance;
- It produces a long term vision or strategy;
- It reflects on power structures, considers uncertainty and competing values;
- It develops planning content, images and frameworks for decisions;
- It develops new ideas and ways of progressing these;
- It considers ways of building agreements, ways of organizing and mobilizing;
- It is focused on decisions; and
- It provides for monitoring, feedback, revisions.

This is a very broad and exhaustive definition, but for Albrechts (2004), reflects the diverse nature of contemporary planning practice and policy. The wide range of issues and interests that have emerged around the norms of sustainable development for instance – reflects the need for citizen and business involvement in a very wide variety of fields. Policy making and planning practice have to address numerous and complex environmental, social and economic concerns and the modes of practice are certainly more diffuse than what was generally associated with traditional land use planning and plan-making.

Strategic spatial planning therefore can be seen as a collection of a broad range of planning activities (Albrechts, 2004), which attempts to achieve long term strategic goals by employing a range of technical and political efforts aimed at influencing decisions about land use, infrastructure and investment (Faludi, 2000). Critically, it is inherently concerned with *places* – neighbourhoods, towns, cities, city-regions, regions and national territories,

and the essential component is a spatial one; in this way, territories are used as spatial units for integrating different economic, environmental, cultural and social policy agendas – with a particular emphasis on spatial quality and spatial equity. This interpretation suggests that strategic spatial planning is more than a technical feature of place governance and that it needs to be understood within planning's normative framework.

This idea of the common good underpins the normative basis of planning, whereby its activities are rooted firmly in an established philosophy which holds that common [social] interests should prevail over private [individual] interests. Although the concept is ill defined (Campbell and Marshall, 2000), it supports the legitimacy of planning as a public and political activity – referring to what may be understood as a civic constituency, ensuring that the process of physical change through the act of development is regulated to protect common/pubic interests. This relationship disguises an inherent contradiction in that the planning system at the same time protects and maintains individual interests by providing statutory protection to people's private property rights, although these rights are limited by the very existence of rules and restrictions governing these.

Planning has traditionally functioned through public actions and using the system of government enacted at different spatial scales [international, national, regional, metropolitan, city and neighbourhood]. Planning practice has relied on that somewhat simplistic, yet ambitious, understanding, whereby its role can be viewed as one of protecting society from the negative externalities that are created by economic activity and protecting the environment from the effects of markets and the outputs of a functioning society. In this way, it is often thought of as a vocational profession, which attests to its role as providing social and environmental advocacy in the face of increasingly influential economically oriented approaches. It attempts to mediate these conflicting interests, often in highly codified and legally circumscribed statutory powers, with a legitimacy derived from democratic controls [through plan making and permissive development control powers] which are directed towards protecting the common good.

Therefore, it is clear that planning, in functioning essentially as a future oriented activity that, as Friedmann (1993) stated, "seeks to connect forms of knowledge with forms of action" using rules, statutes, as well as clearly coded and prescribed frameworks for public decision making that are politically and socially explicit, is a field that is acutely aware of its

normative underpinnings. Modern planning as a discipline emerged in the mid-nineteenth century as a reaction to the conditions if the urban working classes of industrial cities with a particular focus on public health and housing. The result was the planning system of land use zoning – used to separate non-conforming and conflicting urban activities, which also provided for green space, parks, social and education facilities, employment and infrastructure provision – all aimed at creating liveable and attractive places. Thus, it has a long-established concern with living conditions, and an interest in creating comprehensive plans and policies to facilitate that. So, not only are planning's philosophical roots closely associated with normative concerns, the way in which the discipline functions is highly normative in style – through the use of codes, zonings, rules, and ultimately 'plans for the future'. These in some way, reflect what is understood to be society's presupposed ideas about values and standards.

In considering the way planning relies on rules and regulatory devices to articulate its actions, it suggests that this understanding of normativity is derived from a Hobbesian empiricist viewpoint, whereby the existence of the threat of sanctions can be said to govern the frame of normativity. Therefore, from this rationalist perspective, planning's normative basis is a negative one, based largely on the control of environmental and social action through the power of legal penalty. Non-conformance with rules and regulations is addressed through whatever legal system is in place. Sanctions in the form of financial penalties, land controls, custodial sentences are used to administer conformance to the statutory plans and polices. However, it is suggested that norms are not presupposed, and the threat of sanction is not sufficient to guarantee the broad acceptance of those norms. Instead, there is a need for these norms to be justified from 'a superordinate normative perspective' or the moral law or categorical imperative that Kant speaks about or what Hegel describes as *Sittlichheit* - the inherent, organic validity ingrained in familial, civil and social life.

This Kantian-Hegelian perspective is interesting when considering planning's normativity, and there are two ways in which it can be developed. First, it reminds us of the fact that planning's legitimacy is closely associated with the notion of the common good. The concept for example, of the state intervening and interfering in individual's private property interests is contentious because it limits individual freedoms concerning the use of privately owned land. Despite this extremely far reaching power, which pits the state

directly against the market, these powers have been remarkably resilient over the past 100 years, despite the onslaught of classical economics and the rise and rise of neo-liberalism. The existence and continuity of these rules and norms and the threat of sanctions can be explained by the idea of the common good. For example, society is protected from capital when the planning system ensures that polluting and dangerous industrial activity cannot be permitted in residential areas. Individuals can object to proposed development and appeal decisions to higher powers by invoking the common good in opposing development that they consider to be injurious to their property/amenity/liveability. The concerns of wider interests in society are used to overcome a private company's commercial interest in developing land. Thus, the rules and laws surrounding proposed developments are not seen as the only way in which to frame the debate about the acceptability of the proposed development. The categorical imperative – the common good is the test, the means by which the norms are amplified.

The second way this Kantian-Hegelian perspective might relate to planning is how planning relates to ideas of Utopia. As a future oriented activity, planning engages in 'visioning' practices, relies on creating new places, starting over, regenerating, building ideal cities, towns and neighbourhoods, harmonious places, and has long been involved in dreaming up new ways to build new and better places. Thus, the profession continually gives expression to new versions of Utopia – Garden City, Radiant City, Broadacre, Eco-Towns, and the multiple variants of idealised places – from Brasilia to Shannon Town. Planning's advocates are often highly ideological, socially progressive, environmentally conscious and politically active. This has a long, ancient tradition which goes back to early civilisations' obsession with settlement and idealised societies and has continued into post-modernity. Planning is inherently utopian and this is one distinctly transcendent, normative characteristic that encourages collective action and supports the social values that the profession espouses.

Certainly, whilst planning seems to have a relatively strong sense of why it is needed, its normative behaviours have evolved rapidly and the established codes and practices which define it reflect historical, cultural and technological vagaries as well as fluctuating professional and academic trends. In the past 50 years, for example, there has been an almost 180-degree turnaround on how to manage urban cores and revitalise city centres. This philosophical turning point was best dramatised in the protracted battle in New York between Robert Moses and environmental and political activist Jane Jacobs over the

former's proposals to progress major highway building projects in downtown Manhattan at the expense of long established communities, historic buildings and public spaces.

This very public dispute was essentially a fight for planning's soul, a symbolic expression of the gap that had emerged between the rational, technical style of planning and the community to which it was supposed to serve. This pitched 'highways and development' against 'streets and community' – and highlights a significant issue in respect of the discipline's norms. This battle changed planning's trajectory and its legacy is a deep-rooted and now well-established commitment to conservation, protecting city centres, public and green spaces, community planning and streets as spaces for working and living. In addition, it forced a reappraisal about transport planning – where it is more clearly understood today that transport infrastructure should serve the city, not the other way around. This battle between Moses and Jacobs personified a deep conflict within the profession and contributed to a communicative turn in planning – and may be understood as a highly influential juncture. Regardless of what it 'produced' afterwards, this illustrates clearly that the discipline's norms – its categorical imperatives were fractured and were consciously and explicitly revisited, and have continually been debated and re-evaluated to a point where complexity and fragmentation now more accurately reflect its character.

Strategic spatial planning is understood often as a method of decision-making and a framework for action, rather than a device that is restricted to 'producing' decisions. It is a policy-driven style of governance (Healey, 1997) concerning the management of collective affairs. This perspective reflects the view that planning is a form of social practice of governance as opposed to merely a technocratic feature of government. However, this view of strategic spatial planning, which tends to emphasise socio- political *processes* as opposed to physical *outcomes* does not automatically imply the discontinuation of planning's core concern with the idea of place-making and aspirational thinking. The intrinsic concern with places and future-oriented, visionary frameworks with clear social and physical dimensions within the discipline inevitably locates spatial planning within the tradition of utopian thinking.

In any case, as Friedmann, (2000, 465) argues, it may be unhelpful to perpetuate what may be a false division between *process* and *outcome*, suggesting that the two concepts reinforce the importance of each other because democratic processes can only be

sustained if they lead to improved outcomes, "…on the one hand, we need an inclusive democratic framework that allows for the active pursuit of political objectives even when these are contrary to the dominant interests. On the other hand, we need to be clear about the objectives to be pursued. The imaginary of the good city has to embrace both these terms." Therefore, strategic spatial planning can be interpreted not only as a form of practice, and a process for managing complex and conflicting objectives – but also as a contemporary expression of planning's core concern with outcomes and with its ability to shape those outcomes.

Strategic spatial planning attempts not only to manage or mitigate existing trends, but to influence future outcomes that are not dictated by social or economic norms or the politics of path dependency. For Hillier (2011, 504), "…strategic spatial planning represents an issue of a strategically navigated becoming. It evolves, functions and adapts pragmatically, concerned with what can be done, how new things, new foldings and connections can be made experimentally, yet still in contact with reality… I propose that its practice be concerned with trajectories rather than specified end-points." In this way, strategic spatial planning can be thought of as a way to combine aspiration with pragmatism, through a reflexive process of strategy-making, experimentation, adaptation and strategic navigation.

Many planning theorists have employed the concept of utopia to describe and imagine a future place or condition that reconciles contemporary socio-economic and environmental problems. Unlike the idealised societies imagined in literary or religious utopian traditions, planning's utopia is usually accompanied by, and in a way, dependent upon the production single spatial expressions – in the form of places and settlements.

Planning has an established tradition of utopian thinking including the classical figures of Robert Owen, Ebenezer Howard, Lewis Mumford, Frank Lloyd Wright, Daniel Burnham, Le Corbusier – key shapers of planning thought - all of whom were concerned with the idea of progressive social change using a combination of physical and societal interventions; much of this work tended to direct planning towards new models of city building. Moreover, the birth of modern planning as a part of the bureaucratic tradition of municipal government in European urban areas was largely the product of a socially progressive version of a more mundane utopianism – that is the public health and housing initiatives that emerged in response to major public and political critiques of the urban conditions of the mid-

nineteenth century industrial city. In addition, the contributions of people such as Jane Jacobs and Kevin Lynch in the second half of the 20th century have had an extremely important influence on the utopian tradition in planning, particularly their attempt to reorient basic concerns within utopian thinking towards existing places and existing urban conditions.

Through the work of Ebenezer Howard, Frank Lloyd Wright and Le Corbusier, the twentieth-century bore witness to a large number of physical expressions of the type of progressive utopian thinking that had emerged in the previous 100 years, and which was accompanied by rapid technological changes, which made these visions possible. All three believed that new physical settings were necessary to ensure the continuation of industrial civilization and alleviate living conditions.

Ebenezer Howard's Garden Cities of Tomorrow (Howard, 1902, reprinted 1965) addresses many contemporary urban problems relating to urban areas (Hall and Tewdwr-Jones, 2011) and contained a clear social as well as physical version of a utopian settlement. According to Ward (1998), Howard's expression of the Garden City continues to be of relevance in the discussion of contemporary planning issues. Howard's Garden City and its subsequent translation and implementation is widely seen to have led, however unwittingly, to the pursuit of low-density development (Ward, 2002), and was influential in the development of the British new towns, as well as generations of suburban development in the public and private spheres. A regular criticism of the interpretation of Howard's publication is that the physical aspects of the Garden City are emphasised at the expense of the social reform concepts. Mumford (1965) contends that Howard was less concerned with the outward form of the city than the process behind it, while Fishman (1982) sees the models of the utopian planners, including Howard's, not as blueprints, but as models which illustrated the general principles of each.

The Garden City was a new settlement to be built on greenfield land, to combine the advantages of urban life with the "beauty and delight of the country" (Howard, 1902, 45). For Mumford (1961) and Hall (2002), the originality of the Garden City was not in the individual elements themselves, but in how they were combined. Howard's Garden City was a response to congested and overcrowded cities and it was also actively promoted as an impetus to return people to the land (Fishman, 1982). Mumford's introduction to the

1965 edition of Howard's book emphasises the fact that the Garden City addressed urban and rural issues as a single, integrated entity (Mumford, 1961, 35), indicating its integrationist qualities. The justification of creating a settlement on a greenfield site as opposed to an existing settlement is defended on the basis that it was necessary to redistribute wealth and alter land ownership patterns. This, along with reformation of the administration of the city, he contended, could not really be achieved on an existing settlement (Howard, 1965). At a strategic level, the surrounding agricultural belt was to provide access to the countryside, provide food and absorb waste, while containing the urban settlement. For Howard, utopia was based on the establishment of a series of small self-contained Garden Cities which were to be self-sufficient, low density settlements accommodating work, living, recreation and agriculture. These self-sustaining towns combined the convenience of urban life with the advantages of a rural location.

A more radical version of a decentralised settlement was proposed sometime after the Garden City in the United States, by architect Frank Lloyd Wright. Influenced, like Howard, by both Henry George and Kropotkin, (Fishman, 1982: Hall, 2002) Lloyd-Wright proposed a view of settlement very different from either Howard, Geddes, or Corbusier. He published The Disappearing City in 1932, reacting to what he perceived as the obsolescence of the American city, and inspired by modern technological advances in telecommunications and automobiles (Fishman, 1982). In terms of his influence on twentieth century utopian thinking, Lloyd-Wright's contribution is important for its representation of the extreme decentrist view as noted by Breheny (1996), Berke (2002) and Fishman (1982). The proposal for 'Broadacre City' is founded, like the others, on a reaction against the city, and like Corbusier, not only the nineteenth century but the twentieth century city. Its form is not easily described, nor are its urban characteristics easily discerned; three main influences were the automobile, telecommunications and standardised production, but Broadacre was to build on this and allow the exercise of man's social rights (Lloyd-Wright in LeGates and Stout, 2000); in other words, greater democracy and independence were to be achieved through decentralisation (Fishman, 1988).

In contrast to Howard's balanced decentralism, and Geddes' and Mumford's more holistic regional view, Le Corbusier represents an extreme version of centralism, or arch-centralism (Breheny, 1996); like Howard, his ideas had a major influence on twentieth century city planning (Hall, 2002). Bearing in mind Howard's response to the overcrowded cities of the

nineteenth century with his particular arrangement of density and open space, Corbusier's writings reveal a similar stimulus although by this time, the overcrowded city was further congested by motorised transport. In his proposals for the Contemporary City, Corbusier was not explicit on where additional growth would be accommodated. There were, however, some similarities with Howard's Social Cities idea. Indeed, Jacobs (1961), one of Howard's and Corbusier's critics, saw the Contemporary City as a successor of the Garden City. Both include proposals for a newly built, compact central city, with ample open space, industry on the edge, surrounded by a belt of green land, housing 2,000 people and primarily agricultural, in Howard's case. An upper population limit was identified in both, though of very different scales. In both visions, outside this green belt, other Garden Cities would then be established. Corbusier's basic principles were to decongest the city, by improving transportation and by increasing both density and open space.

Le Corbusier's ideal city was based on efficiency, speed and technology; the layout of Contemporary City reflected Le Corbusier's understanding of the importance of the relationship between movement and land use. The rail station was located in the centre of the city, linked to subways, buses, helicopter airfields and an expansive multilevel road network. In proximity, and there was to be numerous sixty storey skyscrapers serving the commercial needs of the city. This area was surrounded by restaurants, theatres and shops with a series of high-rise apartment buildings as well as colonies of individual houses. The high density living and working zones allowed for the concentration of land uses into an efficient arrangement and allowing for sufficient space for agricultural and recreational needs.

These figures and their contribution to the debate on utopian thinking in planning are seen as major influences in twentieth century planning. Howard, Geddes, Lloyd- Wright and Le Corbusier, and their influences on planning, have been discussed thoroughly by planning scholars including Berke (2008), Breheny (1996), Fishman (1982), Hall (2002) and Hall and Tewdwr-Jones (2011). What is significant about the inputs of these visionaries in the context of this research is the scale and form all of their utopian thinking; it is possible for instance to relate the work of the 20th century visionaries to the form and style of contemporary strategic spatial planning. In each case, the visions that were produced – the Garden City, Broadacre, Contemporary City – involved were clearly strategic level considerations of land-use, transportation, open space, and employment. These visions

were set out at a grand regional scale, involving very large scale, transformative initiatives covering broad territories and involving a wide range of sectoral considerations. Like contemporary expressions of strategic spatial planning, these utopian visions were generally articulated as large-scale strategic interventions designed to transform ways of living, address fundamental environmental concerns and respond to existing social economic and cultural concerns around existing urban conditions.

In considering the professional and academic tradition more broadly, planning has become a widely accepted form of public policy and professional practice during the 20th century. The literature on planning establishes that one of its key objectives is the preparation of long-range, comprehensive plans for places and communities – which are designed to influence the future conditions of society. This involves constructing a public policy space that combines physical action with social and economic measures, and whose purpose is to create 'ideal' places as part of a distinctive future-oriented tradition. For Meyerson (1961, 183), planning in the middle of the 20th century was faced with the choice of abandoning its residual Utopian ideals or of resurrecting them, arguing that,

> *city planners ought to recognize the value of Utopian formulations in the depicting of the community as it might be seen through alternative normative lenses…city planning, in portraying a future state of affairs, tries to link economic and social policy with physical design to solve such urban problems as housing and transportation. The two separate traditions of utopia, that of artifact and that of institutions, can simultaneously be drawn upon for this objective.*

Using this perspective, the value of utopia lies not in its expression as a caricature of a place or a spatial outcome in the future but in the manner in which it forces the planning community to think about reaching those places. Meyerson (1961, 183) argues that "It is the Utopian process, the sketching out of the implications of altering certain fundamental features of society and environment, that should be emulated, rather than the Utopian product." This emphasis on the importance of processes is echoed by Balducci (2008), who suggests that utopian impulses in spatial planning are important because the tradition of experimentation associated with such practices necessarily involves communication and involvement of actors and an antidote to the tradition of top-down policy development.

In the latter part of the twentieth century, there has been a decisive turn towards developing an understanding of how planning operates as a mode of *governance*, as an active agent in public policy, and as a mediator between the conflicting tensions between economy, society and environment. Planning is a highly public exercise with visible socio-economic outcomes, clear associations with regulatory forms of decision-making and as a result, has been perceived as both a process and a product of governance. Accordingly, planning theory has been concerned with the normative; reflecting upon what planning ought to be doing (Fainstein, 2005: Friedmann, 2000). This emerges from planning's function as an instrument of government and the resulting concern about the way it should balance the needs of its principal patrons – society and the market. The discipline of planning is concerned with the management of space for the benefit of society; this simplistic definition however ignores its deeply political nature, the struggles around legitimacy in the face of economic rationality, its increasingly complex, fluid and diverse interpretations of itself and the multiple variations of alternative definitions offered.

The practice and discipline of planning is interested in space, society and time, and specifically in devising strategies, policies and structures aimed at establishing an acceptable balance between the often conflicting demands of social, environmental and economic needs. This is best represented by Patrick Geddes' (1915) early work in town planning, using the conceptual triad of "Place - Work - Folk" as a way of structuring our thinking about the relationships between people and their local environments.

Although not considered a utopian in the tradition of Howard, Lloyd -Wright and Le Corbusier, Patrick Geddes' contributions to twentieth century planning, and in particular to the theory and practice of regional thinking, are considerable. He is credited with proposing a more expansive view of the city which encompassed the city-region and ultimately with the foundation of regional planning (Hall, 2002) and is regarded as important in terms of not just his contribution to theory but to urban planning practice (Le Gates and Stout, 2000). In addition, his view of the existing city as a resource – particularly the historic city - and the methodology of survey before analysis and plan, are important elements of his contribution.

In *Cities in Evolution*, Geddes, having observed the unrestrained development of urban areas, coalescing into a single, sprawling urban entity which he termed a 'conurbation', emphasised the need to halt the spread of cities into neighbouring countryside and villages, and kept distinct by open land in between (Geddes, 1915, 34). This problem could not, he contended, be solved by looking at individual cities alone, but by considering the wider strategic view. Geddes, like Mumford, refers to Aristotle, advocating a 'synoptic view' of the city (Geddes, 1915, 13) and the consideration of the entire city-region as a basis for understanding urban development, as opposed to the incremental approach to city development. One unique feature about Geddes' approach is his unequivocal view of the existing city as the beginning of a response to its problems. While an admirer of Howard, this emerges as one key difference, Geddes arguing that it was necessary to work with the existing cities (Geddes, 1915).

Lewis Mumford (1961) interprets and expands upon Howard's and Geddes' ideas, recognising the importance of a regional context both in terms of settlement structure. He recognises the importance of a regional 'green matrix' not only to provide a containing setting for the urban areas, but more significantly, the potential effects of the 'low grade urban tissue' on the ecological order of the region (Mumford, 1961). This regional perspective lays the foundation for much of the kind of strategic planning initiatives at the city-region scale undertaken in the second half of the 20th century. The need for dramatic interventions at the scale of city-region [green belts, development boundaries, compact city policies] all emerge the context of what Mumford identified as part of an unravelling of urban geography. Specifically, the rise of the suburb as a universal urban feature had completely altered the spatial and social context of 20th century cities.

Mumford's *The City in* History (1961) was written at a time when he could reflect on the advances made by figures like Howard and Geddes. He observes a threat that they, responding to the earlier threat of congested and overcrowded industrial cities, had not anticipated: the emergence of suburbia, largely fuelled by the automobile. Here, Mumford describes in detail the issues raised by the spread of suburbia, and recognises the need to strike a balance between the lower residential density [inspired by the Garden City] and those, still lower, which became widespread in new towns and suburban development. The mass movement to the suburbs was, he contended, such that destroyed both town and country, cautioning that Unwin's 'Nothing Gained by Overcrowding' should be tempered

with 'Something Lost by Overspacing' (Mumford 1961, 576). Mumford saw the continuous expansion of the 'low grade urban tissue' as a threat to not only the setting of the cities, but as a threat to the ecological balance of the whole region, identifying the urban area and the region around it as a symbiotic relationship, and saw the protection of this 'green matrix' and the containment of urban growth as crucial (Mumford, 1961).

Mumford's concerns about spatial order, containment, ecology and coherence are presented stridently; based on a belief that those were the fundamental challenges associated with city development. The forms and practices of contemporary strategic spatial planning would suggest that today's practitioners and policy makers are grappling with similar issues on which Mumford was reflecting. Strategic spatial planning is considered necessary because the structural problems in society depend upon transformative practices that are designed to remedy some of the urban development decisions of the past. These strategies, similar to the 20th century urban visions, are presented as a way of delivering radical alternatives to path dependency.

The transformative agenda has been developed specifically to challenge the traditional approaches to planning and development. Its proponents, like Mumford, try to develop an alternative set of conceptual lenses for considering contemporary planning challenges. Albrechts (2011, 20) for example promotes a 'social innovative' form of spatial planning which

> *… Is based on the capacity of human beings – as a response to problems, challenges and potentials – to create, improve and reshape their places with the aid of knowledge (scientific as well as local), innovation and transformative practices to work with history and over, history. This requires a climate that is conducive to new ideas and planning practices, alternative visions and governance structures.*

This emphasis on transformative practice by Albrechts may be interpreted as an urgent call for change, and it contains a distinctive message about the urban development challenges of the 21st century. There are echoes of Mumford's (1961, 601) reflections on 'megalopolitan civilisation', when he argues for the rejection of dominant urban development patterns in the middle of the 20th century

> *… the cyclic process we are in the midst of is not necessarily a fixed and fatal one. On this fact all wise these plans must be based… Our problem in every department is to slow down or bring to a halt the forces that now threaten us: to break into the cycle of expansion and disintegration by establishing new premises, closer to the demands of life, which will enable us to change our direction and in many areas, to make a fresh start.*

This requires, according to Mumford, and expressed in a similar way by Albrechts (2011), a deeper appreciation of a longer-term historical perspective, and a dedication to the concept of transformative practice. The challenge for strategic planning today will necessarily involve both an appreciation of longer term and large-scale considerations as well as a reliance on physical, social and economic interventions that are radical.

The normative genetics of spatial planning can be traced, and re-traced, along a variety of philosophical and practical lines. The core concern with developing ideas and formulations of an idealised and imagined physical future remains, however, there has been deliberate reorientation towards pragmatism and incrementalism – and in particular a concern with the practice of governance. This is sometimes assumed to represent a departure from the discipline's relationship with utopianism, with an assumed emphasis on process, and the administration of decision-making as the key practice. However, there has been resistance offered to counter this particular interpretation. One of the key contributions to the debates on planning theory and the utopian tradition in the last fifty years came from John Friedmann's (2000) open letter to Manuel Castells following publication of the latter's book 'Millennium' in 2000. Friedmann expresses his disappointment that Castells had effectively renunciated the concept of utopianism and suggested that the academy should not, or could not, escape ideology.

Instead, Friedmann prefers to foreground the idea of utopian visions as part of a planning toolkit which allows for a critique of the present on one hand, whilst assisting in imagining alternative futures on the other. Friedmann's utopian ambition, however, is not rooted in physical expressions of imagined places; his understanding of the good city is based on an open-ended, emergent thinking around the idea of material well-being. The challenge, according to Friedmann (2011, 93), was an immediate one; the rapid increase in the pace

of urbanisation demanded that planning envisaged positive images of an urban future – "We can thus look ahead to a historically unprecedented age of city-building. And city builders need not only blueprints for their work, but *guiding, normative images*." Friedmann's contribution is timely, and by doing so introduces a particular challenge for those involved in contemporary strategic spatial planning. It suggests that one of the fundamental challenges facing the discipline of planning today relates to its ability and construct a mode of action that integrates normative thinking into governance processes. Hence, this research is particularly concerned with exploring this interface within strategic spatial planning, which attempts to capture aspirational thinking and utopian sensibilities within a decision-making milieu characterised by complexity and incrementalism.

2.6 ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

In the preceding overview of the literature around strategic spatial planning and urban governance, a broad canvas of theories and concepts has been presented and discussed. This has been used to inform the research setting by establishing a context for the subsequent inquiry, which has been influenced by a variety of disciplinary traditions and academic perspectives around both the substantive and procedural dimensions of place making and urban governance. The review of this material has provided a detailed account of transformations in strategic spatial planning and urban governance, and it has suggested a tentative analytical framework to guide and inform the empirical studies. The analytical framework developed here, and summarised in Table 1, illustrates how theories and concepts encountered in the literature have helped to frame and organise the analysis. The framework has been developed as a critical synthesis of theory in the field, and it demonstrates how these were interpreted as part of the development of the various empirical lines of enquiry. Four broad theoretical positions are used which have been derived from a review of the literature, and are summarised below. The substantive and procedural dimensions of each of these are highlighted and the subsequent formulation of the key analytical variables are outlined.

TRANSITIONS IN NATIONAL TERRITORIAL AGENDAS: RECONFIGURATIONS OF SPACE AND PLACE - Although there is wide divergence across the literature, it is clear that there have been important changes in how strategic spatial planning is evolving at particular spatial scales, and within national frameworks of governance. This has produced new configurations of

space and place within the realm of strategic spatial planning and encourages particular expressions of central-local relations. We see an important shift in how national territories are managed and planned and it is contended that place based approaches are generating new spatialities of planning, new forms of city-regionalism and new geographies of governance; this manifests itself as a rescaling of power within the state and around cities and city-regions. This reflects the capacity and opportunity presented by the city/metropolitan region as a spatial unit which had the potential to integrate a variety of spatial and sectoral policy streams, address institutional and organisational complexity and encompass the real territorial needs associated with ecological and environmental pressures.

DISCOURSES IN DECISION MAKING: STRATEGIC SPATIAL PLANNING AS PLACE GOVERNANCE - The extensive discussions within the literature relating to the interface of planning and governance provides signposts for ways in which strategic spatial planning frames policy and practice for metropolitan areas. Theorisations of contemporary expressions of strategic spatial planning appear to highlight its emergence as a context for the articulation of governance strategies at the city-region and metropolitan level. Planning projects are becoming important devices for progressing large-scale urban development agendas, which are used to capture of a variety of economic, environmental and social priorities. Thus, strategic spatial planning may be defined also as a framework for decision-making, and the production of strategic planning projects at city-region and metropolitan scales contributes to what may be understood as a form of place governance. Therefore, we can interpret the practice and application of strategic spatial planning as an expression of semi-formalised decision-making at particular spatial scales; this serves to enhance the governance capacity of city-regions, promote integrated territorial development and foregrounds place as a key ingredients within the realm of urban governance.

FRAMING CONTEMPORARY UTOPIAS: STRATEGIC SPATIAL PLANNING AS PLACE-MAKING – It is contended here that strategic spatial planning is more than merely a technical response to spatial or environmental priorities and that it constitutes something of a paradigm shift in the normative basis of the discipline and how it approaches its fundamental territorial development and place-making challenges. A review of the literature would suggest that strategic spatial planning may be understood as a distinctive mode of policy and as a form of practice that is concerned with the delivery of spatially-explicit territorial outcomes. It

can be distinguished from traditional practices of comprehensive land use planning with a distinctively affirmative approach and an emphasis on transformative practices. It is therefore concerned with deliberately shaping development trajectories, exerting fundamental shifts in spatial development patterns – and relies upon what could be interpreted as a set of normative principles rooted in planning's core utopian frames of reference. This reflects a core concern with grand place-making efforts, integrative and visionary futures and imagined futures with an extensive temporal and spatial reach. Place making episodes therefore become important objects of scrutiny as part of the analysis into strategic spatial planning.

RESEARCH PERSPECTIVES: CONSIDERING COMPLEXITY AND REFLEXIVITY IN PLANNING RESEARCH – From an analysis of the literature in strategic spatial planning, it has been concluded that it cannot be understood as a single object or process, but as a collection of concepts, processes and instruments which are deployed strategically and selectively. Research in this environment also involves addressing an analysis of complex, interconnected phenomena, and studies of planning and governance need to capture that inherent socio-cultural, political and economic complexity. These produce a set of scholarly and practical questions around both the processes and products of planning, so an effective methodological framework should combine conformance and performance-based assessments of strategic spatial planning episodes. This is deployed in this thesis as a stratified mode of enquiry, based on multidimensional scheme of analysis. In this research, strategic spatial planning is treated as being both instrumental and conjectural; it is considered to be *instrumental* due to its emphasis on preferred outcomes and actualising planning, while it may also be considered to be *conjectural* because it is rooted within problematic and uncertain conditions, and are inherently speculative and theoretical in nature. This is complemented by a consideration of the reflexive nature of planning within complex socio-spatial and political contexts; and it makes use of a recursive mode of assessment that considers the iterative and incremental nature of urban governance processes in real-world settings.

Table 1. Analytical Framework

THEORIES & CONCEPTS	CORE-THEMES		ANALYTICAL VARIABLES	RESEARCH FOCUS	KEY RESEARCH QUESTIONS
TRANSITIONS IN NATIONAL TERRITORIAL AGENDAS: RECONFIGURATIONS OF SPACE AND PLACE	**SUBSTANTIVE** Place-based territorial strategies Spatial selectivity Transformation of European spatial planning policies and practices Place-governance and place-making strategies	**PROCEDURAL** Rescaling of planning and governance Multilevel governance Shift from sectoral to territorial governance	I. Discourses in national spatial planning II. National urban policy content and emphasis III. Reorganisation of planning functions and governance reforms IV. National territorial development strategies V. Regional development focus and performance VI. National population and economic trajectories	I. Central-local dynamics as part of strategic spatial planning at the national scale. II. Explorations of the phenomenon of second-tier cities within the evolution of a national spatial planning agenda.	I. Is there evidence to suggest that planning strategies for national territories are evolving as part of a reconfiguration of strategic planning in the favour of place based territorial development? II. What are the prospects for second-tier cities as agents for the regional development agenda? III. How is the concept of territory being interpreted as part of contemporary episodes of strategic spatial planning?

THEORIES & CONCEPTS	CORE-THEMES		ANALYTICAL VARIABLES	RESEARCH FOCUS	KEY RESEARCH QUESTIONS
DISCOURSES IN DECISION MAKING: STRATEGIC SPATIAL PLANNING AS PLACE GOVERNANCE	**SUBSTANTIVE** Integrated territorial development The city-region as a territorial-economic device Metropolitanisation of planning policy and place-making Combining comprehensive planning mechanisms with strategic modes of practice and policy formulation	**PROCEDURAL** Planning in the soft spaces of governance Transition from Euclidean to relational perspective on space Enhancing governing capacity in city-regions Strategic spatial planning shaping policies and decisions made by non-planning interests	I. Discourses in city-region and metropolitan spatial planning II. Patterns of sub-regional and metropolitan development III. Evolution of planning policy frameworks at city-region scale IV. Collaboration and coordination in strategic growth management	I. How strategic spatial planning frames policy and practice for metropolitan areas. II. Emergence of strategic spatial planning as a framework for articulating urban governance strategies.	IV. How is spatial planning expressed as a specific mode of governance in response to the particular challenges facing Europe's urban areas in the context of a variety of spatial, environmental, social and economic forces? V. How does spatial planning interact with decision-making processes both within and outside formal government structures in order to pursue basic spatial planning principles through policies, plans and other initiatives?

THEORIES & CONCEPTS	CORE-THEMES		ANALYTICAL VARIABLES	RESEARCH FOCUS	KEY RESEARCH QUESTIONS
FRAMING CONTEMPORARY UTOPIAS: STRATEGIC SPATIAL PLANNING AS PLACE-MAKING	**SUBSTANTIVE** Core concern with idealised and imagined physical futures Shift from sectoral to territorial approaches to development Place governance as an economic instrument Emphasis on spatial quality and spatial equity Strategic spatial planning as utopian thinking Transformative and integrative policy frameworks	**PROCEDURAL** Metropolitan scale governance Resilience of institutions and their territorial-political architectures Strategic spatial planning as a decision making framework. Strategic spatial planning as strategic navigation	I. Communicative content of sub-regional plans II. Permeation of strategic planning to formal policy settings III. Spatial coherence of development at metropolitan scale IV. Alignment of sectoral policy at city-region and metropolitan levels V. Strategic reorientation of zoning regimes	I. The efficacy and impact of strategic spatial planning initiatives as instruments for the promotion of sustainable development practices at the level of the city-region.	VI. To what extent does strategic spatial planning as a mode of policy and a form of practice succeed in delivering spatially-explicit territorial outcomes in favour of sustainable development? VII. Does strategic spatial planning have the capacity to perform effectively as a framework for delivering transformative measures within city-regions?

THEORIES & CONCEPTS	CORE-THEMES		ANALYTICAL VARIABLES	RESEARCH FOCUS	KEY RESEARCH QUESTIONS
RESEARCH PERSPECTIVES: CONSIDERING COMPLEXITY AND REFLEXIVITY IN PLANNING RESEARCH	**SUBSTANTIVE** Combination of conformance and performance Strategic spatial planning projects as instrumental and conjectural products Strategic urban projects as 'framing' practice Spatial metaphors and imaginaries	**PROCEDURAL** Strategic spatial planning as a paradigm shift City-region concept as a normative methodological instrument *and* a mental construct Strategic spatial planning as recursive mode of policy Strategic spatial planning as a mode of action that integrates normative thinking into governance processes	I. Framing of planning policy and practice II. Participatory nature of strategic spatial planning projects III. Emergence of governing coalitions and collective action IV. Measuring conformance and testing performance	I. Methodological reflection relating to the particular challenges associated with scholarly inquiry within the realm of strategic spatial planning	VIII. What are the appropriate methods for the analysis of strategic spatial planning as a mode of policy and a form of practice? IX. Is there an effective methodological framework for combining conformance and performance-based assessments of strategic spatial planning?

3. ESSAY ONE

SCALE, GOVERNANCE, URBAN FORM AND LANDSCAPE: EXPLORING THE SCOPE FOR AN INTEGRATED APPROACH TO METROPOLITAN SPATIAL PLANNING

ABSTRACT

Based on the example of Metropolitan Cork, this paper looks at some different strands of planning thinking as they apply to the city-region: economic and political arguments about the scale of a city; landscape arguments about identity and place; spatial arguments about urban form; and environmentally grounded arguments about nature, ecology and the city. Bringing together the different theoretical contexts and disciplinary frameworks of these interrelated approaches and relating them both to the often contradictory principles of sustainable development and to the challenge of achieving appropriate systems of governance at this scale, it explores an initial argument for how holistic and mutually reinforcing approaches to the spatial resilience of a city-region might re-emerge.

INTRODUCTION

With increasing complexity and specialization in the way that environmental and economic issues are addressed at various territorial scales (Brenner, 1999: Storper, 1997) and with distinctive shifts towards looser and more sector-based approaches to spatial planning (Galland, 2012: Haughton et al, 2010) it becomes increasingly difficult to promote genuinely holistic thinking about the future of places particularly at the regional or sub-regional scale. Significant changes have occurred within the decision-making environments of cities in the past thirty years which relate to the need for urban areas to foster an economic dynamism to guarantee future success within an increasingly competitive global economy. Greater international competition and the hypermobility of capital and investment have meant that the fortunes of urban areas have become increasingly dependent on inward investment and on decisions made beyond the local and national context (Harding, 1997: John and Cole, 1998).

Conventional bureaucratic styles of government focussed on welfare distribution, traditional land-use planning and managerial politics have been replaced increasingly by horizontal patterns of governance, multiple sites of decision- making and an emphasis on the principle of partnership and collaboration. As a result, a proliferation of institutions has emerged at local and regional levels (Kearns and Paddison, 2000) and has introduced challenges of complexity and compatibility due to the multitude of decision making structures, interests and the emergence of multi-level governing environments (Benz and Eberlein, 1999). The complexity of these institutional arrangements and the density of agencies and actors operating in the urban arena have also encouraged sectoralisation in the way urban issues are being addressed. Whereas traditional urban and regional planning models usually attempted to integrate a variety of policy strands, increased specialisation has encouraged the segregation of policy activity into discrete silos. As a result, economic, environmental, social and physical issues around urban areas tended to emerge within highly complex and often incoherent policy settings, with incongruous spatial and temporal frames and scales of operation.

In response to this complexity, Roberts (1997) highlights the need for a regional scale of planning as a way to effect the coordination and integration of sectoral activities and

argues for a spatial integration of those typically fragmented policy areas. In addition, Carley (2000, 275) suggests that policy for urban areas has also become increasingly compartmentalised and has led to a "…failure to integrate physical regeneration with social and economic development; failure to link policy streams, such as industrial location, transport and training; failure to link regional, city and neighbourhood initiatives in a coherent framework."

'PLACE-FOLK-WORK' AND 'SUSTAINABLE URBAN FORM': CONTRADICTIONS OR CHALLENGES?

When it comes to the spatial characteristics of actual cities and city-regions, the phenomena described above – which are largely aspatial in nature - pose very particular challenges for planning: they tend to be more concerned with economy, governance and decision-making than with the communities, places and physical ecosystems or environments within which they are situated. Whilst this is consistent with postmodern interpretations of planning as seen from the social sciences and the noticeable scepticism within contemporary literature about the role of physical planning (Allmendinger, 2001 & 2009) it fails to address day-to-day questions for planning such as: what is the appropriate scale and form of a particular city in order for it to be sustainable?; what shape does the natural hinterland of this city take?; what are the appropriate relationships between settlements of different sizes and functions within the city-region?; what determines the efficiency of transportation infrastructure that would best meet the needs of both the business sector and a commuting workforce?; how do we balance real estate interests against the need to manage open space and environmental assets in our city-region?

In many ways these questions are among the enduring tasks of planning and echo the synthesising concerns of pioneering writers in the field, particularly Patrick Geddes who is credited with the first attempts to address the planning of the city within its region (Hall, 2002). In developing a framework for trying to reconcile these wide-ranging planning questions with the (apparently opposite) trends towards sectoralisation and specialisation referred earlier, two established sets of ideas are employed here to frame our approach. These were considered to be useful in this discussion as they provide a framework that allows us to consider both the *forms* and *processes* of this particular planning challenge.

The first, which was explored in a collection of papers entitled 'Achieving sustainable urban form' (Williams et al, 2000), is the idea that the physical form of a city or city-region (including shape, size, density and configuration of land uses) can affect its long term sustainability. This suggests that, even though the compact city remains a dominant concept in sustainability terms, there appears to be no single ideal urban form. Instead, the sustainable city – which is generally characterised by 'strong public transport networks, environmental controls and high standards of urban management' (Williams et al, 2000, 355) - can be a flexible concept achieved through many different forms in different places. For Williams et al (2000, 353), '...it is the job of urban managers and policy makers to decide which pathways the city should take and what the desired outcomes should be...making decisions about the most sustainable urban form *in any given circumstance* (italics added), and seeing it through to completion...'. This places very clear emphasis not only on physical form but also on the importance of place, character and local factors at work in different places. Also, with a growing understanding of the role of culture in urban development, concepts such 'place-values' can be taken on board. These include the character of the wider landscape which can contribute to the identity of a city or city-region (as it might be understood either locally or further afield) and which, in turn, can be significant in an investment climate where high quality environments and quality of life can offer competitive advantage.

The second set of ideas framing our approach is concerned with the way that the sustainable development discourse poses particular challenges for spatial planning and for the planning profession generally. In spite of some devaluation of its principles due to over-use and an increasing ascendency of the economic over the social and environmental in political terms (Campbell, 1996: Baker, 2006), the sustainable development paradigm remains a powerfully integrating one. This is especially the case in the planning domain where, since the time of Patrick Geddes, a long tradition of assimilating diverse epistemological and disciplinary approaches can be found. The scope for an integration of genuinely convergent ideas about the sustainability of cities and city-regions therefore may be worthy of re-examination.

The 'contradictions of sustainable development' as found in the planning sphere have been conceptualised by Campbell (1996) into what he calls 'the triangle of conflicting goals for

planning'. In representing the ways that competing sustainability demands of social justice, economic growth and environmental protection give rise to different sets of inherent tensions (the so-called 'property conflict', 'development conflict' and 'resource conflict'), he provides a useful model for planners and others to analyse the current dominance of economic arguments over environmental ones or questions of equity when addressing the city-region. Given that the task of managing development and change in a city and its hinterland is concerned with timeframes that extend well beyond current economic cycles, the model also allows us to address how the tensions and balances between sustainable development goals may shift significantly (if for example, concerns about environmental effects become more dominant). The remainder of this paper then sets out a preliminary argument for how, taken together, the sustainable development challenge and the question of sustainable urban form may set up a mutually reinforcing argument for integrated spatial planning at the city-region scale.

DIFFERENT STRANDS OF PLANNING THINKING

In this research, ideas about planning for the metropolitan sub-region are drawn together from some distinct perspectives. The first is concerned with the ways in which cities and their hinterlands are seen as economic spaces driven by investment decisions, political and administrative governance and drivers of growth such as demographic change, labour markets and the mobile requirements of capital. Another strand is concerned with the natural environment and the ways in which biodiversity, ecological considerations and networks of open space are expressed at this scale. This is closely related to questions about the spatial relationships - including urban form - that are found within the city-region and to questions of scale, density, and physical land use arrangements The final strand of our investigation is the landscape scale of the city and its surroundings (Selman, 2006) which also has some scope for seeing the city-region as a unified whole.

POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC APPROACHES

In response to the changing dynamics associated with global economic restructuring and the associated fragmentation of traditional forms of urban government, cities and regions have become active in promoting regional economic development through the

development of strategies aimed at enhancing competitiveness and comparative advantage. In particular the work of Porter (1990) on clusters and agglomeration economies has been influential in encouraging cities and regions to articulate economic development policies within a clear geographical setting. Economic development policies regularly promote specialised employment clusters and accompanying institutional structures and capacities to foster competitiveness at the city and region level. This has reinforced the belief that in order to successfully compete in an international economic domain - characterised by mobility and flexibility of goods, labour, capital, and knowledge - cities and regions need to produce development strategies that are spatially and economically coherent (Cox, 2010: Jonas and Ward, 2007).

In the context of increasingly globalised, fragmented and diversified economies traditionally-bounded municipalities are considered too small in scale to manage strategic urban challenges, while the nation-state is judged to be too large to appropriately address place-specific physical, environmental, economic and social relations. This has created new geographies of governance (MacLeod and Goodwin, 1999) whereby the city/metropolitan region emerges as a spatial unit that can integrate the various spatial and sectoral policy streams, address institutional and organisational complexity and encompass the real territorial needs associated with ecological and environmental pressures (Harrison, 2010: Segbers, 2007: Scott, 2001).

Consequently, the concept of the city/urban region has been conceptualised as an alternative governing space. According to Healey (2007, 7) the city/urban region has been put forward as a way to address the increased fragmentation and sectoralisation of policy and which "…seem[s] to promise integration of different policy sectors as they interrelate in places and affect the daily life experience of place quality…the urban region seems to offer a functional area within which the interactions of economic relations, environmental systems and daily life time-space patterns can be better understood than at a higher or lower level of government." For Rodríguez-Pose (2008, 1033) the rise of policy-making at the city-region level has served to "accelerate the shift from sectoral to territorial policies" where social, environmental and economic issues can be considered.

In addition, the city-region may present a more appropriate scale in which to address the environmental and ecological challenges that emerge in the context of dispersed settlement patterns, complex commuting and the suburbanisation of housing, employment and commercial activity. This governance space also provides a context in which the issue of increasingly obsolescent, yet stubbornly permanent, administrative boundaries can be overcome. In this way, the city-region can in theory provide a means of addressing the mismatch between the effective functional extent of an urban area and the often incongruous historical governing arrangements deeply embedded in political and institutional norms.

Furthermore, Roberts (1997, 881) claims that the traditional regional scale of planning is fully compatible with contemporary concerns around sustainable development, and suggests that "…much early regional planning considered economic, social and environmental matters equally, and attempted to express the relationships between these elements in the form of a territorial strategy which emphasized the needs of a particular region rather than those of sectors of production." Thus, it is suggested that the city-region provides a useful conceptual and governance space that is appropriate for integrating the various elements of the sustainable development paradigm. Planning and development policies are therefore being increasingly directed towards representing the city-region, consisting of an urban core, connected to an expansive suburban and rural hinterland through economic and functional ties with horizontal and vertical coordination of numerous institutional public and private actors as well as spatial integration of various social, environmental and economic concerns.

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT APPROACHES AND SPATIAL FORM

These questions of scale can also be expressed in physical-spatial terms, especially when seen in the context of urban form and the natural environment. Almost 100 years ago, Patrick Geddes described his synoptic view of the city-region, which encompassed both the design of the city and the conservation of the natural environment surrounding it (Geddes, 1915). Even though the terms 'urban compaction' and 'sustainable urban form' came much later (Williams et al, 2000) there is a particular resonance with these early ideas about the relationship between the town and the surrounding countryside. Indeed one of

the most enduring urban containment tools of the twentieth century worldwide was the metropolitan green belt (or other strategic open space devices like green 'wedges', 'fingers', 'greenways') a concept which in contemporary times has a certain resilience in terms of ecological resources, open space networks and urban settlement patterns. Though in its original, inflexible and legalistic form the green belt idea is a contested one (Amati, 2008), it can offer a physical or spatial context for examining the sustainability of a city in its region.

In this context it is argued that the concept of considering open spaces as part of a network which is wider than the city itself remains a particularly relevant one in terms of the current sustainable development paradigm. Geddes' approach saw the city-region as the appropriate scale for survey, analysis and planning of the city, and understood the importance of containing the spread of cities by considering the city in the context of its surroundings, while also recognising the importance of conserving the 'city-in-the-region' in terms of natural resources while allowing access to these natural areas for mental and physical health (Geddes, 1915). This holistic view of cities and their surroundings also included the provision of urban open spaces within the cities, based on the survey-analysis-plan method. This approach can be seen in regional plans such as the Greater London Plan proposed by Abercrombie, and in a variety of texts of influential figures in regional planning, ecological design and landscape ecology such as Mumford (1979), McHarg (1992) and Forman (2008).

In the intervening years, however, the view of open spaces and their relationship with urban areas was not always considered as a whole. The persistence of quantitative open space standards in areas of new urban development in urban areas is still evident today (Marauni and Amit-Cohen 2007, Stahle 2010), although there is an increasing awareness of the importance of the qualitative aspects of how open space is provided in urban areas.

However, the dichotomy between balancing open space and the density of built form in urban areas are not, it is contended, new challenges. Indeed, the pursuit of various methods to achieve a balance between open and green space and built form can be traced through late nineteenth and twentieth century urban planning history. While Fishman (1982, 192) refers to open space and density (of built form), as "the seeming opposites of

urban design", more recently, the re-emergence of a holistic approach to open space planning on a city-region scale is seen in concepts and movements such as such as Green Infrastructure, and landscape ecology, as well as those such as outlined by Erikson (2006) where planning approaches are advocating connecting open space on a metropolitan level. In terms of urban eco-systems, among the more important concepts are those of interconnectedness and size (of natural patches) rather than the quality of individual sites (Alberti, 2000). All of these ideas suggest the importance of networks and layers of interconnected environmental and cultural assets when considering the landscape scale of a city.

LANDSCAPE: A UNIFYING FRAMEWORK FOR IDENTITY AND PLACE

The emergence of the concept of a metropolitan landscape as discussed by Van Den Brink et al (2007) encompasses both the city and surrounding open space areas instead of considering these as opposites, and is therefore significant for spatial planning at this scale. In terms of concepts such as landscape quality, aesthetic values, sensitivity and change, the coherency of geographical and cultural identity of place presents further challenges. This is particularly so in relation to issues such as a lack of trans-boundary co-operation (Healey, 2007) and problems of informal blending of urban and rural development at the urban fringe (Qvistrom, 2012).

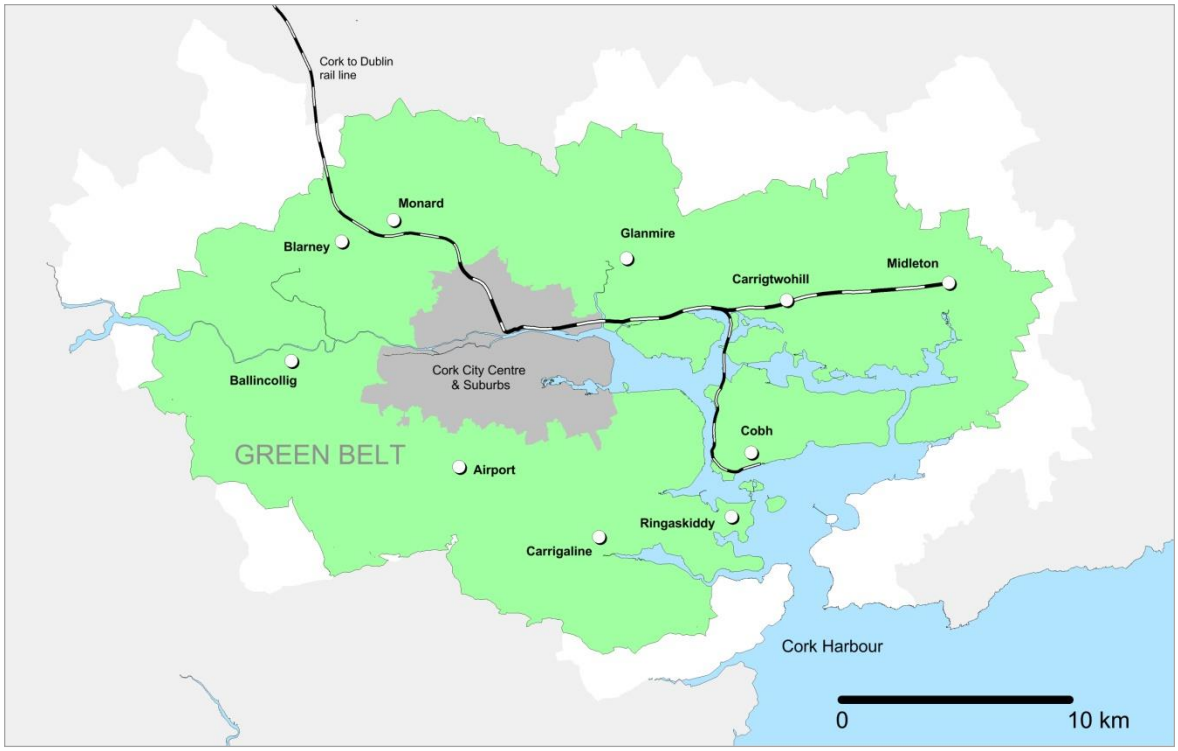
Support for a more holistic approach to landscape however has steadily been building momentum in the last decade, largely propelled by the establishment of the European Landscape Convention (Council of Europe, 2000), with recognition of the importance of all areas, whether they be outstanding, ordinary or even degraded. For planning, which in the recent past has tended to focus on preserving areas of beauty or high aesthetic quality, this provides scope for broadening out a landscape argument for the city-region. This includes interconnectivity between landscape elements and the particular reciprocal relationship between culture and nature (Aalen, 2013). For questions of identity and the importance of place among communities this approach draws on layers of meaning such as "physical and cultural memories" (O' Sullivan, 2009, 406). For Crowley (2006, 131), the landscape is "an archive that reflects the collective memory of people and nature, past and present", and how "uncovering its secrets allows us to interpret history and to decide upon the best

means of interacting with the land for the benefit of future generations". It is these layers and the relationships they embody that define landscape interpretations today, with the added context of sustainable development – heightening the significance of landscape considerations in contemporary place-making. Planning at this landscape scale may involve "the redrawing of political and economic boundaries on the basis of bioregionally oriented relationships" (Selman, 2006, 102). Whilst in instrumental terms the European Landscape Convention is not as powerful a planning device as the directives on habitats and strategic environmental assessment (Ray, 2013), its broad, integrated and collaborative principles offer another important layer for metropolitan scale planning. Furthermore, this formulation of ideas about landscape undoubtedly resonates with the importance – in spatial planning terms – of a responding to 'place identity' in regional planning (Hague, 2005).

METROPOLITAN CORK: COMPLEMENTARY APPROACHES TO A CITY AND ITS HINTERLAND

In this preliminary presentation of our ideas, we begin to draw out some pointers for how these different strands of planning thinking might play out in a typical mid-sized European city-region. Cork is a useful study for a number of reasons. With a very tightly drawn city council boundary (with limited scope for expansion), spatial planning initiatives have had to rely on a co-operative approach from adjoining planning authorities. This has meant that many planning approaches (such as the establishment of the metropolitan green belt) have been voluntary ones rather than centrally imposed ones and, as a result, objective arguments may be made that go beyond simple critiques of government policy or central / local relationships. It is also timely in that the Irish government has begun a period of reflection about what the appropriate scale of city government for Cork might be.

Figure 1. Diagrammatic representation of current metropolitan planning ideas in the Cork area. It shows the contained growth of the city and suburbs surrounded by a necklace of satellite towns (e.g. Carrigaline and Ballincollig), some strategic employment locations (e.g. Ringaskiddy), planned growth along the re-opened rail line (Carrigtwohill, Midleton and the proposed new town at Monard) all defined by a strong green belt.



Source: CASP proposals (Atkins, 2001)
Mapping: Centre for Planning Education & Research, UCC
Diagram Features: Colour green represents metropolitan green belt; colour grey represents contiguous built up area.

With a metropolitan population of nearly 290,000 people, Cork is the second largest urban area in the Republic of Ireland. The city-region contains an attractive and vibrant compact urban settlement, sitting at the mouth of a large natural harbour, surrounded by a planned network of satellite towns and employment hubs, all within a high quality landscape and coastal setting (fig 1). There is a diverse and dynamic economy in the area with a strong presence of global pharmaceutical, technological and service-based industries, a strong network of third level research and education institutes, as well as a robust traditional employment base in agriculture, fishing and food production/processing. The city and wider region has performed strongly in economic terms over the past twenty years at both national and European levels, consistently achieving above average in GVA, productivity and employment (ESPON, 2012).

Cork has a strong pedigree in sub-regional and metropolitan planning that is quite uncommon in an Irish context, where a centralised state structure as well as a territorially constrained system of local government tends to dissuade spatially integrated planning activities across fixed administrative boundaries. Despite these constraints, the urban region [comprised of a legally defined city with a population of 119,230, a metropolitan area of 289,522 persons and a wider city-region of 408,157 persons (Central Statistics Office, 2011) has been subject to a fairly continuous non-statutory planning programme since the late 1960s. The origins of strategic thinking around metropolitan issues in Cork can in fact be traced to the 1941 Advisory Plan prepared by Manning Roberston, which established an agenda for planning at this scale for the following seventy years.

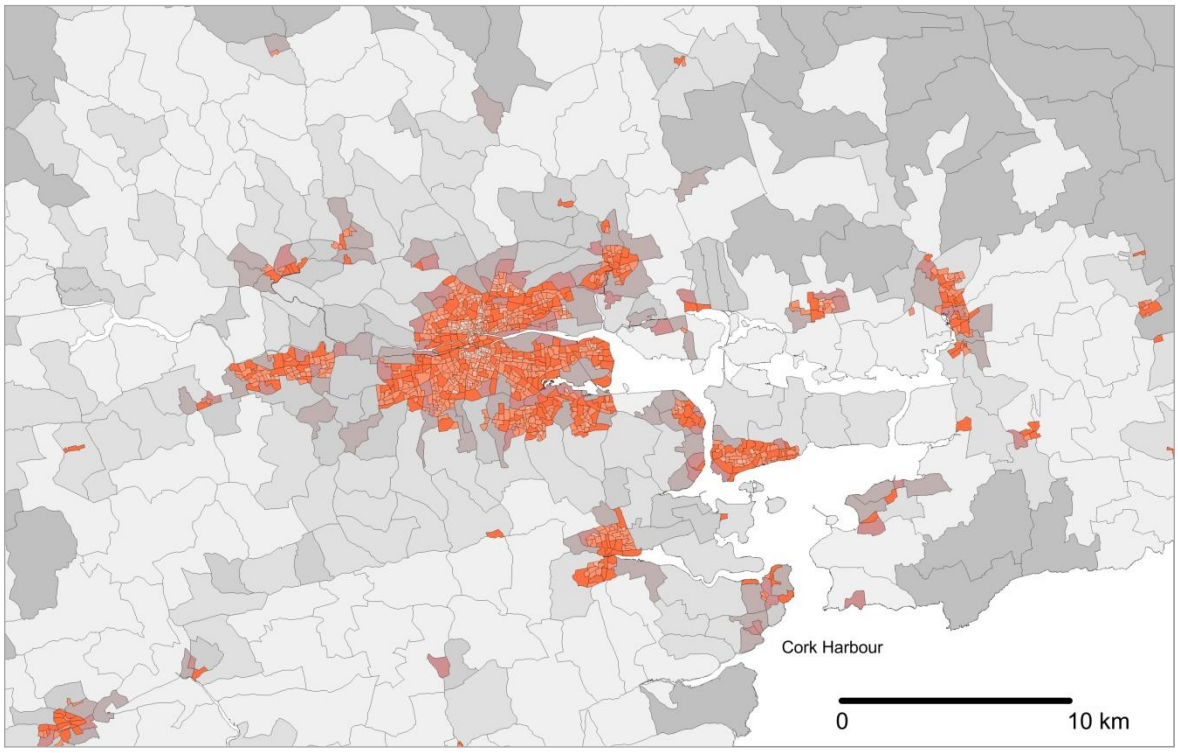
A LONG PEDIGREE OF ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL THINKING ABOUT THE CITY-REGION

The first Land-Use and Transportation Study, LUTS1, was published in 1978 (Skidmore Owings & Merrill, 1978) and updated as LUTS2 in 1992 (Skidmore Owings & Merrill, 1992). This was subsequently replaced in 2001 by the Cork Area Strategic Plan, CASP1, (Atkins, 2001) and its update (CASP2) in 2008 (Indecon International, 2008). The LUTS strategy in 1978 identified a study area, corresponding to a defined metropolitan district that has been retained and re-defined as a contemporary spatial planning and statistical unit known as the Cork Metropolitan Area. The LUTS and CASP strategies proposed integrated planning and development strategies based on targeted public investment towards infrastructure-led development, economic specialisation and diversification, a controlled settlement pattern based on a compact city and satellite centre network, and environmental and conservation strategies aimed at protecting and enhancing the city-region's physical and natural assets. This produced a continuous 35-year strategic planning framework and is especially notable because of its inter-institutional and collaborative approach in providing a jointly agreed framework for future development between two separate local authorities (Brady & O'Neill, 2013: Counsell et al, 2014). However, it is equally significant for the ways in which it attempted to integrate economic, environmental and physical planning concerns in a spatially coherent way.

This was quite a fundamental departure from previous sector-based plans prepared within established local authority boundaries which tended to generally address individual themes

such as traffic and transport, ecology and environment, economy and employment, land use zoning, conservation and heritage social and community, without any meaningful integration or vertical and horizontal coordination. There is clear scope then for the environmental and economic disadvantages of uncontrolled urban sprawl (Williams, 2000) to be minimised in coherent strategies such as these. In strategic planning terms, an argument can be made that these different sectors (which would otherwise have been subject to the tendency for separation and specialisation described earlier in this paper) can have a reasonably clear, integrated and geographical manifestation at the city-region scale. It is interesting to explore the extent to which the resulting integrated network of city and suburbs, satellite towns, and strategic employment locations, all enveloped in a high quality green belt setting and improving transportation connectivity can allow the city to perform at a more competitive metropolitan scale (O'Sullivan & Ray, 2012). It also has relevance for ongoing discussions about reform of local government boundaries in the area.

FIGURE 2. Map showing variation of population density in the sub-region of Cork city and its hinterland. Based on the small area census areas from the 2011 national census the map shows how growth and development is focused at discrete locations in a polycentric metropolitan pattern rather than a sprawling one. This appears to show how the spatial configuration of development envisaged in the LUTS and CASP strategies are reflected in real growth patterns.



Source: Central Statistics Office, 2011
Mapping: Centre for Planning Education & Research, UCC
Diagram Features: Areas with highest population density shown in red; areas with the lowest population density shown in grey.

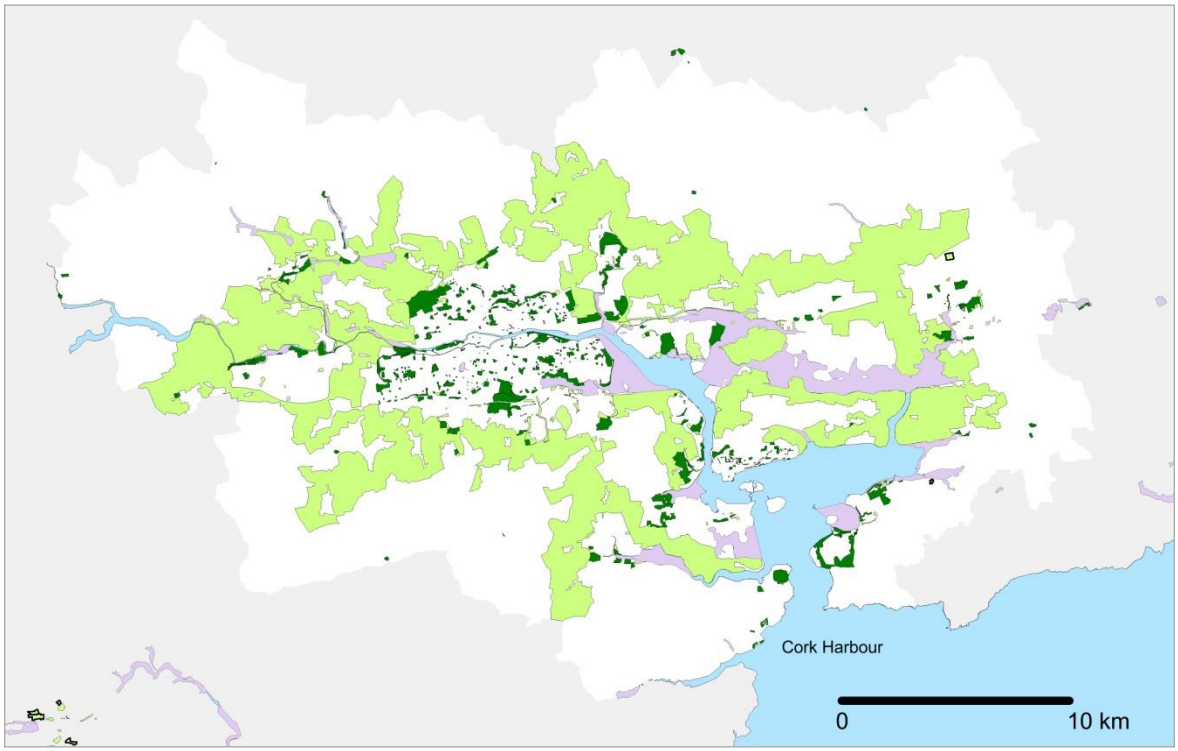
URBAN CONTAINMENT, LANDSCAPE AND OPEN SPACE

In the greater Cork area, the green belt has been a strong urban containment tool for planning. Its effectiveness (or otherwise) should be seen in the light of the fact that, unlike in Britain for example where green belt policy is determined by statute, it is a policy that has been determined by successive locally agreed development plans for more than two decades.

The most sensitive green belt land in the area (strategic undeveloped gaps preventing built up areas merging or the prominent ridges and valley sides that give the city its distinctive landscape setting) remains largely intact. When analysed along with planned open space

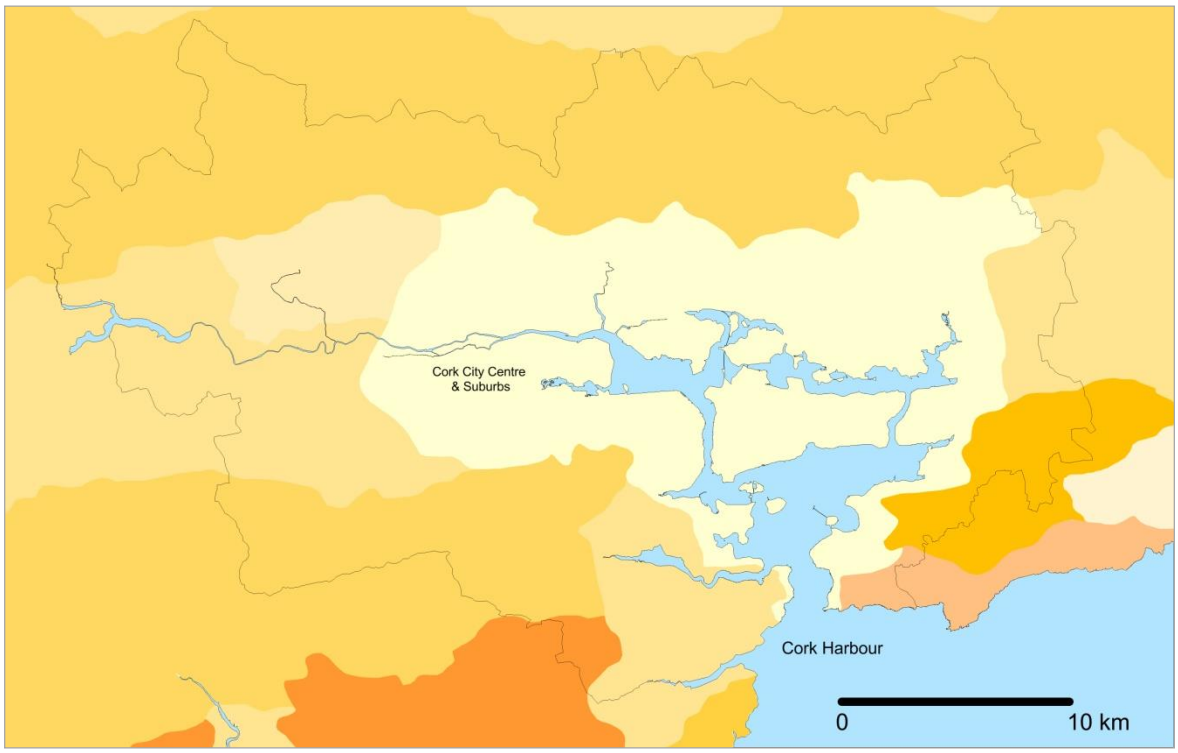
policies in both the city and the county area that deal with parks, recreation areas, ecological sites and other areas to remain free from built development (see Fig 3) a strong framework for promoting networks of urban diversity, habitats and high landscape quality begins to emerge at this same metropolitan scale. When areas of landscape character (based on an analysis of land form, land cover, and aspects of landscape values) are identified on a 'whole landscape' basis (see Fig 4), following the principles of the European Landscape Convention, the case for examining all of these strands together at the sub-regional scale becomes more compelling.

Figure 3. Map showing the combined natural environment and open space planning policies (including high quality green belt) that apply in the city council and county council areas surrounding the city.



Source: Cork City Development Plan 2009, Cork County Development Plan 2009
Mapping: Centre for Planning Education & Research, UCC
Diagram Features: Dark green areas indicate detailed landscape protection and open space designations; light green areas indicate high quality green belt designation.

FIGURE 4. Map showing the variations of landscape character to be found in the around Cork city and its hinterland. This shows how landscape arguments can complement other integrated metropolitan approaches to spatial planning.



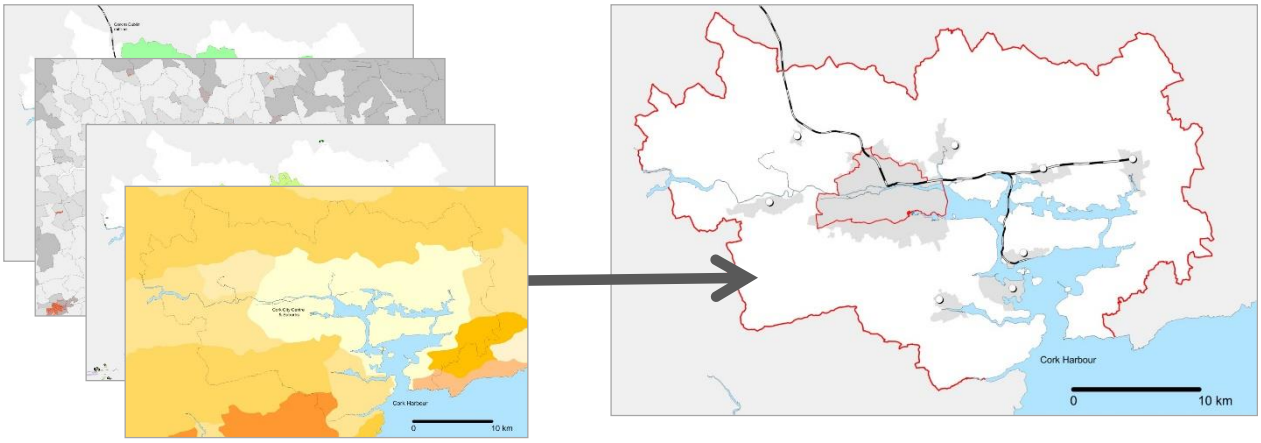
Source: Cork County Development Plan 2009
Mapping: Centre for Planning Education & Research, UCC
Diagram Features: Coloured areas represent different landscape character areas

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this paper was to consider the possibilities for combining those sustainable-city approaches concerned with physical form, scale and place with the integrative styles of the sustainable development paradigm within a broader framework that draws upon the holistic Geddesian tradition of planning for sub-regional and metropolitan spaces. It is suggested that despite significant structural, political and economic obstacles, as well as evidence of some discordant spatial and economic development patterns in the Cork case, a relatively coherent and consistent approach to strategic spatial planning at the sub-

regional and metropolitan scale has persisted within the city-region. Although it is not suggested that this is necessarily the manifestation of an explicit *programme* that deliberately espoused the combination of different disciplinary traditions, it can be interpreted as a continuous, tacit *project* consisting of a set of overlapping and coordinated initiatives. This overlapping set of spatially-comparable initiatives and policies reveals a governance space with a particular shape, scale and character (see Figure 5).

Figure 5. Schematic showing how a holistic approach to the city and its hinterland can bring about genuinely convergent ideas about spatial planning that address the challenges of sustainability and urban competitiveness in a resilient way.



Mapping: Centre for Planning Education & Research, UCC
Diagram Features: Large white area outlined in red represents 'Metropolitan Cork'; small grey area outlined in red represents Cork City administrative area; grey areas represent built-up areas.

The paper is a contribution to discussions about the holistic nature of planning at city-region level. It has used the spatial planning narrative of a relatively compact city-region in Ireland to explore, in a preliminary way, the case for a return to broader and more synthesised place-focused approaches to questions of sustainable cities. Campbell's idealised concept of three sets of interrelated tensions in sustainable development presents planning and planners with on-going challenges to seek the "elusive centre of the triangle" (Campbell, 1996, 301) especially in the face of powerful forces for change (such as the current dominance of investment, mobility and competitiveness issues). This has particular resonance for city-regions, especially at the present time where, as explained in this paper, issues of governance, economic growth and institutional change are often

presented in highly complex, non-spatial and often incoherent policy settings; each with different scales, political imperatives and time horizons.

Whilst the planning story of Metropolitan Cork underscores the centrality of the property, development and resource conflicts highlighted by Campbell's model, we have also begun to find a surprising *convergence* of influences especially in the way that economic issues, environmental quality of life, local government structures and landscape can be mutually reinforcing drivers in terms of urban form, spatial development patterns and about how sustainable development priorities can be articulated in coherent ways. The longevity and relevance of Cork's on-going sub-regional and metropolitan case study can certainly be explained - in part - by the manner in which diverse planning strands have been combined and layered to articulate a strong physical and representational space in which the planning and governance of the city-region has managed to prevail. This provides an interesting context within which metropolitan areas can be governed and planned in more assimilative ways, and begins to hint - tentatively perhaps - that more formalised approaches for bringing forward sustainable development principles at the scale of the city-region might be considered.

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4. Essay Two

Local Government Reform in Ireland: An Opportunity for Metropolitan Planning

ABSTRACT

In October 2012, the Irish government published its proposals for reforming the system of local government in the 'Putting People First' document and set out a comprehensive programme of administrative and functional reforms of the system of regional and local government in Ireland. If effected, these proposals will introduce extensive and far-reaching changes to the established system of sub-national government and address some of the institutional and structural problems associated with what is an outdated and inflexible model of local government in Ireland. It is proposed to radically alter the composition and character of Ireland's local and regional authorities, by reducing overall numbers, changing functions and realigning boundaries.

This paper explores the opportunities that these reforms present in the context of metropolitan governance in Ireland's cities. Although the reforms proposed would initially appear to relate most clearly to local and regional tiers of government, it is argued that the proposals are also potentially radical in that they finally attempt to address the issue of fragmented governance in Ireland's cities. Using Metropolitan Cork as a case study, it presents an account of how the current proposals may be advanced to create the institutional and administrative space for metropolitan government to emerge and argues that appropriately scaled and properly constituted metropolitan spatial planning in Ireland's second-tier cities is essential for sustained and balanced economic growth as a regional and national imperative.

INTRODUCTION

The Cork city-region has a long experience of, and a relatively coherent and consistent approach to, strategic spatial co-ordination at a sub-regional and metropolitan scale. This longstanding and spatially-consistent approach has meant that Cork has in effect been planned as a single metropolitan and sub-regional entity for the last forty years. This coherent approach overlapped with sustained economic success, and has produced a balanced metropolitan development pattern, a relatively intact greenbelt, a compact city and a logical distribution of settlement nodes. The current proposals for local government reform represent an opportunity to advance this achievement and consolidate and institutionalise the coherent and sensible approach to urban management by considering a new definition of *'Metropolitan Cork'.* It also enables the Cork case to act as a potential experiment for rescaling urban governance on a metropolitan footing in Ireland for the first time.

In October 2012, the Irish government published 'Putting People First' which sets out a comprehensive programme of administrative and functional reform of the system of regional and local government in Ireland. If implemented, this will introduce extensive changes to the established system of sub-national government and address many of the institutional and structural problems associated with what is an outdated and inflexible model.

In spatial planning terms, these changes could significantly alter the way in which planning policy is formulated and delivered, involving the possible standardisation of city governance, the introduction of a completely new tier at municipal district level and the strengthening of regional planning through the introduction of more meaningful territorial units with enhanced powers. The implications for the regional and local levels of government would initially appear to represent the most explicit manifestation of the government's aspirations. However, the proposals are also potentially radical in that they attempt to finally address the issue of fragmented governance of our cities and create for the first time the institutional and administrative space for metropolitan government to emerge, and the possibility of appropriately-scaled and properly-constituted metropolitan spatial planning for Ireland's second-tier cities. Although somewhat inconsistent in

application, the proposed reforms provide a major opportunity to address years of neglect of metropolitan governance issues in Ireland's large urban centres.

This paper describes in brief the evolution of urban government and the approach to local government reform in Ireland, highlighting in particular a general ambivalence towards the need for an explicit urban policy. Following this, it outlines the changing nature of urban governance and strategic decision-making for urban areas as a common concern in a European and international context, presenting the idea of metropolitan governance as a national economic imperative. Finally, the paper presents a case study of the 'Cork Metropolitan Area', and based on its tradition of integrated spatial, environmental and economic planning, proposes Cork as an ideal location for applying a new model of urban governance in Ireland.

GOVERNING IRELAND'S URBAN CENTRES

> *Ireland does not have an urban policy per se at present; rather, urban policy is threaded through a wide range of national programmes and implemented by a confusion of routes and agencies…In a society where rural and small town values are cherished, rapid, large-scale urbanisation has been something of an unintended or even an undesired by-product of economic growth and modernisation. In such circumstances, large scale urban and metropolitan growth has been viewed as an inevitability and it has taken place in the absence of any pro-active, coherent urban policy.*
>
> (Bannon, 2004, 26)

There have been regular calls for reform of local government structures since the Local Government Act 1898 established the system of government at local level in Ireland. However, political and economic priorities have tended to overshadow the urgency of these demands and there have been very little effective and meaningful alterations to the way cities have been governed. The system of local government tends to rely upon established government structures at sub-national level and the established party political system has strong roots within these structures. Therefore, any reform of local government structures can be translated as political reform. Considering that any extensive amendments to existing governance arrangements at local level usually address the issue of political representation, this can be extremely challenging.

In addition, there is a tendency on behalf of successive governments to support measures aimed at improving the local development agenda rather than the local government sphere. Prioritising development over governance at a local level reflects the increasing concerns associated with economic circumstances and local economic development strategies. These development and economic imperatives can often relegate the importance of local government reform as a political priority. Nevertheless, the pressure for reform of local government has remained and although the government has emphasised strongly the efficiency and financial benefits of the current package, the measures also reflect some of the more substantive elements of earlier reports such as the Barrington Report, 1991.

The Barrington (Local Government Reorganisation and Reform) Report (Government of Ireland, 1991) indicated a need for a fundamental overhaul of sub-county arrangements but did not advocate firmly one specific approach. It highlighted the need for extensive changes and ultimately advocated that the town council model be replaced with a new administrative system based around towns and their natural hinterlands. This reorganisation of town government reflected an attempt to deal with the uneven nature of local political representation but did not expressly deal with the issue of governance at the city scale.

In 1996, the report of a statutory, independent Reorganisation Commission entitled 'Towards Cohesive Local Government – Town and County' and 'Better Local Government: a programme for change' (BLG) stemmed from the Strategic Management Initiative and represented the government's aspirations to reform the public service more generally. BLG aspired to enhance local democracy and widen participation and, for the large part, its proposals largely attempted to reflect the agenda of efficiency and public sector modernisation.

The history of local government reform in Ireland is characterised by a remarkably enduring commitment to the established county structures and this has tended to discourage serious consideration of how best to govern and plan its urban centres. Ireland's recent experiences of spatial planning in the last 20 years in particular are instructive in this

regard. Here, the legitimate and quite conservatively expressed urban-oriented policies in the National Spatial Strategy 2002-2020 [which had emerged in response to external and internal pressures for improved policy and territorial coordination of investment and development in the face of rapid economic change] based on the concept of concentration and co-ordination, simply could not be administered in any meaningful way due to the absence of a structural and statutory framework within which those urban polices could be articulated. Instead, the NSS's implementation was undermined by a regime of delivery which was dominated by interests framed at county and local level, as well as resistance to the basic premise of concentration and regional development based on urban-centred growth strategies. In essence, there was no strong urban agenda in place.

The need for a review of local government structures was revisited in 2008 when the Coalition government published a Green Paper entitled: '*Stronger Local Democracy – Options for Change.'* The Green Paper (Government of Ireland, 2008: 6) stated that *"*Local government can deliver more if equipped to do so...This poses a challenge to a number of interests, including central government. It also provides an opportunity to create a more dynamic and less dependent local government system." Without any meaningful coherent implementation mechanisms, the reforms up to this time can be perceived as piecemeal and reflecting essentially a modernising agenda in line with the emerging paradigm of new public management increasingly popular across Europe (OECD, 2003) and placed increased emphasis on promoting values such as customer service, accountability and strategic management without meaningfully reforming arrangements at a local government level for which the Barrington Report had so strongly advocated.

However, the aspiration for improved policy and territorial coordination of investment and development from national to local level as articulated in the NSS was not recognised in the 2008 Green Paper. This was particularly worrying considering the proposed reforms in the 2000s paid little reference to the unprecedented urbanisation and economic growth that was occurring in and around Ireland's major urban centres. Within this context of rapid economic growth, the distribution of investment and population reinforced the historically unbalanced patterns of development in the country, and, in the absence of any reform of local government, consolidated the monocentric nature of Ireland's urban system focussing on the Greater Dublin Area and the eastern part of the country generally.

The evolution of Ireland's principal cities over the past twenty to thirty years from relatively small scale and compact provincial centres with localised urban fields into larger metropolitan areas with more complex functional and economic characteristics was not accompanied by any sophisticated attempt to revise governing arrangements to reflect such changes. This resulted in fragmented urban governance and no reliable mechanism to allow administrative boundaries to evolve in line with urban growth. This has created a highly unsatisfactory urban management regime, whereby effective and coherent planning and management of metropolitan areas is generally dependent on co-operation between neighbouring authorities in a political and financial context that usually encourages competition and divergent priorities along administrative boundaries. Indeed, efforts to introduce changes were generally limited to sporadic boundary revisions on a case by case basis, title changes and a reconstitution of internal workings and administrative functions of local authorities generally.

'Putting People First' provides for a range of measures that will affect the way Ireland's cities are governed, and ultimately planned. For Limerick and Waterford, it is proposed to merge City and County Councils, no specific immediate changes are recommended for Galway or Dublin, whilst a bespoke solution for Cork is suggested – be based on the premise of an expanded urban jurisdiction either agreed by the two local authorities or imposed by the Minister. The reform is both timely and necessary and there is now a major opportunity to establish effective and robust metropolitan governance while presenting a real opportunity to address the inherently anti-urban nature of Irish public policy in respect of territorial development and city government.

METROPOLITAN GOVERNANCE, CITY-REGIONS AND SECOND-TIER CITIES

Significant changes have occurred in the decision-making environments of European cities over the past thirty years, which serve to suggest the importance of territorially-coherent governing spaces at an extra-urban and sub-national level. These structural economic dynamics and new political challenges indicate clearly that in an era of competitiveness, flux, mobility and technology, place and space still matter, and the way that metropolitan areas are managed and developed can have extremely important implications for their

resilience and economic prospects. These changes have been explained by the need for urban areas to foster an economic dynamism to guarantee future success within an increasingly competitive global economy. The increased movement of goods, services and information across borders has caused regions to become increasingly vulnerable to what would have previously have been considered external processes (Christopherson et al, 2010). Greater international competition and the hypermobility of capital and investment have meant that the fortunes of urban areas have become increasingly dependent on inward investment and on decisions made beyond the local and national context (Harding, 1997: John and Cole, 1998). Consequently, political and business leaders in urban areas have begun to realise that local economies can no longer afford to rely on national policies of resource distribution.

This has contributed to a fragmentation of decision-making and the proliferation of institutions at local and regional levels (Kearns and Paddison, 2000) and has introduced challenges of complexity and compatibility due to the multitude of decision-making structures, interests and the emergence of multi-level governing environments (Benz and Eberlein, 1999). The complexity of the institutional landscape and the density of agencies and actors operating in the urban arena have also encouraged sectoralisation in the way urban issues are being addressed. Whereas traditional urban planning models usually attempted to integrate a variety of policy strands as a way of tackling urban and regional planning issues, increased specialisation has tended to encourage the segregation of policy activity into discrete silos (Carley, 2000). As a result, economic, environmental, social and physical issues around urban areas tended to emerge within highly complex and often incoherent policy settings, with incongruous spatial and temporal frames and scales of operation.

A key response to increased complexity and fragmentation in metropolitan contexts has been the move towards spatial strategies, involving "shaping place qualities through conscious attention, through some kind of strategy, which embodies and expresses a conception of the place of an urban area." Healey (2007, 265). These 'place-governance strategies' aimed at influencing economic and environmental outcomes also involve efforts directed at creating institutional and administrative forms that are more reflective of the functional realities of metropolitan areas. This is part of what Haughton et al (2009)

consider to be a rescaling of planning emerging at metropolitan and sub-regional levels where a mix of top-down and bottom-up forces are combining to produce a form of semi-formalised, non-statutory planning strategies.

It is argued that these approaches have created 'soft' spaces for planning strategies to emerge that reflect the functional realities of cities and metropolitan regions whilst evading the institutional and political obstacles associated with regulatory planning and governing regimes. Despite concerns about efficacy, delivery and democracy within these 'soft spaces' bordered by 'fuzzy boundaries', it is clear that the focus on strategic and coordinated approaches to the planning of cities in a European context highlight the increasing importance of scalar issues as well as "a greater emphasis upon the building blocks of sub-regions and city regions" (Haughton et al 2009, 235).

Political and economic processes, according to Christopherson et al (2010, 4) "are at the core of regional resilience, creating capacity, including governance capacity, and determine how vulnerable a region is to events outside the control of regional residents". In this regard, it can be said that urban and regional resilience is inextricably linked to governance capacity and that strong, coherent governance structures encourage the development of more resilient regions. This issue of governance at the urban scale becomes particularly important in the context of the role that cities play in supporting local, regional and economic development and the increased need for cities at all scales to actively develop strategies aimed at enhancing their economic resilience and sustainability.

Europe's cities can no longer be characterised as passive actors in the sphere of economic development. Global economic changes combined with increased centralisation tendencies on behalf of nation-states have forced metropolitan areas to become proactive in developing and implementing strategies for economic development. Within Europe in particular, there has been an intensification of inter-metropolitan competition whereby cities "…increasingly seek to measure their own economic performance against their counterparts throughout the E.U." (Salet et al 2003, 30). Competitiveness and economic resilience become intrinsic parts of the urban development and spatial planning agenda as urban leaders realise that they can no longer depend on traditional political-economic

structures and norms guaranteed by the nation state to ensure success or survival "Simply stated, localities have something to compete with" (Harding, 1997, 295).

Metropolitan regions in Europe have increasingly concerned themselves with how to represent their cities as dynamic, assertive and competitive actors within Europe's economic space and this has encouraged thinking around scale, governing arrangements, critical mass, institutional and administrative relations, quality of life, environmental and placed-based considerations. This reflects an acknowledgement that historically fragmented urban governing arrangements largely defined by legally prescribed municipal boundaries are not necessarily conducive to effective metropolitan governance and competitive urban development strategies.

In a major study on Europe's Cities, Parkinson et al (2004, 8) suggested that although the impacts of globalisation which have resulted in fragmentation and increased social and economic mobility, new territorial and political norms pose major challenges for the role of cities in Europe, "…cities still do matter - and probably more rather than less…and it can be argued that place, space and community have become more - not less - important for identity and action in an increasingly globalised and insecure world… cities are still critical sites for identity, action and decision-making - and also crucial to national economies." Furthermore, the importance of cities to national economies is highlighted in the study through an increased awareness of the economic potential of cities as drivers of national growth as well as the need for cities to compete across a European and global scale.

There are, however, serious concerns about the dominance of capital cities, which suggest perhaps that a more sophisticated conception of the need for urban governance across national territories is required. As well as potentially constraining the economic potential of capital cities, the negative externalities associated with spatial agglomeration can lead to national underperformance associated with a distorted urban network as a well as an imbalanced and vulnerable spatial development pattern. In other words, over concentration of urban economic activity may disadvantage the dominant capital city as well as the secondary urban centres within the hierarchy. The recently published applied research project, 'Second Tier Cities' by the European Spatial Observatory Network (ESPON, 2013) concluded firmly that urban policy at national and EU level urgently needs to

recognise the potential of second tier cities as part of national economic development and to pursue stronger, more explicit and economic place-based urban policies that support city-regions at all levels of the urban hierarchy. This major study also promoted the practice of horizontally and vertically aligned policy making systems at national, regional and local levels as well as distinct 'territorial place-based strategies' aimed at developing a strong urban hierarchy which considers the role of governance and urban policy for primary and secondary cities.

Notwithstanding the variety of academic interpretations of the city-region concept, which vary from economic governance to political regionalism (Storper, 1997: Kunzmann, 1998: Jones and MacLeod, 1999), it refers in essence to a territorial-functional space, a relationship between a core city and an associated hinterland in terms of housing, retail and employment markets, travel-to-work catchments well and which are sometimes overlapped with physical and landscape features, administrative boundaries or co-operative arrangements (Rodríguez-Pose, 2008). For Healey (2007, 7) "…the urban region seems to offer a functional area within which the interactions of economic relations, environmental systems and daily life time-space patterns can be better understood than at a higher or lower level of government." The rise of policy-making at the city-region level has served to "accelerate the shift from sectoral to territorial policies" Rodríguez-Pose (2008, 1033), where social, environmental and economic issues can be considered more effectively.

Furthermore, unlike those such as Scott (2001) who advocate its use as a framework principally for governance of global cities, Le Gales (2002) suggests that the city-region concept provides a mode of action and a framework for articulating a governance agenda for medium-sized cities as an alternative to the very large metropolitan urban centres in Europe. In addition, the city-region represents a more appropriate scale in which to address the environmental and ecological challenges that emerge in the context of dispersed settlement patterns, complex commuting and the suburbanisation of housing, employment and commercial activity.

This move in Europe towards a reconsideration of the way in which cities are managed to reflect new governance space that urbanisation demands. This idea of metropolitan

governance is based on the social, economic, environmental and political imperatives which demand an urban management policy that is spatially and functionally more sophisticated than traditional city government mechanisms which have discouraged territorial and sectoral integration.

Fundamentally, this is a position which argues for a local government system at city level that acknowledges functional spaces of metropolitan areas which address the inherent disconnect between how people live and how they are governed. While it may be worth acknowledging that partnership and cooperation at the metropolitan scale can work at some levels and in particular circumstances, it is becoming increasingly important that cities compete and coordinate more efficiently – and appropriate governance spaces are more important where cities compete with each other. In the aftermath of a series of highly disruptive economic events and structural failures in the planning system at national, regional and local levels, the task of rethinking planning at this scale in Ireland has become urgent. In particular, there is a need to enhance understandings of governance needs at the city-region and metropolitan scales and to emphasise the importance of strategic spatial planning as an essential component of regional and economic resilience, which through the production of coherent and meaningful long-term visions, can promote social environmental and economic sustainability.

METROPOLITAN PLANNING IN IRELAND: A NATIONAL IMPERATIVE?

The administrative and governance structure for Ireland's second-tier cities has not evolved in line with economic, demographic, social or political developments and despite a continuous and predictable pattern of urbanisation there has been no substantial reconfiguration of the ways in which Irish cities are governed. In the absence of any sophisticated attempt to revise governing arrangements, administrative boundaries have remained relatively static.

Therefore, by introducing the possibility of distinctive metropolitan governance for the first time outside Dublin, the current proposals represent an important policy turn in urban governance which may have significant implications for the way in which Ireland's cities are governed and planned. The policy document states that "Local government structures will

reflect appropriate metropolitan areas in the cities" (Government of Ireland, 2012, vii) and indicates a range of proposals for the various urban centres. This would appear to be significant in that it represents a formal acknowledgement on behalf of government that the design and operation of local government in Ireland's cities is problematic, and more importantly, that these governing arrangements need to be redefined in order to achieve a better fit between administrative and functional urban fields. This is potentially a considerably important statement in Irish urban policy as it provides for the emergence of metropolitan governance and metropolitan spatial planning to occur for the first time in Ireland.

Analysing the potential of the Putting People First proposals from the perspective of metropolitan governance and metropolitan spatial planning is valid from a number of perspectives:

First, the issue of Metropolitan governance as an active consideration within the local government reform agenda is a novel political development in an Irish context. This is notable in a state that traditionally focuses on territorial issues through an overwhelmingly rural lens and which has favoured internalised reforms of established local government structures over radical reordering of urban administrative regimes. Any significant attempts to address the issue of local or regional government structures in Ireland have been directed towards either a regionalisation agenda at European level as part of administrative and funding objectives or a local development aspiration linked to the principles of subsidiarity and participation. In between these levels of spatial consideration, the issue of metropolitan governance for Ireland's cities has been neglected. In addition, apart from sporadic boundary extensions, the issue of metropolitan governance for Ireland's urban areas seems to be confined to consideration of the needs of the Greater Dublin Area. Although there is a national imperative to address the need to deliver suitably scaled and efficient strategic governance for the metropolitan context of the capital city, there is an equally urgent need to face up to the challenges of strategic government and decision making at the metropolitan level in Ireland's second-tier cities. The issue of the wide gap in scale between Dublin as Ireland's prime city and the secondary cities may justifiably be used to explain why these issues are dealt with separately, however, this particular feature

of Ireland's urban hierarchy is in itself a major policy weakness and is, in fact, a reason why new metropolitan structures are required.

Second, the concept of Metropolitan governance relates to the need to establish formalised administrative governing units that reflect the functional life of urban areas. It is increasingly recognised that coherent urban governance is an essential ingredient of economic success within an increasingly competitive and globalised economic system. As part of this, it is understood that cities need to develop sophisticated, efficient and integrated strategies for urban development which rely upon coherent governance arrangements directed towards targeted delivery of land use, infrastructure, economic and environmental aspirations at a metropolitan scale. In addition, within a context of a neoliberal policy regime which tends to discourage state-led urban development and regeneration, cities and regions have been forced to engage in inter-locality competition by creating the conditions in which to lure private investment. In this environment, where the success of urban areas in economic terms is linked intrinsically to their ability to compete as substantial and dynamic urban units at an international level, strategic urban governance of the metropolitan area has replaced more traditional forms of managerial urban government at the city scale. These strategic urban aspirations often transcend historically embedded governing traditions and formalised legal territorial units, reflecting a philosophical shift from management to mission as the dominant urban political credo.

Third, delivering governance structures that more appropriately reflect urban settlement systems should be viewed as an urgent priority as part of any local government reform agenda in Ireland and there is a need to address the ways in which the state's cities are governed and planned. Ireland's main urban centres have experienced significant physical expansion and in the case of Limerick, Waterford and Cork, a significant proportion of those cities' population, amenities and employment are now located outside the respective City Council's administrative boundaries, resulting in extensive 'underbounding'. Quite simply, these cities have quickly outgrown their constituencies and the process of boundary extensions provided for in Part 8 of the Local Government Act 2001 has failed to deliver an effective mechanism for facilitating necessary and timely boundary changes. This process, whereby the urban authority formally applies to the Minister for Environment, Community and Local Government for an extension to the established legal urban boundary, has

tended to be highly politicised, unduly competitive and rarely focuses on the substantial matter of strategic urban governance and effective decision making capabilities. The current proposals, whilst presenting a range of different governance arrangements at metropolitan level, provide a certain opportunity to address historic weaknesses through a more decisive approach to tackling urban governance challenges.

Finally, the proposed reforms represent an opportunity to address the neglect of the metropolitan level of local government and argues that Ireland's second-tier cities require particular attention. Aside from their own individual development, political and socio-economic aspirations, usually articulated as local development agendas, this level of the country's settlement hierarchy needs consideration as a *national* economic priority. This challenges the view that Ireland should be governed and planned spatially as a single region consisting of a dominant capital with a series of satellite provincial urban centres within an economic environment characterised by the ideology of dependency, trickle-down and enhanced centralisation. It is suggested that this economic model is outdated and fails to appreciate that Ireland's economic profile and spatial structure demands a recognition of the importance of second-tier cities as part of the state's economy, the need for governing and economic strategies to reflect this, and new public policy efforts to support a more sustainable and balanced urban landscape. It is also considered that this is a critical component for supporting national economic development, more sustainable settlement patterns and more equitable development opportunities.

Recent development trends emphasise the need to acknowledge that the way in which Ireland's urban centres are managed and planned needs serious attention. Despite a policy environment that has been largely hostile to the idea of a policy for urban government and generally negligent of urban policy, Ireland's demographic and economic landscape is set to become increasingly urban in character and form. Table 1 [below] illustrates the increasingly urbanised character of Ireland's demographic profile. The 2011 Census confirmed that the trend of urbanisation has continued, with 62% of the state now living in urban areas, representing a 10.5% increase from 2006, compared with the rural equivalent of a 4.5% increase over the same period. In addition, whilst much of this urban growth occurred in smaller settlements, particularly the town categories 1,500-2,999 and 10,000 and over, many of which are located within urban catchments, the proportion of the state

residing in the five cities [city and suburbs as defined by the CSO] at 33% 2011 is substantial.

Table 1 Population Change 2006-2011 in the Main Cities, Towns and Rural Areas

	Population 2006	*% of State Population*	Population 2011	*% of State Population*	Absolute Change	*% Change*
Dublin city & suburbs	1,045,769	*24.67*	1,110,627	*24.21*	64,858	*6.20*
Cork city & suburbs	190,384	*4.49*	198,582	*4.33*	8,198	*4.31*
Limerick city & suburbs	90,757	*2.14*	91,454	*1.99*	697	*0.77*
Galway city & suburbs	72,729	*1.72*	76,778	*1.67*	4,049	*5.57*
Waterford city & suburbs	49,213	*1.16*	51,519	*1.12*	2,306	*4.69*
Cities and Suburbs	**1,448,852**	***34.17***	**1,528,960**	***33.32***	**80,108**	***5.53***
Towns 10,000 or over	615,925	*14.53*	730,414	*15.92*	114,489	*18.59*
Towns 5,000 – 9,999	272,713	*6.43*	297,182	*6.48*	24,469	*8.97*
Towns 3,000 – 4,999	108,555	*2.56*	119,705	*2.61*	11,150	*10.27*
Towns 1,500 – 2,999	128,268	*3.03*	170,628	*3.72*	42,360	*33.02*
Urban Total	**2,574,313**	***60.72***	**2,846,889**	***62.05***	**272,576**	***10.59***
Rural Total	**1,665,535**	***39.28***	**1,741,363**	***37.95***	**75,828**	***4.55***
Total	**4,239,848**		**4,588,252**	**100**	**348,404**	***8.22***

Source: CSO [Census of Ireland: 2006, 2011]

When the effective functional reach of these cities is considered, [using CSO POWSCAR data to produce a figure for each city and the surrounding area where more than 20% of the resident population in employment commute to the city], it emerges that over 55% of the state's population is located within the catchment of the five cities alone [See Table 2]. However, only 18% of the population are governed by the respective urban authorities and responsibility for these five metropolitan areas rests with eighteen separate local authorities [excluding any town councils located within these functional fields]. The recently published Gateways and Hubs Development Index reports (Future Analytics, 2013) prepared to measure the performance of the various growth centres designated in the NSS indicate clearly that although some of the five cities generally performed strongly in capturing development and economic activity, the geography of urban development was characterised overwhelmingly by increasing levels of urban-generated suburban and rural growth and a marked failure to promote a sustainable pattern of urban development.

Table 2 Population 2011 in the Main Cities, Cities & Suburbs, and Metropolitan Areas

	Population of City *	% of state population	No. of Local Authorities	Population of City & Suburbs **	% of state population	No. of Local Authorities	Population of Metropolitan Area ***	% of state population	no. of Local Authorities
Dublin	527,612	11.50	1	1,110,627	24.21	4	1,659,018	36.16	7
Cork	119,230	2.60	1	198,582	4.33	2	398,292	8.68	2
Limerick	57,106	1.24	1	91,454	1.99	3	222,604	4.85	4
Galway	75,529	1.65	1	76,778	1.67	2	185,913	4.05	2
Waterford	46,732	1.02	1	51,519	1.12	3	97,076	2.12	3
Total	**826,209**	**18.01**	**5**	**1,528,960**	**33.32**	**14**	**2,562,903**	**55.86**	**18**

* 'City' = legally constituted urban area governed by City Councils

** 'City & Suburbs' = defined city and suburbs according to CSO 2011

*** 'Metropolitan Area' = CSO POWSCAR derived data for each city and hinterland where more than 20% of the resident population in employment commute to the city

Source: Census of Ireland [2011]

Despite a national employment and economic development policy framework appears ambivalent about the explicitly urban requirements of growth/growth management strategies, and which seems to avoid completely the role of agglomeration and urbanisation economies as an employment development tool, Ireland's economic geography also exhibits very strong trends towards increasing urbanisation. Whilst the total number of people at work in Ireland nationally between 2006 and 2011 declined by 6.4%, there were increases in all Irish cities apart from Waterford [See Table 3]. Furthermore, the cities of Dublin, Cork, Limerick and Galway all experienced substantial increases in the number of workers travelling into the urban areas over the same intercensal period. This pattern is mirrored also by recent figures for job creation which show that 82.5% of all net job increases during 2012 in IDA-supported firms were located in Counties Dublin, Cork, Limerick, Galway and Waterford. In addition, some recent emerging trends in the

residential and commercial property markets (CSO, 2013: CBRE 2013: Lyons, 2013) suggest a two-tier post-recession landscape dominated by Dublin in particular, but also generally by urban locations and the larger cities. This is reflected most tellingly by changes in commercial yields in the GDA, increased activity in the form of property transactions in urban areas, and increases in residential rents in the main urban centres.

Table 3 Total persons at work and the number of persons commuting to the Irish cities and suburbs, 2006/2011

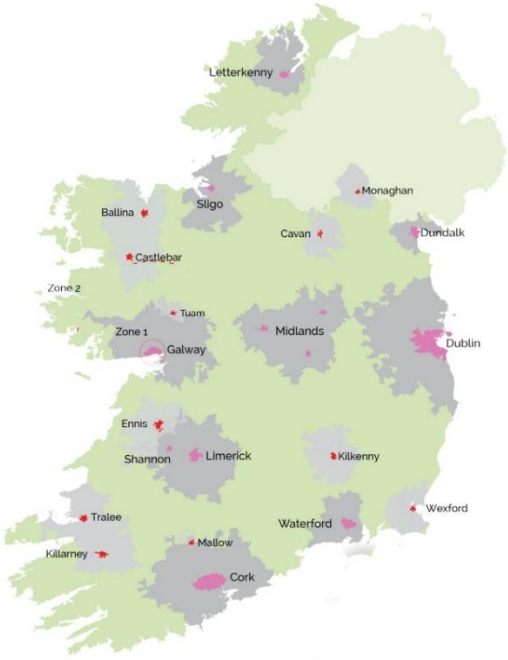
Urban Area	Persons at work 2006	Persons at work 2011	Change in persons at work 2006-2011	*% change in persons at work 2006-2011*	Workers travelling into the city & suburbs 2006	Workers travelling into the city & suburbs 2011	Change in workers travelling into the city & suburbs	*% change in workers travelling into the city & suburbs*
Dublin city & suburbs	455,375	469,987	14,612	*3.2*	104,865	117,764	12,899	*12.3*
Cork city & suburbs	86,316	92,150	5,834	*6.8*	31,909	36,519	4,610	*14.4*
Limerick city &suburbs	35,977	40,464	4,487	*12.5*	15,984	20,086	4,102	*25.7*
Galway city & suburbs	40,859	41,402	543	*1.3*	18,931	20,560	1,629	*8.6*
Waterford city & suburbs	25,838	23,332	-2,506	*-9.7*	11,685	10,646	-1,039	*-8.9*
Ireland Total	**1,930,042**	**1,807,360**	**-122,682**	**-6.4**	**N/A**	**N/A**	**N/A**	**N/A**

Source: Census of Ireland [2006, 2011]

These patterns have contributed to a context whereby governing structures at subnational level are increasingly incompatible with the way in which cities and metropolitan areas are functioning in spatial and economic terms. Ireland's territorial landscape is becoming characterised increasingly by the appearance of a number of functional urban regions centred on established cities and large towns. These may be described in different ways as city-regions/metropolitan areas/functional urban areas, however they all represent some kind of spatially defined relationship between an urban centre and its constituent semi-urban and rural hinterland characterised by a range of overlapping socio-economic

interactions [See Figures 1 and 2]. The nature of these interactions have not been fully explored, however, emerging mapping technologies and more sophisticated use of demographic and economic datasets has served to illustrate clearly this new spatial context and highlight the associated governance challenges. Although the fragmentation of urban government is not unique to Ireland and is a phenomenon identified throughout the urban world, Ireland's experience is notable in that there appears to be no official recognition that this a challenge, represents and a major social, cultural and economic shift and that it should become a public policy consideration.

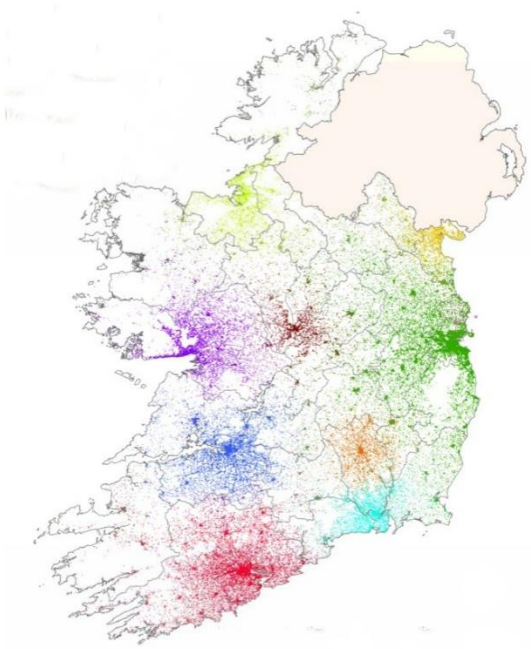
Figure 1. Gateways and Hubs Functional Areas



Source: Adapted from Gateways|Hubs Development Index 2012

Diagram Features: Built up areas shown in red; commuter catchments shown in grey.

Figure 2. Catchment Areas of major workplace locations, 2011



Source: Census 2011

Diagram Features: urban workplace locations shown as coloured dots.

Despite an increasingly urbanised settlement pattern over the last twenty years, policy measures for urban areas have been directed towards addressing sectoral, infrastructural and locally-prescribed regeneration and development initiatives and have largely ignored

the issue of urban jurisdiction and governance issues. In a review of urban policy, Bannon (2012, 241) suggests that Ireland in fact has no urban policy context, and suggests that,

> *Ireland needs a much more explicit and coherent overarching and proactive urban policy. Such an urban policy should give priority to better defining the roles of different levels of places and to ensure that these roles are supported and enhanced with efficiency and effectively. The role of cities outside Dublin, as well as other designated Gateways must be discussed and implemented with regard to issues of critical mass and the generation of both urban and agglomeration economies.*

Considering the increasingly important position of cities and urban development in Ireland's economic and demographic profile, and the opportunity as part of the proposed reforms to enhance the role of Ireland's second-tier cities as drivers for local, regional, and national development, there is justification for considering a new level between the regional and county levels. The present circumstances would suggest that a city like Cork provides a very useful case study as an experiment in metropolitan governance. The creation of a new unit of metropolitan government should be embedded in this reform process as it is an issue of national importance. It is also considered that the reforms in Cork should not proceed as a traditional boundary extension exercise to be decided through a local process of territorial and political negotiation. With a view to achieving greater efficiencies and economies of scale for Cork, it is imperative that consideration be given to restructuring on the basis of the main functions being performed at a scale larger than the municipal district but smaller than the county. Its history of spatial planning make it an ideal and appropriate platform for metropolitan economic and spatial planning in Ireland but it needs coherent and well-establish governance structures to enable it to reach full potential.

THE EVOLUTION OF GOVERNANCE AND SPATIAL PLANNING IN THE CORK CITY-REGION

Cork is the second largest urban area in the Republic of Ireland and the city-region contains an attractive and vibrant compact urban settlement, sitting at the mouth of a large natural harbour, surrounded by a planned network of satellite towns and employment hubs, all

within a high quality landscape and coastal setting. There is a diverse and dynamic economy in the area with a strong presence of global pharmaceutical, technological and service-based industries, a strong network of third level research and education institutes, as well as a robust traditional employment base in agriculture, tourism, fishing and food production/processing.

Cork has a strong pedigree in planning thinking at sub-regional and metropolitan scales that is quite uncommon in an Irish context, where a centralised state structure as well as a territorially constrained system of local government tends to dissuade spatially integrated planning activities across fixed administrative boundaries. Despite these constraints, the urban region [comprised of a legally defined city with a population of 119,230, a metropolitan area of 289,522 persons and a wider city-region of 408,157 persons (CSO, 2011) has been subject to a fairly continuous non-statutory planning programme since the late 1960s. The origins of strategic thinking around metropolitan issues in Cork can in fact be traced to the 1941 Advisory Plan prepared by Manning Roberston, which established an agenda for planning at this scale for the following seventy years, and strategic planning in the greater Cork city-region around land use, economic and environmental issues began in earnest following the publication of the Cork Harbour Development Plan in 1976 and the Land Use and Transport Study in 1978.

The first Land-Use and Transportation Study, LUTS1, was published in 1978 (Skidmore Owings & Merrill, 1978) and updated as LUTS2 in 1992 (Skidmore Owings & Merrill, 1992). This was subsequently replaced in 2001 by the Cork Area Strategic Plan, CASP1, (Atkins, 2002) and its update (CASP2) in 2008 (Indecon International/RPS, 2008). The LUTS strategy in 1978 identified a study area, corresponding to a defined metropolitan district that has been retained and re-defined as a contemporary spatial planning and statistical unit known as the Cork Metropolitan Area. The LUTS and CASP strategies proposed integrated planning and development strategies based on targeted public investment towards infrastructure-led development, economic specialisation and diversification, a controlled settlement pattern based on a compact city and satellite centre network, and environmental and conservation strategies aimed at protecting and enhancing the city-region's physical and natural assets. This produced a continuous thirty-five year strategic planning framework and is especially notable because of its inter-institutional and collaborative approach in

providing a jointly agreed framework for future development between two separate local authorities. However, it is equally significant for the ways in which it attempted to integrate economic, environmental and physical planning concerns in a spatially coherent way. This was quite a fundamental departure from previous sector-based plans prepared within established local authority boundaries which tended to generally address individual themes such as traffic and transport, ecology and environment, economy and employment, land use zoning, conservation and heritage social and community, without any meaningful integration or vertical and horizontal coordination. In strategic planning terms, an argument can be made that these different sectors, which would otherwise have been subject to a tendency towards separation and specialisation, can have a reasonably clear, integrated and geographical manifestation at the city-region scale.

Jointly commissioned by Cork City and County Councils, CASP predated the NSS and presented a vision and strategy for the city-region up until 2020. Cork's experiences are recognised within an international academic planning context as a national exemplar, with Counsell at al (2012, 2) stating that "When it was published in 2001, CASP was still unusual in providing a non-statutory, sub-regional plan developed by neighbouring local planning authorities that recognized the value of joint strategic thinking at the city-regional scale. Indeed, CASP was in the vanguard of demonstrating the utility of sub-regional spatial planning on its release." ESPON's recent reporting on Cork as part of their focus on the role of local and national policies for second-tier cities indicated that "A reading of both national policy documents and leading academic literatures, together with interviews with key players within the city-region, all point to the fact that Cork possesses a strong element of strategic capacity, with a tradition of governance actors endeavouring to work together for the good of the city-region (ESPON, 2013, 20).

The CASP approach is a commendable achievement from the perspective of collaboration between local authorities in strategic land use planning terms, its integration of land-use, transportation, environmental and economic strands and its continued relevance as a framing device for the development of the city-region. Following the basic approach established by LUTS, the strategy maintained and advanced the idea of developing a metropolitan region with a compact city at its centre, surrounded by a network of dedicated satellite residential and employment locations set within a high quality green

belt setting. Perhaps its defining characteristic as a planning device was the attempt to resist established market trends in the region by redirecting development activity from the south and west of the city using a rail based development mechanism to focus growth to the north and east. In order to translate this fundamental shift in development patterns, it required a substantial commitment in terms of infrastructure provision, active and protective zoning interventions, and persuading elected members, development interests and central government that such an approach was worth pursuing. That this most interventionist ingredient of the strategy was agreed and maintained during a period of unparalleled development pressures and a highly pro-growth political atmosphere was significant and is likely to be the strongest legacy of CASP in the longer term.

However, the governing framework provided by the CASP model was simply insufficient to ensure that the plan's core objectives could be fully pursued. Whilst the partnership between the two local authorities is admired as a positive example of cross-boundary collaboration in a country where competition generally characterises urban government, the soft space of governance that CASP relied upon provided too much flexibility to control decision making around certain key development and investment priorities. When new governing arrangements are being considered for Cork following the Putting People First reforms it will be important to consider the need to establish a clear set of governance structures to ensure that strategic objectives for the metropolitan area and wider city-region are confirmed. It is likely that a territorial redistribution of administrative responsibility of the respective local authorities will be a critical component of this and there is a need to reconfirm the priorities of CASP.

It is important to note here that when assessing the efficacy of the performance of urban governance in the city-region using a non-statutory plan like CASP, the analysis of outcomes should acknowledge its strategic character and thus avoid becoming a pedantic journey through hectares, households and headroom. In their critique of CASP, Counsell et al (2012, 15) suggest that it is unfair to regard these strategic plans as documents of conformity and argue that "…strategic planning success can never be evaluated simply through conformity to a rigid end-document… the issue is more, whether the planning process overall helped progressive ideas and practices to move forward substantially or not." Therefore, instead of seeking to establish whether each of the CASP's individual

measured objectives have been 'achieved', it is more instructive to review the way in which its fundamental proposals around the spatial distribution of growth and development have performed. This reflects a more nuanced understanding of strategic spatial planning and recognises the complex relationship between policy and decision making as part of the task of urban governance. With this in mind, a review of the development landscape in the Cork city-region after 2001 highlights a number of key concerns regarding the ability to implement large scale growth management polices within a fragmented governing structure.

Focussing on the extent to which the high level strategic aspirations of CASP have been followed is key to assessing its performance. In this regard, although there has been significant progress for instance in the development of a commuter rail network in the metropolitan area and in largely preserving the Green Belt encompassing the city, there are indications of some worrying divergences from certain core objectives. This can be expressed generally as an ongoing tension between development patterns between the urban core and its metropolitan and rural hinterland. The original CASP was predicated on the ongoing development and renewal of the city as the core of the city-region and policies were selected with a view to supporting its role as the economic engine for the city-region. This was based on a policy of concentration and improvement, land use policies aimed at reversing population and employment decline in the city core, and targeted investment in infrastructure to support economic activity. Overall, this was to be delivered through an emphasis on the provision of population and employment growth in the city and the satellite towns located in the metropolitan area (with the largest share of growth directed towards settlements on the rail corridor), whilst growth was also to be facilitated in the ring towns that encircled the city-region.

Examining the general pattern of population distribution in Cork from 2001 to 2011 highlights the difficulty in applying these high level objectives largely because it relies upon securing agreements from a large and diverse range of interests. In this case, it involved the creation of a new settlement and zoning regime for the city-region, and adhering to the philosophy of CASP meant a level of control and coordination that proved impossible to police in the context of two local authorities with different perspectives on the preferred development agenda. By 2006, it was clear that the spatial strategy was not proceeding in a

way that supported prioritisation of the city and that it had not managed to shape fundamental development trends in the way it had intended. While population targets for the city-region overall conformed to CASP predictions, there were significant spatial anomalies in the distribution of growth, highlighting in particular the continuing trend of city decline coupled with excessive suburban and rural growth. Table Four shows the city population continuing to decline (although CSO records for the city and suburbs present a more accurate reflection of urban growth of over 12,000 between 2002 and 2011), although the rate of population decline in the city has slowed significantly. The strong trend overall however is the continuation of the pre-CASP pattern of rural and ring town growth which accompanied the relative decline in the urban population. The rural and ring town areas grew by 25,045, representing a 26.7% increase between 2000 and 2011, whereas the city and suburbs grew by less than half that amount or 6.6% during that period.

The CASP Update (Indecon International/RPS, 2008, iv) acknowledged that early spatial development trends were not encouraging in respect of the balance between the city and its hinterland; "The City population has declined and is well below CASP expectations but the rural areas generally and Ring Town hinterlands grew much faster than anticipated… Population was therefore more dispersed than concentrated which is not aligned with what was envisaged in CASP." The recently published Gateways|Hubs Development Index for the Cork Gateway confirmed that this pattern had not been arrested by 2012 and raised concerns about the ongoing pattern of growth in areas outside the Zone 1 areas which consisted of the city and suburbs.

Table 4. Review of CASP Population Forecasts

	1996 Population Actual	2002 Population Actual	2006 Indicative Implied Projection [CASP]	2006 Population Actual	*Difference Actual/ Projection*	2011 Population Actual	*Difference 2002/2011*
Cork City	127,187	123,062	128,719	119,522	*-9,197*	119,230	*-3,832*
Cork City & Suburbs	179,954	186,239		190,384		198,582	*12,343*
Rest of Metropolitan Cork			149,366	153,019	*3,653*	170,292	
Cork Metropolitan Area			278,085	272,541	*-5,544*	289,522	
Ring Towns & Rural Areas			98,916	105,055	*6,139*	118,635	*25,045*
Cork City Region	325,000		377,000	377,596	*596*	408,157	*63,057*

Source: CASP 2002, CASP Update 2008, Census of Ireland 1996/2002/2011

There are also major concerns that the city-region's employment profile may also be evolving in a way that CASP had attempted to avoid. CASP had intended to promote the co-location of new economic activity with population growth, and therefore to promote central Cork as the prime location for new employment uses. This was to be achieved through an increase in jobs for the city of over 16,000 by 2020, in parallel with dedicated growth targets in the rest of metropolitan Cork (+26,000) and the ring towns and rural areas (+4,000) (See Table 5). It was envisaged that the city would accommodate this increase in employment through a programme of revitalisation and improvement of the city centre generally, and more specifically on the back of a wholesale redevelopment of brownfield sites, located mainly in the Docklands. The city centre, including a redeveloped docklands would facilitate most of the employment growth, as well as the southeast/northwest sectors.

Table 5 Planned Employment Growth to 2020

	2000	2020	Growth
City Centre	22,430	30,150	7,720
Northeast Cork	5,300	7,130	1,830
Northwest Cork	9,540	9,810	270
Southwest Cork	18,710	19,650	940
Southeast Cork	9,400	14,820	5,420
Cork City	65,380	81,560	16,180
Rest of Metropolitan Cork	53,580	78,750	26,170
Ring Towns & Rural Areas	37,040	41,060	4,020
Total	156,000	201,370	46,370

Source: CASP 2001

Analysis of the employment trends for Cork city since 2001 using the City Council's detailed ELUS data [Employment and Land Use Survey] indicate that the city experienced a very small net loss in jobs, following a substantial increase up to 2006 (Table 6), reflecting the impact of the wider economic landscape in recent years. It is improbable therefore that the city will reach the target of 81,560 set out by CASP and highly unlikely to meet the more optimistic target of 90,691 contained in the CASP Update, 2008. Although the city's overall employment figures have demonstrated a notable resilience in the context of extremely disruptive external fiscal and economic circumstances, the spatial distribution of jobs across the city is concerning from the perspective of planned growth and employment targets. Table 6 illustrates the employment distribution across the city between 2001 and 2006, and shows a significant decline of 16.5% in the city centre and almost 14% in the south centre, accompanied by 16.5% increase in the southwest and over 25% increase in the northeast.

Table 6 Employment Change Cork city 2001-2011

	Cork City Total	Cork City Centre	Northeast	Northwest	Southwest	Southeast	South Centre
2001	71,642	28,968	8,386	4,701	15,010	9,605	4,972
2006	75,049	28,243	8,406	4,749	16,898	10,077	5,287
2011	71,387	24,175	9,020	5,886	17,483	10,520	4,288
Change 2001-2011	-255	-4,793	634	1,185	2,473	915	-684
Change 2001-2011 %	-0.36	-16.55	7.56	25.21	16.48	9.53	-13.76

Source: Cork City Employment and Land Use Surveys 2006, 2011

These trends reflect some non-related structural patterns shaping the employment profile of these individual areas, such as business expansion of existing industries in the southwest and northeast sectors for example. However, there are also some indications that the decline in the city centre is related to growth of the suburban areas, with evidence of business relocations from the city centre and the inability of the city centre to capture demand for high quality employment space due to the lack of high quality, large scale office spaces. In recent years, there is also an indication that the success of high profile locations such as Mahon for example, may in fact be having implications for the ongoing sustainability of the city centre as the prime location for employment in the city. Therefore, although the overall city employment picture may appear to be somewhat robust in the context of the wider economy, the basis of CASP's economic strategy – the city centre acting as the economic engine of the city-region - is undermined by this redistribution of employment within the city boundary and the relative decline of the city centre. This has been compounded in particular by the failure of the Docklands to emerge as a focus for activity and renewal as originally envisaged.

The Cork Docklands Development Strategy was prepared alongside CASP, published in 2001 and formed the basis for advancing the strategic aspirations for expansion of employment and population in the urban core. The strategy articulated the potential of Docklands and identified that the area could accommodate significant employment, residential and recreation uses including approximately 580,000m² of new non-residential uses including

offices, education, retail, culture and leisure facilities, 5,800 new residential units as well as new parks, public spaces, pedestrian routes, marina and recreational uses, new bridge/road river crossings and the consolidation of the Civic Quarter around the City Hall at the heart of the expanded City Centre. The provisions of the CDDS were subsequently translated into the Cork City Development Plan 2004 and further articulated through the preparation of Local Area Plans for the South and North Docklands sites. In a compact, densely populated city such as Cork, the role of the Docklands in facilitating substantial growth was essential. The Economic Study for Cork Docklands report prepared by DTZ Pieda Consulting, outlined its importance, "There are a limited number of areas – with the exception of Docklands – which have the scope and potential to enable the significant growth the City requires to achieve under the NSS and its designation as a National Gateway. Docklands is the only significant sized area within the City which has the scale and potential to enable Cork to deliver and reinforce its acknowledged role as the location outside of Dublin to play a key role in the economic development of Ireland. Importantly, the regeneration of Docklands squarely addresses the sustainable principles of both the Compact City and the City Region." (DTZ Pieda Consulting, 2007, 28). Thus, the redevelopment of the docklands was the critical ingredient for supporting Cork's role as a National Gateway and in achieving an urban critical mass at the urban centre.

The lack of progress in terms of docklands' jobs and population growth has certainly undermined the overall contribution of the city centre in the context of driving growth in the city-region. It is important to note however, that a lack of private sector investment and development activity on the scale anticipated by CASP and the CDDS cannot be explained by a lack of certainty in planning terms. Cork City Council was quite efficient in translating the objectives of the docklands strategy into a statutory framework through the new City Development Plan and the two Local Area Plans. In addition, a comprehensive and focussed set of guiding documents were prepared, including an Economic Study, a Jobs@Docklands Strategy, Cork Docklands Business Implementation Plan 2008, a Land Contamination Study, Water and Infrastructure Programmes, Quay Walls Study, as well as a detailed urban design and open space framework. In addition, some early progress had been made in the form of a number of high profile development projects at Lapp's Quay/City Quarter and Anglesea Street/Elysian. However, due to the pattern of land ownerships, the ongoing presence of an active Port, the costs associated with

redevelopment of brownfield lands and the need for infrastructural investment, in order for the Docklands to progress in earnest, explicit government commitment was required to confirm public endorsement and to instigate the process of renewal and development.

In the absence of such a formal commitment in the form of substantial infrastructural investment or fiscal incentivisation measures, combined with the high redevelopment costs, private investors, major employers, and public institutions were simply not persuaded that the Docklands would become a viable location for investment. In addition, the easy availability of alternative, lower cost and accessible locations within the metropolitan area for similar developments was undoubtedly influential. In particular, the emergence of the Cork Airport Business Park as a new employment hub was viewed as having a material effect on the ability of the city centre to attract investment and jobs. Originally conceived and permitted as a location for enterprises involved in airport-related business activities, the Cork Airport Business Park has subsequently evolved into a large and diverse conventional urban business park with over 3,000 jobs, accommodating a large variety of businesses with no apparent explicit functional relationship with airport or airport-related activities. This location now accommodates businesses such as offices for pharmaceutical companies, insurance agencies, banks, software companies, healthcare providers and a range of urban-oriented, non-airport related businesses. The immediate availability of low cost, fully serviced and accessible greenfield sites proved to be a major attraction and Cork County Council's zoning regime proved to be too flexible to control the rapid expansion of this employment location.

Consequently, the city and in particular the city centre and docklands was effectively competing with its own metropolitan area for new employment. Whilst it is certainly not especially unique for different parts of an urban area to compete for investment, it is however preferable to coordinate strategic urban redevelopment priorities to avoid direct conflicts in close proximity. In particular, in a metropolitan area of the scale of Cork, it is important that there is careful management of high value economic activities that contribute to the wider regeneration objectives for the entire catchment such as those planned for critical locations such as Docklands. In this case, many of the uses specifically targeted for Cork's docklands in the 2006 Economic Study [Bio Pharma/Pharmaceuticals, Life Sciences & Medical Devices ICT & Digital Media Financial Services & Internationally

Traded Services/Mobile Services] were instead being directed into the Cork Airport Business Park. As a result, the two local authorities were effectively competing against one another for a relatively small pool of endogenous investment that was the most likely source of early external investment into the urban area. Had there been more overt and dedicated backing from central government to the Docklands in the form of fiscal measures and/or direct infrastructural supports, it is likely that a more level playing field would have emerged in terms of the ability of the city centre, and in particular, the docklands to compete. Although this might question the respective local authorities' commitment to the underlying CASP principles in respect of the role of the city centre core in the economic life of the city-region, it is clear that both authorities were acting in the best interests of their constituencies. In addition, it would be perhaps unfair to criticise Cork County Council for permitting developments when there was clear demand in that particular location, and when alternative sites in the city were apparently not immediately available.

The case study of Cork Docklands and the Cork Airport Business Park, as well as the data in respect of population and employment change across the city-region suggests that the success of Cork as a balanced and sustainable city-region and as a driver of regional and national economic development is being undermined by the fragmented nature of the governance landscape. The co-operative model provided by CASP is still a valid basis for a governing regime for the wider city-region and should be maintained, however, there is an urgent need to rebalance the jurisdictional and administrative divisions to support the fundamentals of CASP. This will necessitate a meaningful recalibration of the boundary between Cork City and Cork County Councils to reflect both functional realities and a realistic future time horizon. In simple terms, it is essential for Cork and the wider South West Region that this expanded metropolitan area is large enough to represent the functional urban area for the next 50 years.

A NEW GOVERNANCE MODEL FOR URBAN IRELAND: THE CORK METROPOLITAN AREA

The government's local government reforms include specific reference to the problems associated with Cork's administrative arrangements. Putting People First (2012, 86) acknowledges the risks associated with this; "[in Cork] the administration of…a largely continuous, or closely connected, urban area is divided between two entirely separate local

authorities carries potential future risks, for example, with regard to development, spatial planning, and economic and social evolution" and suggests that "..a more prudent long-term approach would be to bring the administrative configuration into line with the demographic and developmental reality." The document suggests that this would involve a "boundary adjustment to define an appropriate metropolitan area incorporating allowance for a suitable future development horizon" (2012, 86). This specific reference to a metropolitan area is significant in that it would suggest that a modest boundary extension to simply capture the contiguous urban area is not appropriate. Furthermore, the use of the term 'future development horizon' is important because it indicates a preference for a realigned boundary that goes beyond the task of simply correcting an historic anomaly and which instead considers future development needs at a strategic level.

There is a range of options that may be considered as part of a new metropolitan definition of the urban area of Cork. The need to establish an appropriate and manageable metropolitan area is considered an important ingredient of the future success of Cork as a driver of local, regional and national development and competitiveness. Good urban governance in Ireland's second-tier cities is an issue of national importance in terms of promoting a more balanced and sustainable urban structure and it is impractical to expect the two local authorities in this case to identify the most effective solution. The role of government is essential in leading the advancement of these proposals and there should be a centrally co-ordinated review conducted to outline the most advantageous approach. A review of the history of metropolitan governance and spatial planning in the city-region over the last forty years, combined with an analysis of trends in urban governance in Europe's cities suggests a number of essential criteria that should be considered as part of this process;

- *A New Governing Unit:* instead of pursuing a simple territorial expansion of the existing City into the County, using the boundary extension procedures under Part 8 of the Local Government Act 2001, a new metropolitan authority should be created, to replace Cork City Council, within an expanded jurisdiction. The Cork Metropolitan Council would function legally and procedurally as a City Council under existing legislation;

- *Scale and Critical Mass:* the newly constituted unit should reflect the functional realities of the metropolitan area in population and employment terms. This is essential in how the metropolitan area is represented as a statistical unit and in the way it is perceived internationally as a medium sized European city;

- *A Metropolitan Unit:* the new Council should be established as a *metropolitan* and not a *city-region* unit, and should therefore not extend to cover the entire city-region [CASP area]. It is considered appropriate to continue the tradition of shared responsibility for the implementation of the CASP Strategy;

- *Viability, Political Rationale and Legitimacy;* the formulation of the new metropolitan area should address the need to maintain a politically and economically viable Cork County authority with geographical and functional coherence. It should also have some shared meaning as a unit of administration, spatial planning, data and statistical representation and territorial organisation;

- *Functional Catchments;* the scale and shape of the new metropolitan area should in some way reflect a confluence of functional catchments, including some compromise between commuting, retail, employment and housing markets which have a defined geographic scale;

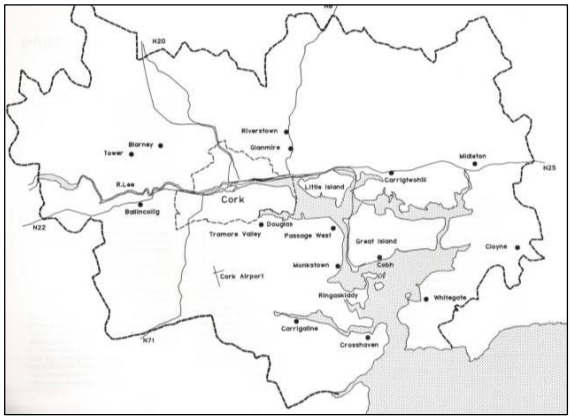
- *Future Oriented;* the new metropolitan area should be designed to function effectively as an appropriate governing unit using a 40-50 year outlook and should therefore consider the likely future demographic, environmental, economic and physical requirements of a future Cork as opposed to simply redrawing the boundary to capture existing contiguous built up areas; and

- *Directed by government;* this task should be coordinated and lead by central government, perhaps through a formal Local Government Committee process with a formal role for the two existing local authorities.

Whilst there may be multiple options to consider in light of the above, there is already a territorial unit in place that would address most if not all of these guiding criteria. The first

Land Use and Transport Study (LUTS) in 1978 identified an area with a defined boundary that has been used consistently as a spatial planning unit (known as Cork Metropolitan Area) by both Local Authorities (See Figures 3 and 4).

Figure 3. Definition of Cork Metropolitan Area LUTS 1978



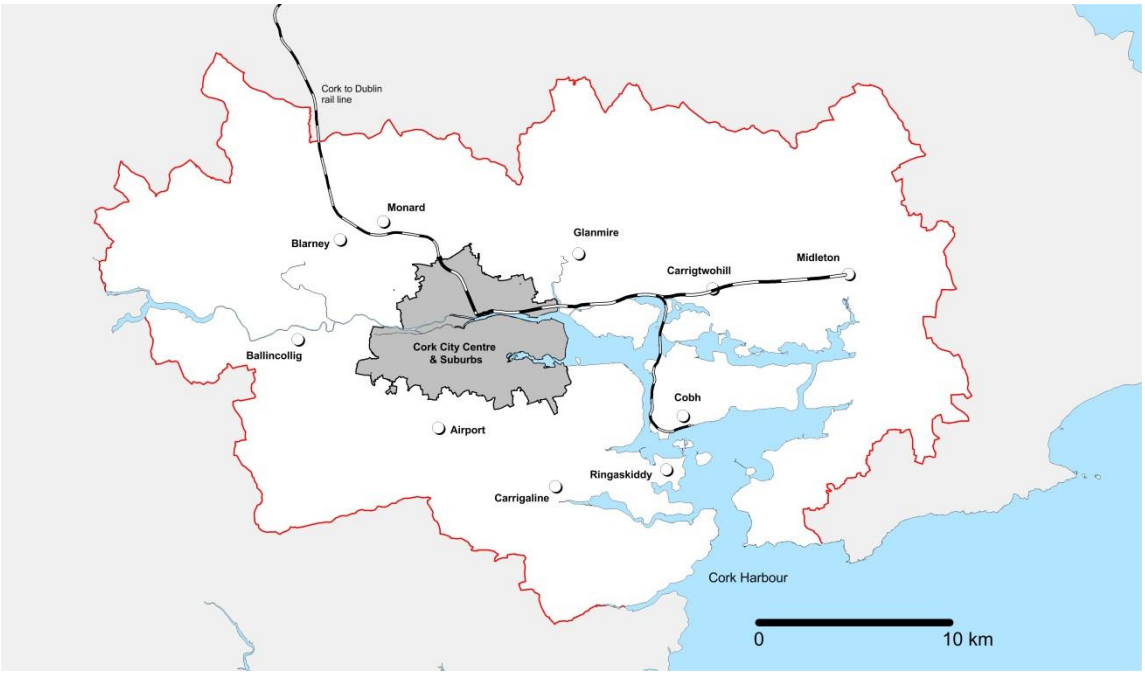
Source: LUTS (Skidmore Owings & Merrill: 1978)

Figure 4. Cork Metropolitan Area [shaded] i CASP 2000

Source: CASP (Atkins: 2002)

This metropolitan definition has persisted and was confirmed and reinforced in the CASP strategy as the basis for development and growth in the city-region. More importantly, it has emerged as a widely used unit of analysis and policy both within a CASP context and also as a basis for the jointly-commissioned metropolitan projects. As well as the two local authorities developing a Joint Housing Strategy and a Joint Retail Strategy, the Metropolitan Area is used as one of Cork County Council's Strategic Planning Areas for the County. In addition, this unit has formed the basis for metropolitan statistical analysis since 1976, providing a very useful resource for measuring and assessing performance and change in social, economic and spatial trends. The continuous use of the Cork Metropolitan Area (CMA) as a spatial unit of analysis and policy indicates both its practicality as a governance space and an important institutional acceptance of its territorial and functional legitimacy.

Figure 5 Cork Metropolitan Area, comprising Cork City & Suburbs and Settlement Network

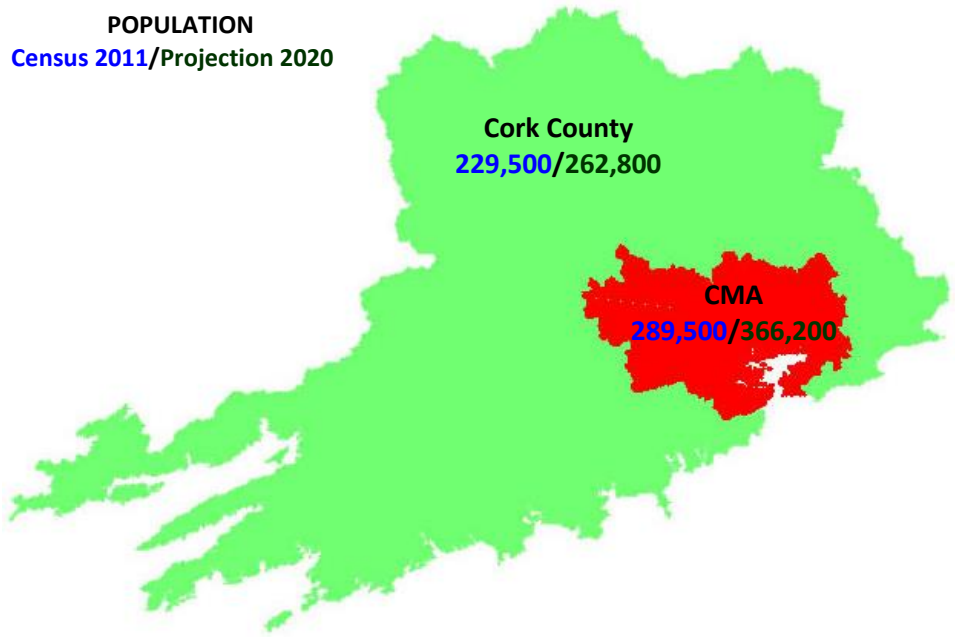


Mapping: Centre for Planning Education and Research, UCC
Diagram Features: Large white area outlined in red represents 'Metropolitan Cork'; grey area represent Cork City and suburbs.

Institutionalising the Cork Metropolitan Area as a unit of local government would correct an historical anomaly whereby the urban area's growth and status has been ignored since its boundary was last adjusted in 1966. It is evident that events over the last 50 years in the city-region have created an urban governing landscape that is seriously deficient in urban administration, environmental and spatial planning terms, and that the very significant challenge of urban governance now requires government attention. It is considered that the CMA proposal also represents a pragmatic solution that ensures a viable and functionally coherent County Council would be retained in the context of the new urban authority. It would result in a more balanced jurisdiction in population terms (See Figure 6), ensuring that both local authorities would have constituencies that are economically and politically viable, and that the newly configured electoral area arrangements will continue to be workable in the context of Cork County.

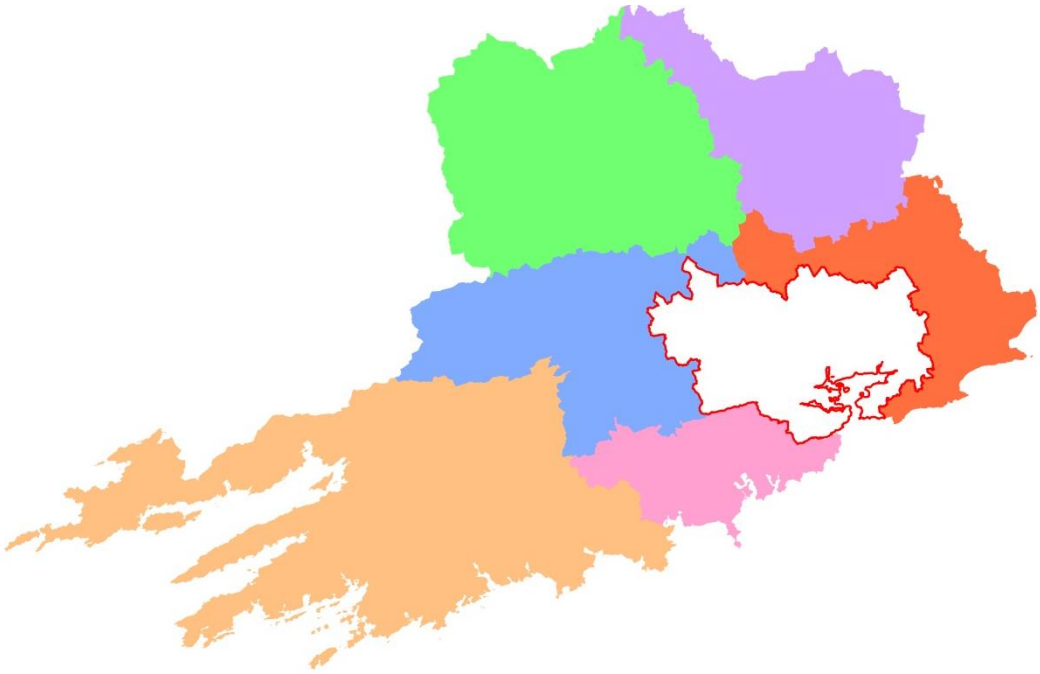
The recently announced reconfiguration of electoral districts for Cork County would need further modifications in preparing the system of Municipal Districts to accommodate this new administrative solution. However, it would appear that the criteria for reform contained in the review by the Local Electoral Area Commission and the Putting People First proposals can still be adhered to in the context of the proposed reorganisation presented here. This would result in the establishment of approximately 6 Electoral Areas [making up 3 Municipal Districts] in Cork County, surrounding the newly established Cork Metropolitan Area (Figure 7), resulting in a more balanced political, territorial and administrative landscape.

Figure 6. Population in Cork County and Cork Metropolitan Area, 2011 + Projected Population, 2020



Source: Data: CSO 2011, Cork City Council Core Strategy, Cork County Council Core Strategy
Mapping: Centre for Planning Education and Research, UCC
Diagram Features: Red area represents Cork Metropolitan Area; green area represents remainder of Cork County council administrative area.

Figure 7.Revised Modified Electoral Areas and Proposed Cork Metropolitan Area



Source: Local Electoral Area Boundary Committee Report 2013
Mapping: Centre for Planning Education and Research, UCC
Diagram Features: Large white area outlined in red represents 'Metropolitan Cork'; other coloured areas indicate possible reconfigurations of Electoral Areas of Cork County.

The purpose of this paper was to consider the possibilities for a new paradigm of urban governance in Ireland to emerge from the government's proposed reconstitution of local government structures. It is suggested that despite significant structural, political and economic obstacles, as well as evidence of some discordant spatial and economic development patterns in the Cork case, a relatively coherent and consistent approach to strategic spatial planning at the sub-regional and metropolitan scale has persisted within the city-region. This however, is increasingly vulnerable because the scale, nature and character of development in the city-region in recent times points to an increasingly fragmented and competitive decision making arena which serves to highlight the need for a more robust and sustainable balance between the jurisdictional arrangements between the urban and rural authorities.

This paper contends that the recent reforms announced in Putting People First provides an opportunity to build upon the experience of metropolitan planning in the Cork area and to

recognise that the efforts on behalf of the Cork authorities to develop strategic governing capacity over the past 40 years now need to be supported and institutionalised. This is essential both as a way to improve urban governance in the context of Cork, but also to further advance urban governance on a metropolitan footing in Ireland which reflects social and economic realities. Cork is an ideal location to innovate in this context and, as such, could act as a laboratory for restructuring and rescaling urban governance. 'Putting People First' offers the opportunity to address the perceived anti-urban policies that have characterised local government since the inception of the state as well as promoting a more sustainable, balanced and dynamic urban structure for the state as a national socio-economic imperative.

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5. Essay Three

Territorial Development, Planning Reform and Urban Governance: The Case of Ireland's Second- Tier Cities

ABSTRACT

The increased emphasis within Europe on the role of second-tier cities has implications for the ways in which these urban centres are considered within national spatial planning strategies. In centralised, monocentric states like Ireland, there has been a general ambivalence towards urban policy for cities outside the capital city, and historically this has prevented the development of a strong, diversified urban hierarchy undermining prospects for balanced regional development. This paper examines the extent to which a new found emphasis on Ireland's second-tier cities which emerged in the 'Gateways' policy of the National Spatial Strategy (NSS, 2002) was matched by subsequent political and administrative commitment to facilitate the development of these urban centres.

Following a discussion of the position of second-tier cities in an international context and a brief overview of recent demographic and economic trends, the paper assesses the relative performance of Ireland's second-tier cities in influencing development trends, highlighting a comprehensive failure to deliver compact urban growth. In this context, the paper then discusses the implications of current development plans for the second-tier cities and proposals for Irish local government reform for securing compact urban development.

INTRODUCTION: SECOND-TIER CITIES AND METROPOLITAN GOVERNANCE

There has been significant interest in the role of second-tier cities and in particular in their contribution to national economic performance in recent years (Markusen et al, 1999: Newton, 2012: Parkinson, 2014: Camagni et al, 2014). As part of a re-territorialisation of nation-states caused by new geographies and new economies of production and consumption at global and local levels, cities and city-regions have assumed greater importance as economic and functional spaces (Jacobs, 1984: Ohmae, 1993: Scott and Storper, 2003). This has evolved as the process of economic globalisation has taken on an explicit territorial character based on spatial agglomeration, which tends to encourage concentration of economic activity, people and politics around existing and emerging urban centres. This is largely explained by the existence of agglomeration economies whereby physical proximity, economic synergies and institutional density in the urban arena reinforce and intensify the comparative and competitive advantage of certain urban locations (Henderson, 1985: Glaeser, 2008: Camagni and Capello, 2014).

The role of the city-region as an organisational element in the economic space of developed countries has been recognised increasingly in recent decades, from academic circles to policy-making communities. It has been suggested for example that combinations of an urban core or cores, linked to semi-urban and rural hinterland by functional ties, is an appropriate scale for the implementation of development and planning policies (Rodriquez-Pose, 2008). For Janssen-Jansen & Hutton (2011, 7) "Metropolitan-based local economic regions are increasingly important as metropolitan areas have often greater economic and cultural resonance than current administrative local government units". The city and the city-region (broadly characterised here for the purpose of this paper as 'metropolitan areas') is being conceptualised therefore as a space in which development and territorial policies are increasingly articulated and as a suitable scale for organising economic growth and managing development. Metropolitan areas, it is argued, have assumed greater roles in national and international development and are now understood as "locomotives of the national economies within which they are situated" (Scott and Storper, 2003, 581).

This emphasis in academic and policy making circles has been accompanied by increased focus on the idea of metropolitan governance (Diamond, 1997: Cox, 2010: Newton, 2012) as an important concern as part of territorial rescaling and local government reform. The concept of metropolitan governance here refers to the structures, governing arrangements, decision-making systems and institutions which combine to articulate a series of policies and actions in respect of a territorially defined urban constituency that may or may not have a formal administrative or legal recognition. It is used as a way to characterise the way in which cities have reacted to the challenges of increased globalisation, inter-urban competition and place-based strategies aimed at securing urban success in an increasingly fragmented and complex economic and political arena.

These economic and governance processes are connected, and have emerged in response to a combination of external and internal forces, described by Tosics (2007). In response to external influences, urban areas have increasingly attempted to pursue an economic dynamism to secure future success within an increasingly competitive global and integrated economy. This entrepreneurial governance is considered to be more responsive to the objective of mobilising local resources to ensure that urban areas benefit from increasingly competitive free markets. Metropolitan regions in Europe have increasingly concerned themselves with how to represent their cities as dynamic, assertive and competitive actors within Europe's economic space and this has encouraged thinking around scale, governing arrangements, critical mass, institutional and administrative relations, quality of life, environmental and placed-based considerations. Secondly, internal forces such as urban and suburban sprawl, social divisions, urban poverty, environmental awareness, accessibility and public transport prioritisation, the urban renewal/brownfield land agenda and city liveability have all served to exert pressure on traditional governing norms and encouraged a fresh examination of the efficacy of traditional modes of governance and administrative-territorial arrangements. These twin forces reflect an acknowledgement that historically-fragmented urban governing structures largely defined by legally-prescribed municipal boundaries are not necessarily conducive to effective metropolitan governance and contemporary urban development strategies.

In a recent ESPON study of over 150 European capital and second-tier cities in 31 countries, a number of policy messages for local, national and European policy-makers were

identified as being key to supporting second-tier cities (ESPON, 2013). It highlighted the contribution of second-tier cities to national economies and recommended that governments invest more in the second-tier of Europe's urban hierarchies. The study presented evidence that decentralising responsibilities, resources and powers by encouraging and stimulating high performance across a number of cities rather than concentrating investment in the capital produces national economic (as well as democratic) benefits. This increased focus on second cities has emerged in response to the contention that while successful capitals are important to their respective national economies, there is "a risk that they dominate the rest of the urban system to the extent that the national economy becomes spatially and structurally unbalanced" (ESPON, 2013, 58). This approach reflects trends in European spatial policy contained in the European Spatial Development perspective (ESDP) (Committee on Spatial Development) which had been adopted by EU member states in 1999. This involved re-orienting the role and function of the peripheral urban centres away from one of subordinate and hierarchical relationships in national terms, towards an approach based on a self-reliance, mobilisation and direct participation in European and global economies.

This also reflects what Parkinson, Meegan, Karecha (2015, 1064) identify as a policy concern around over-concentration, whereby "Capital cities can reach a point where diseconomies make them less competitive because of the negative externalities caused by unregulated growth and diminishing marginal returns." Parkinson's work presents strong evidence which demonstrates that decentralising resources, powers and responsibilities throughout a number of cities rather than solely on the capital city produces a range of national benefits. The report found for example evidence in Germany, Austria, Italy, Spain, the Nordic states, and in the former unitary states across eastern and central Europe, that the second-tier cities outperformed their capitals. This study provide valuable insights into the way Europe's cities are governed and administered and emphasises in particular the emerging importance in public policy terms of the second-tier of the urban hierarchy.

In centralised, monocentric states like Ireland, there has been a general ambivalence towards urban policy at the second-tier and this has traditionally prevented the development of a strong and diversified urban hierarchy and regional balance. Parkinson's comprehensive studies however suggests that this might be damaging in respect of

national economic performance and indicated that "they (second-tier cities) can achieve many of the agglomeration effects of capitals, provided they have the right infrastructure, facilities, capacity and powers. They can lift the performance of their regions, reduce inter-regional inequalities and promote social cohesion." (Parkinson et al 2015, 1064). Furthermore, it suggests that decentralisation of responsibilities to second-tier cities is only possible if matched by corresponding powers and resources and that cities in less centralised countries where economic resources are dispersed perform better at a local and national scale.

This paper is concerned with exploring the extent to which these territorial -economic forces are manifesting at the metropolitan scale in second-tier cities in Ireland. Ireland's second-tier grouping includes four urban centres - Cork, Limerick, Galway and Waterford. Although the population and economic characteristics of these cities varies considerably, and there are important local differences as urban entities, they are treated in this paper collectively in order to provide insights into the nature of change across the urban hierarchy of the state. Using settlement policy and development activity as a proxy for testing spatial policy at the national level, it assesses the effectiveness of the state's attempt to pursue a spatially-coherent development policy for its second-tier cities. Ireland's National Spatial Strategy put forward what can be understood as an integrated spatial-economic framework. This involved ensuring that its second-tier cities performed to a certain level in respect of development activity and specifically, population growth. Hence, population change within the second tier of the urban hierarchy became a key part of its spatial-economic strategy in favour of regional development. Therefore, the economic performance of these urban centres was being linked in part to their ability to accommodate urban population growth. As such, by assessing the effectiveness of the state's efforts to promote particular demographic outcomes, a fundamental feature of the NSS can be assessed.

Following a brief overview of the state's recent urbanisation trends, the paper identifies how Ireland's National Spatial Strategy initiated an explicit policy context for the country's second-tier cities. Using demographic data, it then measures the relative performance of the second-tier cities by examining the degree of concentration of settlement and development activity in these locations against what was designated in the NSS. This is

supplemented by a review of how the individual local authorities in those locations have since reordered their settlement and zoning regimes following legislative reforms aimed at addressing continued dispersal of development patterns. Finally, it offers some brief reflections on the challenges associated with introducing territorial policies aimed at promoting second-tier-cities.

URBANISATION AND URBAN POLICY IN IRELAND

Ireland is experiencing a reordering of its demographic and settlement profile that has occurred without any discernible management framework in public policy terms. The state has become increasingly urbanised in the last 20 years, with an increase in the overall urban share of population, a corresponding decrease in rural share and an increase in the number of places now classified officially as urban settlements.[1] The substantial population increases at a national level since the 1990s has been closely associated with the process of urban expansion as population has increasingly concentrated in urban areas or within the functional reach of the principal urban centres. There has also been a corresponding increase in the urbanisation of economic activity, as the locational character of international mobile investment and the importance of agglomeration economies has further consolidated the role and importance of urban areas in economic terms. Despite this, it is difficult to discern any particular government policy that acknowledges the challenge of urbanisation or identifies the need for an urban policy agenda.

The relative share of urban and rural population growth between 1991 and 2011 is illustrated in Table 1. Overall, the state experienced very strong population growth during this period, with an increase of 30% (1,062,533) in the twenty years after 1991. Both urban and rural populations expanded in the 20-year period, with the urban population expanding by 41.6% (836,182) and the rural population expanding by 14.9% (226,351). The relative share of total growth is predominantly urban in nature with the majority (78.7%) of total growth has been located in urban areas.

[1] In 1901, only 28% of the country's population resided in urban areas (settlements with over 1,500 persons). By 1961 the state's population recorded for the first time an urban majority (CSO, 2011, 16 and the aggregate urban population reached 62% in 2011.

Table 1 Urban and Rural Population change in Ireland 1991 – 2011

	1991	2002	2011	1991-2011
State Population	3,525,719	3,917,203	4,588,252	1,062,533
Aggregate Urban Population	2,010,700	2,334,282	2,846,882	836,182
Aggregate Rural Population	1,515,019	1,582,921	1,741,370	226,351
Pop Change (Absolute)	-14,924	391,484	671,049	1,062,533
Pop Change (%)	-0.4	11.1	17.1	30.1
Urban Pop Change (Absolute)	8,526	323,582	512,600	836,182
Urban Pop Change (%)	0.4	16.1	22	41.6
Rural Pop Change (Absolute)	-23,450	67,902	158,449	226,351
Rural Pop Change (%)	-1.5	4.5	10.0	14.9
Urban Population Change as Share of population growth (%)	N/A	82.7	76.4	78.7
Rural Population Change as Share of population growth (%)	N/A	17.3	23.6	21.3

Source: CSO (1991, 2002, 2011)

The underperformance of the state's second-tier urban centres is illustrated in Table 2. Using the CSO measure which captures the city and the physically-contiguous built up area, these figures provide an indication of the scale of growth experienced in the built-up areas, as distinct from their wider regional hinterlands. Between 1991 and 2011, the four combined cities added only 75,791 persons (7.1% of national growth), whilst the towns of 10,000 and over added an extra 394,003 persons (37.1% of national growth). [2] During this period, the only location to record significant, above-average growth was Galway which experienced a 51% increase (25,025), which in fact accommodated more population growth than Cork city and suburbs during the same period. This data also allows for an examination of the relative impact of the NSS in respect of the share of growth in the various urban centres - covering both pre (1991-2001) and post (2001-2011) time periods. These are discussed in the latter part of this paper.

[2]The category of 'Towns of 10,000 and over'' captures two different settlement types; the traditional county or market towns which are distributed widely across the territory and the commuter towns which are generally located within the catchments of the principal urban centres.

Table 2 Population Trends in Ireland's Five Cities and Key Towns 1991-2011

	Population 1991	Population 2001	Population 2011	Absolute change 1991-2001	% change 1991-2001	Absolute change 2001-2011	% change 2001-2011	% share of national growth 1991-2001	% share of national growth 2001-2011
Dublin city & suburbs	915,516	1,004,614	1,110,627	89,098	10	106,013	10.6	22.8	15.8
Cork city & suburbs	174,400	186,239	198,582	11,839	7	12,343	6.6	3.0	1.8
Limerick city & suburbs	75,436	86,998	91,454	11,562	15	4,456	5.1	3.0	0.7
Galway city & suburbs	50,853	66,163	76,778	15,310	30	10,615	16.0	3.9	1.6
Waterford city & suburbs	41,853	46,736	51,519	4,883	12	4,783	10.2	1.2	0.7
Second-Tier Cities	342,542	386,136	418,333	43,594	13	32,197	8.3	11.1	4.8
All Cities & Suburbs	1,258,058	1,390,750	1,528,960	132,692	11	138,210	9.9	33.9	20.6
Towns 10,000 or over	336,411	551,863	730,414	215,452	64	178,551	32.4	55.0	26.6

Source: CSO (1996, 2011)

The increased pattern of concentration of Ireland's population in locations within or close to urban areas has been accompanied by a corresponding urbanisation of economic activity, with a clear pattern of co-location of jobs and population. An examination of census figures in 2006 and 2011 showed that while the total number of people at work in Ireland declined by 6.4%, there were employment increases in all Irish cities apart from Waterford [See Table 3]. These figures provide an employment figure for the cities and their immediate environs and include the net gains/losses on account of persons travelling in and out of the cities in question. This data illustrates the general economic resilience of three of the second-tier cities, with Limerick and Cork in particular managing to facilitate growth following the economic recession which took hold from 2008 onwards. These two cities' performance during this period contrasts sharply with that of Waterford, which experienced a 9.7% decrease in people at work and a reduction of 8.9% in workers travelling into the city & suburbs.

Table 3 Total persons at work and the number of persons commuting to the Irish cities and suburbs, 2006-2011

Urban Area	Persons at work 2006	Persons at work 2011	Change in persons at work 2006-2011	*% change in persons at work* 2006-2011	Workers travelling into the city & suburbs 2006	Workers travelling into the city & suburbs 2011	Change in workers travelling into the city & suburbs	*% change in workers travelling into the city & suburbs*
Dublin city & suburbs	455,375	469,987	14,612	*3.2*	104,865	117,764	12,899	*12.3*
Cork city & suburbs	86,316	92,150	5,834	*6.8*	31,909	36,519	4,610	*14.4*
Limerick city &suburbs	35,977	40,464	4,487	*12.5*	15,984	20,086	4,102	*25.7*
Galway city & suburbs	40,859	41,402	543	*1.3*	18,931	20,560	1,629	*8.6*
Waterford city & suburbs	25,838	23,332	-2,506	*-9.7*	11,685	10,646	-1,039	*-8.9*
Ireland Total	**1,930,042**	**1,807,360**	**-122,682**	**-6.4**	**N/A**	**N/A**	**N/A**	**N/A**

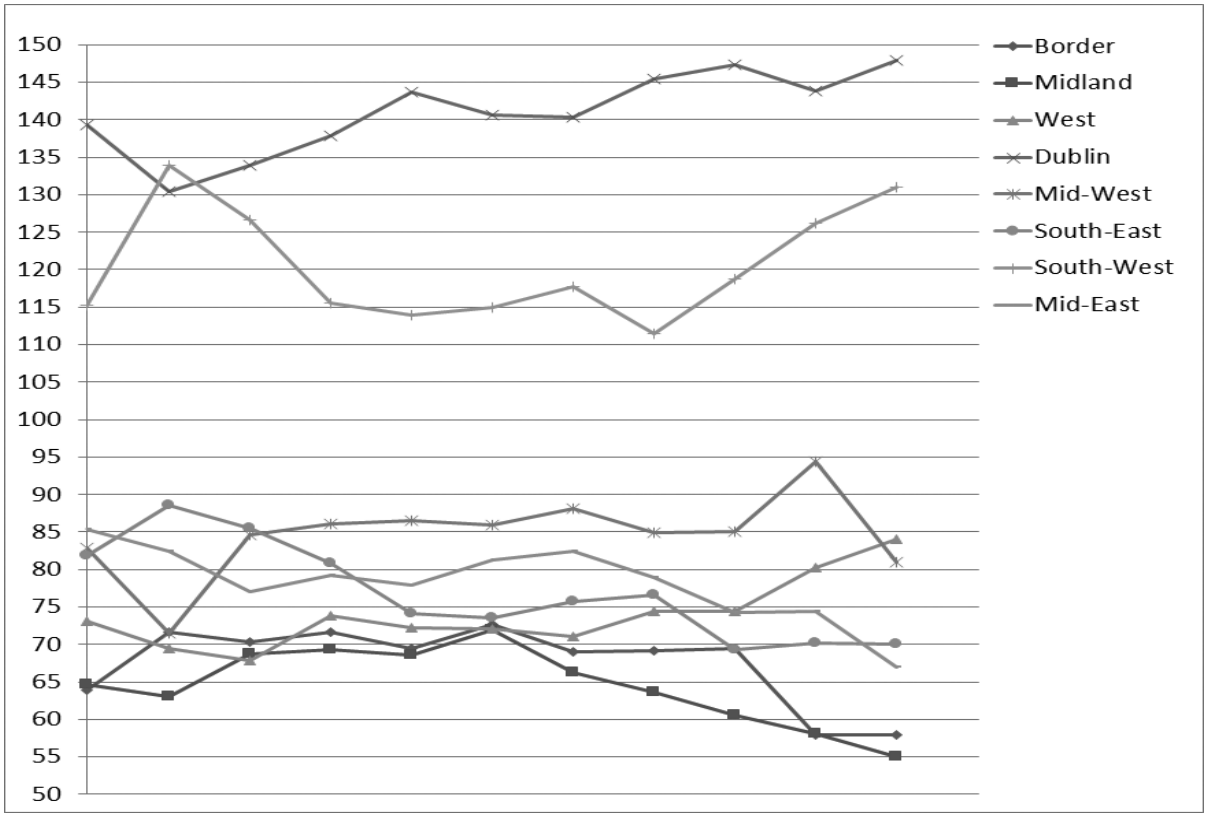
Source: Census of Ireland [2006, 2011]

The regional distribution of economic activity shown in Figure 1 shows a clear correlation between urbanisation and productivity. The regional breakdown of Gross Value Added (GVA) (a measure in economics of the value of goods and services produced in an area minus the cost of materials and services) illustrates an interesting set of trends.[3] Firstly, regions containing a large urban centre generally performed stronger than rural regions without a major urban centre. Secondly, the two largest urban regions, Dublin and the South West (anchored by Cork), consistently produced above state-average productivity figures, both over 130% of the national average in 2011. Thirdly, in the rest of the state, the regions with the lowest GVA were those without a major urban centre – Mid-East, Border and Midlands, while the Mid-West, South-East and West, anchored by Limerick, Waterford and Galway respectively performed relatively well. However, the results also suggest that there is a widening of the gap between Dublin and the second-tier cities in economic terms

[3] GVA is used here to reflect general patterns of economic activity as it is the only economic measure calculated at a regional scale in Ireland. GVA, however, only provides a broad signpost of economic activity because of the way in which transnational firms tend to report exaggerated levels of output from their Irish operations as a way of transferring taxable revenues from other jurisdictions to reduce tax liabilities. As a result, this measure tends to reflect regional concentrations of foreign investment as opposed to pure economic activity. These patterns of foreign direct investment however also reflects the general regional economic profile of the state and the location and concentration of employment.

with indications of the ongoing dominance of the capital city and the underperformance of the second-tier cities.

Figure 1: Indices of GVA per person 2001-2011 at Basic Prices (State=100)



Source: CSO 2011

This pattern of increased urbanisation in demographic and economic terms has not been accompanied by any change in the way that Ireland's urban areas are governed, and cities remain relatively powerless actors on the national stage. According to Bannon (2004, p. 27) in Ireland, "large-scale urban and metropolitan growth has been viewed as an inevitability and it has taken place in the absence of any pro-active, coherent urban policy". In addition, one of the defining features of Irish administration is its highly centralised nature (Callanan and Keogan, 2003), which is characterised by a high concentration of political, administrative and financial power in Dublin, with a very weak framework at regional and municipal levels of government. Regional and local governance is effectively a devolved function of central government, and local

government functions are constrained by limited competencies and a constrained local funding regime.

IRELAND'S NATIONAL SPATIAL STRATEGY – AN EMERGING URBAN POLICY?

The publication of the National Spatial Strategy 2002 – 2020 (NSS) represented an important moment for spatial planning in Ireland**,** and was a significant milestone in the development of an urban policy framework. It introduced an explicit recognition of the importance of cities as agents of regional development and as critical ingredients of national economic policy. The identification of a series of 'national gateways'[4] at the city scale reflected an attempt to introduce a strategy of concentrated de-concentration, whereby the second-tier cities in particular would be prioritised and supported as the major non-Dublin centres for economic and demographic expansion. This was presented as a means of achieving regional balance in respect of the overall distribution of activity across the state and a way to address the ongoing dominance of Dublin nationally. The strategy "emphasises the importance of capitalising upon the strengths of and investment in Ireland's existing major urban areas" (Government of Ireland, 2002, 36) setting out a regional policy agenda that relied on establishing a strong second tier within the urban hierarchy.

The challenges presented by the continued concentration of population and economic growth in the Greater Dublin Area during the 1990s led to a recognition that there was a need for a regional dimension to Ireland's economic and physical development strategy (Walsh, 2004, 2009: Davoudi and Wishardt, 2005). Rapid population growth, combined with substantial increases in employment activity in and around the main urban centres, resulted in major pressures for housing and associated commercial development. In the absence of a strong physical planning framework for controlling rapid expansion, suburban and exurban locations absorbed much of the urban generated development activity, leading to long distance commuting (Williams and Shiels, 2002). This encouraged a pattern of development that was environmentally, socially and economically problematic as urban

[4] The NSS introduced the concept of Gateways as a key element of its spatial strategy. 'Existing Gateway' locations, defined by urban regions with a population of over 100,000 included Cork, Limerick, Galway and Waterford, whilst 5 New gateways were identified in locations had relatively small existing populations. This research identifies the grouping of Existing Gateways as the second-tier of Ireland's urban hierarchy.

growth was being accommodated increasingly in rural areas and locations remote from places of employment and service centres.

One of the key elements of the spatial strategy therefore would be "bringing people and their jobs closer together, reducing the commuting distances which have emerged over the last decade" (DELG, 2001, 12). The favoured strategy was a "targeted approach based on the focussed strengthening of a small number of centres" (Government of Ireland, 2001, 20). The regional economic structure would be enhanced through a concentration of activity, resources and investment which would in turn encourage agglomeration economies and critical mass. The urban cores would function as 'gateways' within the city-region structure, providing a nucleus from which economic activity would flow and permeate outwards.

The four second-tier cities were identified in the NSS as 'national' gateways' along with the Greater Dublin Area (GDA). According to the NSS, these gateways would drive regional economic growth and create a more balanced spatial structure for the territory using the concepts of potential, critical mass and exploiting opportunities for expansion and development. It was considered that balanced national growth could be "… secured with the support of a small number of nationally significant centres, whose location and scale support the achievement of the type of critical mass necessary to sustain strong levels of job growth in the regions" (Government of Ireland, 2002, 39). This involved strengthening the critical mass of the existing gateways and implied substantial growth of economic activity and population.

The NSS also concerned itself with the issue of where development should occur *within* those gateway zones. It highlighted the economic, social and environmental problems caused by long distance commuting and emphasised that the trend of house building in areas distant from urban centres was contributing to increased car dependency and was limiting the impact and effectiveness of public investment in services and utilities. As a result, efforts needed to be made to "…renew, consolidate and develop its existing cities, towns and villages – i.e. keeping them as physically compact and public transport friendly as possible and minimising urban sprawl... Urban land needs to be used carefully, sensitively and efficiently – with the aim of reducing dereliction and under-utilisation.

Where greenfield development is necessary it should take place through the logical extension of existing cities, towns and villages" (Government of Ireland, 2002, 11). Urban and rural settlement patterns therefore should align with the policy of concentration and accord with the overarching aim of developing selected number of centres to achieve a critical mass necessary to ensure economic success.

PERFORMANCE OF IRELAND'S SECOND-TIER CITIES

Assessing the impact of a spatial strategy on any part of the settlement hierarchy involves a broad overview of those centres' performance against what was outlined or prescribed in that policy document. For the purpose of this paper, this means assessing the effectiveness of national gateway status which had a particular spatial intention based on a policy of *population concentration*. The lack of measurable indicators in the NSS regarding specific growth targets[5] means that a simple linear assessment of the NSS is not practical and in any case, as Counsell, Haughton, Allmendinger (2012, 15) argue, it is unfair to regard these strategic plans as 'documents of conformity' and suggest instead that "…strategic planning success can never be evaluated simply through conformity to a rigid end-document… the issue is more, whether the planning process overall helped progressive ideas and practices to move forward substantially or not." Hence, it is appropriate to determine whether it encouraged a new policy approach to the spatial distribution of population growth. The most effective way of assessing this is by examining the key demographic and settlement changes between 2002 and 2011.

The following section addresses population change and distribution in the four second-tier 'gateway' cities and for practical and analytical purposes, employs three different definitions of the cities' respective populations.

5 The NSS produced an estimate of potential population growth for each 'gateway and surrounding catchment' for 2020 on page 49. However, no standardised definition for these units was used; instead, the NSS used the various understandings of each 'city and surrounding catchments as defined in local land use and transport strategies'.

- Firstly, the '***legal city'*** describes the official record of population within the legally-defined urban jurisdictions providing the official city population that is governed by the urban authorities[6];

- Secondly, the '***city and suburbs'*** definition refers to the CSO returns for each city's effective built-up area (often described as *city and environs*), thus allowing for a representation of the actual urban footprint in demographic terms; and

- Thirdly, '***city-region'*** refers to CSO POWSCAR[7]-derived data for each city and hinterland where more than 20% of the 2011 resident population in employment commute to the city[8].

Using these three different classifications allows for an analysis of the distribution of growth within the four gateways, from the urban core to the wider functional area.

Table 4 summarises population change between 2002 and 2011. At *city-region* level, recorded growth for the second-tier cities of 18.1% was ahead of the implied growth outlined in the NSS of approximately 14.3%[9], but it is important to point out that much of the population growth in this period occurred outside the core gateway zones that formed the basis of these designations, and which were expected to accommodate the higher rates of development. The data on the location of growth within the city-regions illustrates this pattern. For example, the overall growth rate of the *legal cities* in the four gateways over the period was only 3.7%. When the *city and suburbs* figures are examined, the second-tier cities grew by 8.3% which provides a more realistic expression of core urban growth at this

6 The 'legal city' unit simply captures the administrative city unit and does not reflect a demographic or economic reality, which in all cases extends beyond these boundaries. However, its analytical value in the context of this paper relates to centrality. The 'legal city' zones represent in all cases the core of each urban gateway, and in policy terms, these core zones were identified as a focus for growth and development within each gateway.

7 Central Statistics Office (CSO) Place of Work, School or College - Census of Anonymised Records (POWSCAR)

8 There are numerous ways in which a city region unit may be defined, but it was considered practical to use a standardised measure of the urban areas' commuting catchment to reflect the functional reach of the various cities. This was the same unit used in the review of the gateways and hubs (Gateways|Hubs Development Index 2012) under the NSS in 2012 (Future Analytics, 2013). In order to be able to measure consistently and compare historical data, the 2011 'city-region' definition was taken as the territorial city region for the 2002 and 2006 census.

9 The NSS presented a projection of population change based on an assumption of economic growth and used baselines for each city region, taken from the respective local land use and transportation strategies. The projections were based on a 20 year forecasting period; the implied population change figures used here is based on a calculation of ten years of projected annual growth. In addition, the comparison here between actual 'city region' growth and that implied by the NSS concerns different territorial units. As a result, the relative population change rather than absolute change is of interest here.

level of the hierarchy. The wider city-regions, however, recorded a growth rate of 18.1%. This suggests very weak growth in the core urban areas with 78% of all growth was accommodated outside the city and suburbs. These results also show particularly strong population growth in Galway with 24.8% growth across the city-region (ahead of implied NSS growth), compared with that of Waterford which experienced a 13.6% growth (below implied NSS growth).

Table 4 Population Change 2002-2011 in the Main Cities

	City Legal Change 2002-2011 (%)	*City & Suburbs* Change 2002-2011 (%)	*City Region* Change 2002-2011 (%)	Implied NSS change 2011 (%)	*City Legal* as proportion of City Region 2002	*City Legal* as proportion of City Region 2011	*City & Suburbs* as proportion of City Region 2002	*City & Suburbs* as proportion of City Region 2011
Cork	-3,832 (-2.1)	12,343 (6.6)	59,418 (17.5)	52,000 (14.9)	36.3	29.9	55.0	49.9
Limerick	3,083 (4.7)	4,456 (5.1)	30,650 (16)	24,000 (10.2)	28.1	25.7	43.3	41.1
Galway	9,697 (14.7)	10,615 (16)	36,965 (24.8)	23,000 (15.8)	44.2	40.6	44.4	41.3
Waterford	2,138 (4.6)	4,783 (10.2)	11,624 (13.6)	22,500 (18.9)	52.2	48.1	54.7	53.1
All Second-Tier Cities	11,086 (3.7)	32,197 (8.3)	138,657 (18.1)	121,500 (14.3)	37.6	33.0	50	46.3
Dublin	31,831 (3.2)	106,013 (10.6)	243,182 (17.2)	332,500 (21.7)	35.9	32.2	71.0	66.9
All 5 Cities	42,917 (3.1)	136,088 (10.2)	381,839 (17.5)	454,000 (19.0)	35.9	32.2	63.6	59.7

Source: CSO [2002, 2006, 2011]

The pattern of growth within the second tier suggests that the functional areas of the four cities are expanding but alongside the relative diminution of their respective urban cores. In all four cities, the share of population located in the *legal cities* as a percentage of the city-region total has declined (from 37.6% to 33%), meaning that 67% of the population of four gateway city-regions now reside outside urban jurisdictions. This has implications in terms of fragmented governance patterns, as well as the social and environmental costs associated with long distance commuting. In the case of Limerick and Cork, the respective *legal city* populations were no more than 30% of their overall city-region. Even applying a more generous interpretation using the *city and suburbs'* definition, their relative share of

population has also declined between 2002 and 2011, with only 46.3% of the second-tier city-region populations now located within these zones. Critically, none of the cities have recorded an increase in the share of the population located within either their legal cities or within the city and suburbs zones. The four cities therefore were experiencing an outward expansion of their urban catchments instead of delivering a pattern of concentrated growth considered to be important for achieving sustainable patterns of development.

The spatial composition of Ireland's gateway cities is also noteworthy in the context of recent population changes. The figures for the *city and suburbs* reveal a wide divergence in the density and compactness between the second-tier cities and Dublin (See Table 5). The average density of the second-tier city and suburbs' is 1,310 persons per square kilometre whereas the equivalent figure for Dublin is 3,498. It is interesting to note also that Dublin's area (city and suburbs) is equal to that of the four second-tier cities combined, but it accommodates more than double the population. This illustrates a clear division between the capital cities and the four second-tier cities in terms of population density, a key indicator of urban compaction, and a widely accepted indicator of sustainability. The second-tier cities appear to be expanding, but at densities which will constrain their ability to secure sufficient critical mass and support the provision of services and urban forms of public transportation.

Table 5 Area and Density of Ireland's Urban Centres 2011

	City & Suburbs km²	Population	Population Density person per km²
Cork	164.56	198,582	1,206.75
Limerick	56.84	91,454	1,608.97
Galway	53.42	76,778	1,437.25
Waterford	44.34	51,519	1,161.91
All Second-Tier Cities	319.2	418,333	1,310.73
Dublin	317.49	1,110,627	3,498.15
All 5 Cities	637	1,528,960	2,401.57

Source: CSO [2011]

It appears therefore, that Instead of strengthening of the core gateway zones advocated by the NSS, the development patterns that followed its publication displayed a continuation, and an acceleration, of the trends of dispersal. This had implications for how growth and development is managed within those territories and the absence of strong governing or oversight structures meant that the policy of concentration depended largely on cooperative rather than statutory decision-making frameworks.

When the statistics for population change between 2002 and 2011 within the four gateways is examined, further evidence of de-concentration emerges (See Table 6). This highlights in particular the continued decrease in importance of the core gateway zones relative to both the smaller urban centres and the rural hinterlands associated with the respective city-regions. Significantly, the core urban areas (city and suburbs) of the four cities combined recorded a modest 8.3% increase in population between 2002 and 2011, compared to a growth rate of 35% in the smaller settlements of 1,500+ within the four gateways.

Table 6 Population Size and Share 2002-2011 in Ireland's Urban Centres, Towns and Urban and Rural Areas

	Population 2002	% of State Population 2002	Population 2011	% of State Population 2011	Absolute change 2002-2011	*% change 2002-2011*
Dublin city and suburbs	1,004,614	*25.6*	1,110,627	*24.2*	106,013	*10.5*
Cork city and suburbs	186,239	*4.7*	198,582	*4.3*	12,343	*6.6*
Limerick city & suburbs	86,998	*2.2*	91,454	*2*	4,456	*5.1*
Galway city & suburbs	66,163	*1.7*	76,778	*1.7*	10,615	*16*
Waterford city & suburbs	46,736	*1.2*	51,519	*1.1*	4,783	*10.2*
Second-Tier Cities	386,136	*9.9*	418,333	*9.1*	32,197	*8.3*
All Cities and Suburbs	1,390,750	*35.5*	1,528,960	*33.3*	138,210	*9.9*
Towns 10,000 or over	551,863	*14.*	730,414	*15.9*	178,551	*32.3*
Towns 5,000 – 9,999	228,629	*5.8*	297,182	*6.4*	68,553	*30*
Towns 3,000 – 4,999	89,321	*2.3*	119,705	*2.6*	30,384	*34*
Towns 1,500 – 2,999	106,738	*2.7*	170,628	*3.7*	63,890	*60*
Towns total	976,551	*24.9*	1,317,929	*28.7*	341,378	*35*
Urban Total	2,367,301	*60.4*	2,846,889	*62*	479,588	*20.3*
Rural Total	1,549,902	*39.6*	1,741,363	*37.9*	191,461	*12.3*

Source: CSO [2002, 2011]

Although some of the non-core urban growth is located in planned settlements close to the urban cores (satellite or commuter towns) and may be considered to be *coordinated metropolitan* growth or as part of a joint spatial strategy within a city-region, a significant amount of growth is also occurring in locations at a considerable distance from the cores (Table 7), and which cannot be defined as either coordinated or consistent with policy. In addition, the rural parts of these city-regions (settlements below 1,500 and the open countryside) experienced an overall growth rate of 25%, stronger than the city-regions' total (18%), the urban settlement average (15%) and the city & suburbs total (8%) (Table 7).

In the Limerick gateway for example, Limerick city and suburbs recorded 10% growth between 2002-2011, with the remaining main urban centres of Shannon and Ennis experiencing growth rates of 10% and 13% respectively. By contrast, growth rates of on average of 100% occurred in the smaller settlements located away from the urban core such as Sixmilebridge, Newport and Ballina. Across the city-region, growth outside formal settlements within mainly un-serviced rural areas at 17% outperformed growth in the urban locations which grew by only 15%. In Cork, the city and environs experienced only 7% population increase between 2002-2011, with 54% increases across the metropolitan towns of Blarney-Tower, Carrigaline, Cobh, Passage-West, Carrigtwohill, Midleton and Cobh and 30% growth in the outer 'Ring Towns' located within the city-region. It is important to acknowledge that the towns located along the suburban rail corridor (Cobh, Mallow, Carrigtwohill and Midleton) recorded stronger average growth rates of 82% and in Cork, some of the non-core growth within the metropolitan area is in effect planned rail-oriented growth in line with the established sub-regional planning strategy. However, the analysis also shows that the rural population in this zone expanded by 20,147 in the ten year period, equivalent to a growth rate of 26%. This compares against an overall urban growth rate in Cork city-region of 15% and only 7% in the city and suburbs. The rural areas' growth represented 34% of all growth in the city-region.

Table 7 Location of Population Change 2002-2011, Second-Tier Cities

		2002 pop	2011 pop	*% change 2002-2011*
Cork City Region	City and Suburbs	186,239	198,582	*7*
	Towns 1500+	74,768	101,696	*36*
	City/Towns Ratio	71|29	66|34	
	Combined Urban	261,007	300,278	*15*
	Combined Rural	77,867	98,014	*26*
	City Region	338,874	398,292	*18*
Limerick City Region	City and Suburbs	83,147	91,454	*10*
	Towns 1500+	39,554	49,884	*26*
	City/Towns Ratio	68|32	65|35	
	Combined Urban	122,701	141,338	*15*
	Combined Rural	69,253	81,266	*17*
	City Region	191,954	222,604	*16*
Galway City Region	City and Suburbs	66,163	76,778	*16*
	Towns 1500+	17,145	27,242	*59*
	City/Towns Ratio	79|21	74|26	
	Combined Urban	83,308	104,020	*25*
	Combined Rural	65,640	81,893	*25*
	City Region	148,948	185,913	*25*
Waterford City Region	City and Suburbs	46,736	51,519	*10*
	Towns 1500+	11,238	13,583	*21*
	City/Towns Ratio	82|18	79|21	
	Combined Urban	63,947	65,102	*2*
	Combined Rural	21,505	31,974	*49*
	City Region	85,452	97,076	*14*
All second-tier cities	City and Suburbs	388,258	418,333	8
	Towns 1500+	142,705	192,405	35
	City/Towns Ratio	73|27	68|32	
	Combined Urban	530,963	610,738	15
	Combined Rural	234,265	293,147	25
	City Region	765,228	903,885	18

Source: CSO [2002, 2011]

These trends suggests considerable deviation from targeted growth strategies and was contrary to the principles set out in the settlement strategies of national and regional planning policy and the respective development plans which advocated the strengthening of the urban centres by establishing critical mass and concentrating services in support of sustainable urban development patterns.

Data on house completions also helps to illustrate the nature of growth in the second-tier cities and their constituent county councils. Table 8 below highlights clearly the difficulties experienced in locating residential development within the established urban centres. Notwithstanding the fact that the city areas may have been expected to record lower housing numbers than their constituent county areas because of the nature of the development challenges, constrained administrative boundaries and land availability, the divergence in development activity remains stark. For example, in each instance, the number of single housing units (one-off residential dwellings) permitted and completed in each county council area exceeded the total number of houses completed in the entire second-tier city. This would suggest the absence of strong incentives for local authorities to collaborate effectively in managing housing supply and a tendency for competitive metropolitan housing markets across local government boundaries. These undermine efforts established at a national level to promote spatially coherent urban development patterns at the level of the second-tier cities. The pattern of house completions across the four second-tier cities and their wider constituent counties in the years following the publication of the NSS highlight perhaps the full extent of what Tosics (2007) characterised as a functional urban area disparity. In essence, fragmented governance at a local level, combined with the lack of effective sub-regional and metropolitan-scale governing structures undermined strategic policy aims which favoured concentration over dispersal.

Table 8 House Completions 2002-2011 by House Type and Local Authority

House Type	Local Authority	House Completions 2002-2011	%
Cork			
All Units		**60,686**	100
Single house	County	18,218	36.1
	City	695	6.8
Multi-unit scheme	County	32,245	63.9
	City	9,528	93.2
Total Cork County		**50,463**	83.2
Total Cork City		**10,223**	16.8
Galway			
All Units		**35,151**	100
Single house	County	14,272	55.4
	City	591	6.3
Multi-unit scheme	County	11,503	44.6
	City	8,785	93.7
Total Galway County		**25,775**	73.3
Total Galway City		**9,376**	26.7
Limerick			
All Units		**20,811**	100
Single house	County	5,874	38.3
	City	388	7.1
Multi-unit scheme	County	9,479	61.7
	City	5,070	92.9
Total Limerick County		**15,353**	73.8
Total Limerick City		**5,458**	26.2
Waterford			
All Units		**14,864**	100
Single house	County	3,935	40.0
	City	236	4.7
Multi-unit scheme	County	5,897	60.0
	City	4,796	95.3
Total Waterford County		**9,832**	66.1
Total Waterford City		**5,032**	33.9
Total Second-Tier County		**101,423**	77.1
Total Second-Tier City		**30,089**	22.9

Source: Department of the Environment, Community & Local Government [2002-2011] Housing Statistics Database 2002-2011

One of the key drivers behind the NSS was the economic, social and environmental problems caused by long distance commuting and it advocated land use policies which would encourage sustainable development patterns that minimised commuting distances. This was to be achieved by supporting the development of compact settlements and by concentrating both future employment and population growth in locations that would minimise travel, and support public transportation. The change in commuting patterns since the NSS is illustrated in Table 9 below through an analysis of the average journey times within the city-regions. This highlights a clear continuation of the trend of longer average commuter times and indicates a settlement pattern based on increasing average distances between peoples' homes and places of work and education. Across the four cities, there was a 2.3% increase in those whose commuting journey was under 30 minutes and a 23.2% increase in the number whose commuting journey was over 30 minutes. [10]

Table 9 Change in Commuting Patterns [by journey time] 2002-2011 in Second-Tier City-Regions

	all journeys 2002	journeys under 30 mins	journeys over 30 mins	all journeys 2011	journeys under 30 mins	journeys over 30 mins	% change under 30 mins	% change over 30 mins
Cork	210,259	159,920	50,339	228,353	163,421	64,932		
%		76.1	23.9		71.6	28.4	2.2	29.0
Limerick	123,289	92,823	30,466	125,156	96,151	29,005		
%		75.3	24.7		76.8	23.2	3.6	-4.8
Galway	95,860	74,494	21,366	109,162	75,810	33,352		
%		77.7	22.3		69.4	30.6	1.8	56.1
Waterford	51,612	42,620	8,992	52,729	43,025	9,704		
%		82.6	17.4		81.6	18.4	1.0	7.9
All Second-Tier Cities	481,020	370,086	111,234	515,400	378,625	137,075		
%		76.9	23.1		73.5	26.6	2.3	23.2
Dublin	906,716	544,058	362,658	968,727	578,064	390,663		
%		60.0	40.0		59.7	40.3	6.3	7.7

Source: CSO [Census of Ireland: 2002, 2011]

[10] The anomalous case of Limerick, which exhibited a 4.8% reduction in the number of journeys over 30 minutes, may be explained by the closure of a single major employer (Dell) which as a very substantial regional employer would have led to a significantly lower amount of regional scale commuting.

The rapid growth experienced in Ireland in the last 20 years brought with it extensive demands on the planning and development system, and a particular challenge was facilitating growth and guiding development to locations that were designated as core growth areas. The government's 2010 review of the NSS (DEHLG, 2010) included an acknowledgement that many of the principal objectives of the NSS, and in particular its attempts to direct development to the key urban centres, were being undermined by inappropriately located zonings, fragmented development patterns and development-driven housing regimes. It specifically highlighted the underperformance of city and town centres, the continuation of pre-2002 trends of urban generated suburban, exurban and rural sprawl, car-dominated and unsustainable commuting patterns and an ongoing failure to coordinate settlement patterns with service and employment provision. The subsequent review of Gateway and Hub performance in the Gateways|Hubs Development Index (Future Analytics, 2013) confirmed in more detail that the pattern of development in the core urban centres had generally been characterised almost universally by a failure to reach agreed targets for population growth with a general tendency for excessive growth in non-core locations.

PLANNING REFORM, URBAN GOVERNANCE AND THE SECOND-TIER CITIES

The research here would suggest that the introduction of the NSS did not succeed in arresting the pre-2002 pattern of imbalanced growth or strengthening the second-tier national gateways. The data presented in Table 2 provides a clear demonstration that the NSS did not succeed in promoting a stronger urban system in Ireland; in fact the level of growth in the post-NSS period (1991-2001) accommodated in the urban centres was below that in the pre-NSS period (2001-2011). The proportional share of national growth declined in all cities, and, for the second-tier cities, decreased from 11.1% to 4.8%. This can be attributed to the ambiguous implementation framework and weak governance structures. The NSS Review (Government of Ireland, 2010, 7) acknowledged that local structures of control and coordination were inadequate and indicated that "Strong and successful Gateways need to be able to transcend administrative boundaries and have a clear vision of their future development and a strong strategic leadership to deliver that vision aided by

effective governance arrangements." However, there was no practical indication as to how the problems presented by those administrative boundaries were to be solved.

One of the key weaknesses of the NSS was the expectation that a national strategy could be largely be implemented by local interests. Breathnach (2013, 6) suggested that the absence of a strong regional tier of government, combined with the fragmented administrative landscape at the urban level and the limited powers at local government level meant that the gateways "…lacked all of the ingredients for the forging of effective urban-regional developmental governance." Furthermore, the lack of political support for the policy of coordination and concentration which manifested itself most clearly with the government's decentralisation programme indicated a weak commitment at an early stage (Walsh, 2009: Meredith and Egeraat, 2013). This reflected also a general preoccupation with national rather than regional policy issues (McFeely, 2016). Essentially, the absence of an urban policy agenda for the second-tier cities undoubtedly affected the impact of the gateway aspirations and there was very little institutional or political space within urban leadership within those cities could emerge.

The status of the NSS within the planning hierarchy was also undermined by legislative ambiguity. Under the Planning and Development Act 2000 (PDA 2000), planning authorities operating at a local level were required only to 'have regard' to the provisions of superior plans including the NSS. This created an inherent structural fragility in the operation of the planning hierarchy and served to separate development planning at a local level from national strategic objectives. Despite the existence of a strong and clear hierarchy of planning policies, the lack of a formal mechanism to ensure consistency and integration between the various levels resulted in significant deviations from national aspirations and regional objectives.

As a direct government reaction to the effects of overdevelopment and evidently unsustainable development patterns, the Irish government introduced the Planning and Development Amendment Act 2010 (PDA, 2010). The principal objectives of this Act were to amend the Planning Acts of 2000 – 2009 with specific regard given to supporting economic renewal and sustainable development. The Act envisaged a closer alignment of the National Spatial Strategy with Regional Planning Guidelines, Development Plans and

Local Area Plans. The Act strengthened the vertical relationship between plans in Ireland by clarifying previous legislative requirements by making it a legal requirement for development plans to '*be consistent'* with, rather than *'have regard to'* superior planning documents. The centrepiece of the legislation however was the *Core Strategy* provision which required development plans to include relevant information and to demonstrate explicitly how policies and objectives of the statutory development plan are consistent with national and regional planning policy.

Essentially, it attempted to enshrine the concept of evidence-based planning and strengthen the land zoning process. This measure, along with the proposed strengthening of the regional tier and the introduction of a planning regulator, represented an attempt to improve the planning and development regime by relying on enhanced oversight, coordination, and evidence. It did not however involve an alteration to the structures or competencies of local government and did not involve any changes to established urban governance structures. The issue of fragmentation and competition and the wider urban governance challenges were not addressed. The analysis here examines the implementation of the core strategies in the four gateways and assesses the extent to which this legislative reform is likely to result in a development regime that supports the strategic principles and targeted measures of the NSS. As part of the analysis, each local authority's Core Strategy and Settlement Strategy was examined and growth targets were extracted. For each defined tier of the hierarchy, the total number of housing units projected across each tier was recorded. [11]

[11] In cases where there were two separate Core Strategies and Settlement Hierarchies within a single county [in all four cases] the total City Council figure was allocated as the top of the unified settlement hierarchy. The former top tier of the settlement hierarchy for the constituent county council hierarchies' then became the second tier of the unified settlement hierarchy.

Table 10 Settlement Hierarchies [2011 onwards]

Local Authority	Tier No.	Settlement Hierarchy Tier	No. Of Planned Units	% of Total Planned Growth
Cork City	**1**	Total City	15,445	17.4
Cork County	**2**	Main Towns	56,716	63.8
	3	Villages	8,919	10.0
	4	Rural/Open Countryside	7,827	8.8
		Total County	73,462	82.6
		Total City and County	88,907	100
Cork City Council (2015). Cork City Development Plan 2015-2021 **Cork County Council (2015). Cork County Development Plan *2015-2021***				
Galway City	**1**	Total City	8,591	65.8
Galway County	**2**	towns and villages	3,189	24.4
	3	Countryside	1,270	9.7
		Total County	4,459	34.2
		Total City and County	13,050	100.0
Galway City Council (2011) Galway City Council Development Plan 2011-2017. **Galway County Council (2015) Galway County Council Development Plan 2015-2021.**				
Limerick City	**1**	Total City	13,513	43.4
Limerick County	**2**	Main Towns	11,432	36.7
	3	Smaller town and villages	1,948	6.3
	4	Tier 6 and open countryside	4,222	13.6
		Total County	17,602	56.6
		Total City and County	31,115	100.0
Limerick City Council (2011) Limerick City Development Plan 2010-2016 **Limerick County Council (2011) Limerick County Development Plan, 2010-2016, Variation No. 1**				
Waterford City	**1**	Total City	4,800	20.5
Waterford County	**2**	Primary Centre	4,825	20.5
	3	Secondary Centre	5,992	25.0
	4	District Centre	5,584	24.0
	5	Other Centres	2,334	10.0
	6	Countryside	0	0.0
		Total County	18,735	79.5
		Total City and County	23,535	100.0
Waterford City Council (2013). Waterford City Development Plan 2013-2019 **Waterford County Council (2011). Waterford County Development Plan 2011-2017**				

Source: Development Plan Core Strategies in each Local Authority

The amount of growth allocated to the top tier of the hierarchy across Ireland's four second-tier cities is extremely diverse, ranging from 17% in the case of Cork City to 66% in the case of Galway City (See Table 10). Across the four gateways, 73% of growth in each combined county and city is allocated outside the core urban areas. Although the urban

allocation of 27% is small, particularly relative to the scale of growth in the non-urban locations, it still represents a major planning challenge in the context of accommodating housing growth within the established built up areas of those cities. This will necessitate strategic growth management within those city-regions that prioritises compact and sustainable forms of developments and which controls greenfield suburban expansion. In a single metropolitan housing market extending across administrative boundaries, this requires coordinated planning and zoning measures which manages the supply-demand dynamic in a way that supports an integrated approach to demand management.

The story of housing provision in the second-tier cities and their constituent counties over the last four years, and throughout the post NSS period, suggests that managing metropolitan housing markets across administrative boundaries remains highly problematic. Proper management of urban housing markets involves the coordination of policy, land zoning and development management practices to ensure that the supply of zoned lands in one location doesn't undermine the effective housing demand in another. Housing trends for the gateway cities in the last four years illustrate the over performance of the non-urban locations, which is in turn likely to be shaping the effective demand in those urban centres. Despite national level policies to address the provision of urban generated housing in rural areas and recent legislative reforms, in the last four years 56.4% of all houses constructed nationally in the period 2011-2014 have been single dwellings that have not been part of a housing scheme and most likely were built outside established urban areas. This is compared with a figure of 30.8% between 2002 and 2011. This highlights that the pattern of housing provision in Ireland has become more unsustainable despite legislative reform.

CONCLUSIONS

This paper presents evidence which demonstrates that the implementation of Ireland's National Spatial Strategy for the gateway cities, as an urban policy measure, proved to be largely ineffective as it relied on a loose and informal governance framework at the urban level. It also shows that the recent legislative reforms appear to have had little influence in promoting more sustainable residential development patterns in the national gateways. As a result, within the second-tier cities, there appears to be a divergence of economic and

settlement patterns, which has potential long term sustainability implications. An increasingly global and competitive economic context is encouraging further concentration of employment in urban areas. At the same time, those urban areas are not accommodating sufficient levels of population growth to service the expanding economic base and support service provision.

The onset of the economic recession from 2008 undoubtedly impacted the delivery of the NSS and the second-tier cities. Although the cities (apart from Waterford) proved to be quite resilient in terms of employment levels, the fiscal crisis constrained the government's ability to deliver the kind of infrastructure necessary to accommodate urban growth in those cities. Large scale infrastructure spending outlined in the National Development Plan 2007-2013 to support the gateway cities did not materialise, as the Gateway Innovation Fund was suspended as the impact of the credit contraction took hold.

While an increased emphasis on the regional planning tier in recent years may address the governance void at regional level, the economic, physical and functional reality at a metropolitan scale has largely been ignored in policy, legislation and governance reforms. It seems unlikely that Ireland's new National Planning Framework can deliver more effective regional balance and a stronger urban hierarchy without a corresponding focus on governance issues in the second-tier cities. Recent experiences in Ireland's key gateway cities would suggest that these 'soft spaces of governance' are not conducive to making hard decisions.

The findings here would also support the assertions of Allin & Walsh (2010, 25) who question the capacity of recent legislative reforms to address the dominant governance culture characterised by institutional fragmentation and competition. In addition, the data would largely support the view put forward by Breathnach (2014) that Ireland's experience under the NSS has generally prohibited the type of proactive urban governance at city-region level which is necessary for the development of a stronger urban system. The experience of Ireland's second-tier cities certainly points towards Tosics' characterisation (2007, 2) of functionally unified urban areas which lack democratic accountability and his contention that these metropolitan areas are an 'economic and social reality even in those countries where the administrative and political systems do not recognize this yet'.

This according to Tosics (2011, 3) is a common problem for many European countries where territorial borders of administrative units are extremely outdated to the extent where the 'economic city' has extensively outgrown the 'administrative city'. At present, these largely rely on the kind of 'collaborative urban place governance strategies' seen only in Cork, and while CASP is correctly regarded as an effective collaborative spatial planning tool (Counsell and Haughton, 2009), its capacity to accommodate those difficult decisions is clearly limited (Allmendinger et al, 2013: Brady & O'Neill, 2013).

The recent revisions to urban governing arrangements, as evidenced in the amalgamation processes in Limerick and Waterford under the Irish government's *Putting People First* project, would suggest that Ireland is likely to continue to overlook the needs of cities and the requirement for explicit city-based governance. Here, the *county* entity has been deemed to be the standard local government unit and the standard template for revised arrangements. The reform process has thereby ignored the role and potential of urban government and administration. It is entirely possible for example that following the current review of local government structures in the cases of Cork and Galway that there will soon be no second tier of urban government in Ireland, with Dublin being the only city with any meaningful structure for urban governance. This is a monocentric vision of urban government with little recognition of the need for city level governing units at the second tier. This represents a further centralisation and dilution of urban administration and suggest a policy trajectory that ignores the emerging political, economic and cultural impulses that are driving change and reforms across urban and regional contexts in Europe.

The post NSS housing and demographic context interrogated in this paper provides clear evidence that spatial initiatives which promote nationally important territorial and economic solutions cannot be the sole responsibility of local actors, unless there is an institutional architecture in place at the sub regional or regional level that promotes strategic commitment around metropolitan development aspirations. It suggests that decentralisation of responsibilities to second-tier cities is only possible if matched by corresponding powers and resources and that cities in less centralised countries where economic resources are devolved perform better at a local and national scale.

In a reflection on current and imminent spatial planning challenges, Albrechts (2010, 1116) encourages "… new ways of thinking that change the way resources are used, (re)distributed and allocated, and the way the regulatory powers are exercised". In Ireland, a first step would be to institute a national spatial planning agenda which reflects these realities in urban and regional settings, understands the importance of these dynamics in national economic terms and which support the basic ingredients of balanced regional development without promoting dispersal. This however needs to be underpinned by a formal recognition at government level that Ireland's prospects for more balanced and efficient territorial and economic development will ultimately fail without embedding a central role in governance terms for its second-tier cities.

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6. ESSAY FOUR

STRATEGY, PROJECTS AND PLANNING IN A CITY-REGION: TRANSPORT AND LAND USE PLANNING AS MODES OF GOVERNANCE

ABSTRACT

Strategic planning at the city-region level regularly involves the formulation of large-scale, symbolic projects aimed at securing certain environmental, social and economic outcomes. These are often presented as key, transformative planning initiatives established as a means of delivering long-term strategic outcomes for a city-region. Often relying on broad coalitions of interests, and crossing various sectoral and administrative boundaries, these projects become core organising elements of sub-regional planning strategies. These types of initiatives often attempt to influence, and even shape, the way in which markets for residential, commercial and industrial development function in order to meet particular social and/or environmental objectives. This is an inherently interventionist approach, which can produce significant tensions as a land use planning project. Considering the scale and importance of such projects, the overall success of a sub-regional planning strategy often depends on the extent to which these projects succeed.

Using the case study of the Cork suburban rail corridor project (2001-2017), one of the key ingredients of the CASP (Cork Area Strategic Plan), this paper analyses in detail the extent to which the project fulfilled the role as a strategic transformative sub-regional planning initiative. Through this inquiry, the research allows for some reflections on the issue of metropolitan governance by exploring the patterns and processes of decision making, policy development and project formation in a city-region setting. In addition, the research employs a bespoke analytical framework in order to appraise the project as a contemporary strategic spatial planning exercise - combining a traditional impact-oriented conformance test with an analysis of the performance of the project as part of a socio-spatial transformation within the city-region.

INTRODUCTION: STRATEGIC URBAN PLANNING PROJECTS AS MODES OF GOVERNANCE

Metropolitan regions in Europe have increasingly concerned themselves with how to represent and manage their cities as dynamic, assertive and competitive actors within Europe's economic space and this has encouraged thinking around scale, governing arrangements, critical mass, institutional and administrative relations, quality of life, environmental and placed-based considerations. This reflects an acknowledgement that historically-fragmented urban governing arrangements largely defined by legally prescribed municipal boundaries are not necessarily conducive to effective metropolitan governance and competitive urban development strategies. The emergence of 'strategic spatial planning' – has come to represent both a framework for planning action/policy at city-region levels and a mechanism for expressing political and economic ambition for urban areas. Large-scale strategic urban projects are a popular mode of public policy and political action, as well as a long-established concern within the planning academy. Planners and other decision-makers present large-scale strategic urban projects as key planning instruments used to operationalise planning strategies at various spatial scales. These projects are also employed as symbolic or metaphoric devices to allow position small- and medium-sized cities survive and compete in the context of international urban competition.

The purpose of this paper is to provide insights into planning processes, policies and outcomes associated with a major project using Cork's experiences of sub-regional planning. The purpose of the case study is to provide a rich setting from which to develop insights into the nature of strategic spatial planning in contemporary public policy settings. The Cork suburban rail project is treated here as a deliberate attempt by a coalition of interests across the city-region to construct a transformative planning initiative, which became a key component of the entire city-region's planning. In this way, the project is understood as a large-scale and long-term experiment in strategic spatial planning at the level of the city-region. The case study is concerned primarily with presenting a comprehensive and deep analysis of this project as a way of interrogating the nature of strategic spatial planning in a typical European second-tier city context.

Strategic plans, policies and projects, which have been devised as a way of transforming or shaping places to meet these goals, become important framing devices in which various modes of governance are played out. The inquiry is generally situated at the interface of planning and governance in a city-region setting. It concerns itself with the manifestation of public policy choices which have been created in an attempt to resolve fundamental social and environmental challenges within the region; these challenges relate to issues around economic development, social accessibility, and environmental protection.

The work is also concerned with determining the extent to which a major planning policy initiative has managed to permeate public policy and shape physical outcomes in the form of development patterns, population growth and transportation patterns. As such, the research includes an elementary linear assessment of policy application as a way of testing core principles and practices associated with contemporary planning. However, it is also concerned with understanding the governance dynamics of these strategic initiatives. It therefore combines a fairly mundane planning concern - exploring the transition of policy into practice – with a deeper focus on the processes of decision-making that emerge in these governance arenas.

STRATEGIC SPATIAL PLANNING PROJECTS

This research is concerned with the ways in which strategic spatial planning attempts to effect change – in social/environmental/economic terms – through the pursuit of what may be termed 'strategic spatial planning projects' (which are also referred to as large-scale urban projects, mega-projects, or flagship projects). It addresses this by focussing on a key output from Cork's experiences in strategic spatial planning at the scale of a medium sized city-region – in this case – the Cork suburban rail corridor project.

Cork's experience of sub-regional planning since the middle of the 1960s can be understood as a long and fairly coherent experiment in strategic spatial planning. Cork has a strong pedigree in sub-regional and metropolitan planning that is quite uncommon in an Irish context, where a centralised state structure, as well as a territorially constrained

system of local government, tends to dissuade spatially integrated planning activities across fixed administrative boundaries.

This produced a continuous strategic planning framework and is notable because of its inter-institutional, collaborative and ultimately, strategic, approach to the provision of an agreed framework for future development of a particular territorial unit – the Cork city-region. It is also significant for the ways in which it attempted to integrate economic, environmental and physical planning concerns in a spatially coherent way. This was a fundamental departure from previous sector-based plans prepared within established local authority boundaries and is notable as a collaborative urban governance exercise, and as an experiment in integrating land-use, transportation, environmental and economic strands, and its continued relevance as a framing device for the development of the city-region.

The sequence of sub-regional spatial planning policies for the Cork city-region can be understood as presenting a continuous narrative around the practice of strategic planning. The type of planning, the styles and forms of policy formulation, the language, the methods and the imagery – all point to a clear expression of strategic spatial planning in practice. Cork's experiences can certainly be identified alongside the definition of strategic spatial planning offered by Oosterlynck et al (2010, 3) which refers to a "…public sector-led socio-spatial process through which visions, coherent actions and means for implementation and co-production are developed, which both shape and frame what a place is and what it might become." The various public-sector plans and policies in the Cork city-region have been engaged in producing a long –term vision that involves an attempt to shape and frame the quality, livability and sustainability of the city –region; it has done this by providing both a context and rationale for decision making within and outside formal planning arenas, influencing private, political and public interests, integrating sectoral concerns and using a series of key, transformative projects – as a way of operationalising its strategic aims.

Large-scale urban development projects are a long-established metropolitan phenomenon, used by cities to increase their international competitiveness (Swyngedouw et al, 2002: Salet, 2008). The Cork suburban rail corridor initiative is a manifestation of a strategic

spatial planning exercise at the city-region scale – and can be can be understood as a 'large-scale urban project.' It can be classified within the tradition of flagship or mega projects – major, transformative exercises at the city-scale.

The literature reveals that there is a multiplicity of different types of large-scale urban projects with a broad range of terms used to describe and represent them. The term 'megaproject' is popular within the discussions on this form of planning (Fainstein, 2008: Lehrer & Laidley, 2008: Hale, 2010: Priemus, 2010: Salet et al, 2013). Orueta and Fainstein (2008) suggest that the term 'megaproject' is used to describe many different scales – from large landmark construction projects to complex and spatially extensive projects. It incudes, for example, grandiose projects like Haussmann's reconstruction of Paris, Cerda's Extension for Barcelona, London's Docklands and Baltimore's Inner Harbour redevelopment, as well as a plethora of large scale urban regeneration/renewal projects in waterfront, suburban, city centre and historic city contexts. The term 'megaproject' can also refer to broader concerns, such as the concept of the grand planning project (Healey, 2010) or Flyvberg's (1998) seminal work on the Aalborg case. It is considered here that the term 'megaproject' can be somewhat unhelpful given its diverse interpretations and that the term 'large-scale project' is a more convenient term in allowing for a wider range of realities (Lecroart and Palisse, 2007, 6). It is also worth noting the use of a sub-type here – in the case of the 'mega-infrastructure' project (Salet et al, 2013) which describes usually large-scale infrastructure and corridor projects.

Healey (2010) discusses the transformative nature of major projects as part of the practice of planning and place-making. Some of the most influential exercises in city building (and re-building) include the formulation of large-scale urban development projects, reflecting often grand aspirations about the future of places. These places were the result of,

> *…concentrated, coordinated effort, involving complex mixtures of public activity and the mobilisation of private investment over a long time. Such efforts have created new 'pieces of city', new landscapes and ambiences, and new relations between lived experiences and built forms, reshaping parts of urban areas for the 'new times' of our times.*
>
> (Healey, 2010, 124).

These projects regularly involve big ideas, imagined futures, re-inventions of existing conditions, and are often aligned with political and economic aspirations about urban regeneration and redevelopment, image building and international urban competition. They facilitate the types of large scale transformations envisaged in strategic spatial planning visions, and are used as a way to translate strategic thinking into comprehensive action. This intersection of *strategy* and *action* within the context of large scale urban projects means they become important case studies for those concerned with exploring the nature of strategic spatial planning.

It is important to point out that the Cork suburban rail corridor initiative cannot be treated as a classic 'mega-project'; it is more accurately a hybrid of the 'large scale development' project Lecroart and Palisse, 2007 and the 'mega infrastructure' project (Salet et al, 2013). As a large scale, long-term and complex project, which formed a central component of the Cork Area Strategic Plan (CASP), it represents a key output of strategic planning efforts in Cork.

CONFORMANCE AND PERFORMANCE: ASSESSING STRATEGIC SPATIAL PLANNING PROJECTS

This paper is concerned with exploring the extent to which the Cork suburban rail corridor initiative fulfilled its purpose as a key element of a strategic planning initiative at the sub-regional scale. The sequence of policy documents – the Cork Land Use and Transport Study Review (1992), the Cork Area Strategic Plan (2001) and the Cork Area Strategic Plan Update (2008) - represent the 'Strategic Plans' whilst the various key headline planning ideas – The Compact City/Cork Docklands/Green Belt/Satellite Towns/Rail Corridor – can be understood as individual components or 'Strategic Spatial Planning Projects/Plans'. Individual spatial planning projects can be observed and assessed as strategic planning in action, which "…make concrete abstract and broad spatial visions by connecting them to local opportunities, transformative and innovative action and means for implementation and co-production, with socially inclusive spatial transformation as a clear aim" (Oosterlynck et al, 2010, 8). Using the work of Albrechts (2006), Carmona and Burgess (2001), De Meulder et al (2004), Oosterlynck et al (2010), a number of key attributes of

strategic spatial planning projects have been identified and used to interrogate the Cork suburban rail corridor case; these can be summarised as follows,

1. *Partnership/Collaboration/Governance* – strategic projects involve usually the development of some form of informal coalition of interests, with a degree of horizontal and vertical alignment. These coalitions combine different levels of government, inter-agency coordination, public-private relationships, community/civil society involvement. These form around broad projects relating to defined spatial units.

2. *Transformation & Structural Impact* – strategic projects usually relate to clearly-defined spatial fragments within cities/city-regions, however they are designed to have a catalysing impact across territories. The scale, visibility and symbolic dimension to these projects provide a degree of economic and political leverage for the parent strategic policy/plan.

3. *Spatial and Temporal Scale* – strategic projects are often articulated at the intermediate scale; they are established as medium-term initiatives so that they can transcend the constraints of short-term planning, whilst operating at a spatial scale (larger than development projects and smaller than city-region scale plans), to allow for territorial and governance innovation.

In order to reflect upon the workings of strategic projects, their 'open' character should be acknowledged. It is important to highlight that these types of planning efforts cannot be treated as prescriptive plans with a predetermined and definitive outcomes. For Van den Broeck (2008, 4), they are concerned with transformation and innovation of social contexts and should "…be considered as search- and learning processes with an 'open' character" and "…the final product should not be fixed and unambiguous from the start." However, at the same time, strategic projects also have a 'closed' character because they are tangible products tied to the realisation of certain physical outcomes.

It is suggested here, therefore, that strategic spatial planning projects combine the comprehensive, closed nature of project plans with the strategic, open quality of strategic

spatial plans and policy. In this way, it is legitimate to treat them as being both instrumental and conjectural products. Strategic spatial planning projects are *instruments* because they contain preferred outcomes (which are spatially explicit) as well as a method (land use zoning/infrastructure/incentives) for delivering those outcomes; they are tools for actualising planning. Although this suggests a linear relationship between project and outcome, strategic projects are also *conjectures* because they are rooted within problematic and uncertain conditions, and are inherently speculative and theoretical in nature; they are also *policy-theories* in use (Schön, 1982). In addressing strategic planning projects, therefore, this research concerns itself with interrelationships between strategic planning and planning instruments – and by necessity deals with implementation, conformance and performance.

This research deals with *implementation* and *conformance* through an examination of evidence relating to the operationalisation of the Cork suburban rail corridor project within the terms of the parent policy frame – LUTS (1992), CASP (2001) and CASP Update (2008). This involves an assessment of the delivery of the elements of the infrastructure project and is concerned with goal attainment, impact and effectiveness. This approach allows for an assessment of the Cork suburban rail corridor initiative as a 'project plan' which has a determinative effect (Mastop and Faludi, 1997, 819), "…a blueprint of the intended end-state of the physical environment, including the measures necessary to achieve that state". This approach allows for consideration of planning as an activity concerned with effecting outcomes; it follows a simple end means logic but this approach is limited; an ex-post evaluation or measurement of *conformance* might interpret *non-conformance* as evidence of policy or plan failure. Non-conformance, however, does not necessarily undermine the integrity or efficacy of the plan or strategy, because whether planning delivers is not the only substantive question.

This form of analysis therefore also requires an evaluation of *performance of* strategic spatial planning projects. This approach draws on this Dutch school of 'performance' (Mastop, 1997: Faludi, 2000), where it is understood that the purpose of strategic plans is to influence decision-making. Hence, assessing performance "…refers to how a plan fares during negotiations, whether people use it, whether it helps clarifying choices, whether (without necessarily being followed) the plan forms part of the definition of subsequent

decision situations. So what happens with the plan becomes the key to evaluation. Whether or not it is followed is not the issue“ (Faludi, 2000, 306). Performance, therefore, refers to the communicative and persuasive aspects of a strategy in shaping actions and decisions, as well as outcomes. Mastop (1997, 344) argues for the following conditions as being necessary for a strategic plan;

(1) The plan must name the operational decisions for which it is intended as a framework.

(2) The plan must be of continuing relevance to the situation as it evolves.

(3) The plan must help in defining operational decision situations. In other words, lest the plan be considered ineffective, it must actually be invoked.

To add to this, Faludi (2000) suggests that the decision makers must *know* the plan, which suggests some form of discourse of implicit agreement or acceptance between the maker of the plan/project and the decision makers at whom it is aimed. Evaluating this aspect of performance involves identifying evidence of such tacit or explicit agreement between plan makers and decision-makers. However, this analysis does not restrict itself seek to the identification of positive correlations between plan content and physical outcomes. Faludi (2000, 309), for example, suggests in situations where decision makers do not conform to the plan, that "…for the purposes of discussing the evaluation of plan performance they are more interesting. In such situations, the evaluator must find out what really happened to the plan, how (if at all) it has been considered." This form of evaluation allows for strategic planning efforts to be seen as search-and-learning processes (Faludi, 2000: Van Den Broeck, 2008), where the assessment concerns itself with decision making, communication, relationships, as well as with outcomes and objects of planning. In this way, it is possible to inquire into what Schön (1984) advocates as an epistemology of practice – as a way to reflect upon what has been learned in action, and in relation to wider contexts.

Therefore, instead of seeking to establish whether each of the CASP's individual measured objectives have been achieved, it is more useful to review the way in which its fundamental proposals around the spatial distribution of growth and development have performed. This reflects a more nuanced understanding of strategic spatial planning and recognises the complex relationship between policy and decision-making as part of the task of urban governance. With this in mind, a review of the development landscape in the Cork city-region after 2001 highlights a number of key concerns regarding the ability to implement large-scale growth management polices within a fragmented governing structure.

CORK CITY-REGION AND STRATEGIC SPATIAL PLANNING

Cork is the second largest urban area in the Republic of Ireland and the city-region contains an attractive and vibrant compact urban settlement, sitting at the mouth of a large natural harbour, surrounded by a planned network of satellite towns and employment hubs, all within a high quality landscape and coastal setting. There is a diverse and dynamic economy in the area with a strong presence of global pharmaceutical, technological and service-based industries, a strong network of third level research and education institutes, as well as a robust traditional employment base in agriculture, tourism, fishing and food production/processing.

The origins of strategic thinking around metropolitan and city-region issues in Cork can be traced to the 1941 Advisory Plan prepared by Manning Roberston, which established an agenda for planning at this scale for the following seventy years, and strategic planning in the greater Cork city-region around land use, economic and environmental issues began in earnest following the publication of the Cork Harbour Development Plan in 1976 and the Land Use and Transport Study in 1978.

The first Land-Use and Transportation Study, LUTS1, was published in 1978 (Skidmore Owings & Merrill, 1978) and updated as LUTS2 in 1992 (Skidmore Owings & Merrill, 1992). This was subsequently replaced in 2001 by the Cork Area Strategic Plan, CASP1, (Atkins, 2002) and its update (CASP2) in 2008 (Indecon International/RPS, 2008). The LUTS 1978 strategy identified a study area, corresponding to a defined metropolitan district, which that has been retained and re-defined as a contemporary spatial planning and statistical

unit known as the Cork Metropolitan Area. The LUTS plan was replaced in 2001 by the Cork Area Strategic Plan, CASP1 (W. S. Atkins, 2001), and by its update (CASP2) in 2008 (Indecon International, 2008).

CASP was quite an innovative approach to planning in the Cork City-Region and represented a significant milestone in sub regional planning in an Irish context. It adopted an approach to spatial planning that was clearly influenced by trends across north-west Europe in particular, and marked a new departure in how the area would be managed and developed. Its focus on the concept of 'Metropolitan Cork' and issues like 'Quality of Life' represented a set of concerns that the LUTS strategy had not considered explicitly and indicated that the strategy extended beyond that of a traditional infrastructure/land use plan. In addition, the plan's narrative, the visual language, graphic techniques all suggest the influence of the European Spatial Development Perspective (1999), as well as the concepts and philosophies that had shaped European planning thinking throughout the 1990s.

At the same time, CASP did provide a sense of continuity, as its remit, coverage and scope was largely coterminous with that of LUTS. Like LUTS, the CASP approach sought to provide a strategic framework for the integration of land use, transportation, infrastructure measures for the Cork city-region and aimed to influence policy decisions for the area taken at national and local levels. In addition, much of the strategy aimed to build on some of the earlier achievements of the LUTS work and to address many of the key shortcomings of that strategy. In particular, it sought to address the challenge of providing a strong public transport network and to use this to try to influence development patterns in the region.

The spatial strategy of CASP bolstered the LUTS approach of promoting a compact city, surrounded by a series of clearly defined satellite centres, as part of a wider functional urban region. The city would function as the economic engine and the capital of a significant city-region operating at a national and European scale. Hence, CASP tried to enhance the performance of the city significantly – through a city revitalisation and a docklands renewal strategy. The regeneration of the city centre and the comprehensive redevelopment of the docklands areas became the critical ingredients for supporting the city's growth and development.

Metropolitan Cork was then presented as an integrated spatial and functional unit, combining the satellite towns as a network of independent and clearly defined settlements. This network of towns in Metropolitan Cork would exist within a high quality landscape, supported by an extensive green belt – which was established to protect the identity and character of the various towns. The green belt provided the setting for Metropolitan Cork and was to become a key planning tool underpinning the concept and operation of this spatial planning unit.

Within the Metropolitan Cork area, the spatial strategy was based on a combination of selective and concurrent consolidation and growth efforts. The broad thrust was based on using strategic infrastructure investment to encourage a new settlement pattern – to address the failure of previous efforts to stem excessive growth in the southern and western parts of the metropolitan area (Douglas, Ballincollig, Carrigaline). Hence, the general approach was to control growth by consolidating existing settlements to the south and west of the city, whilst directing new development along a major growth rail corridor (from Blarney, Monard through the city & docklands and eastwards to Carrigtwohill, Cobh/Midleton).

The CASP approach was based on identifying strategic policies and locations for development. This provided the high-level policy guidance for Development Plans, Housing and Retail Studies, and was also intended guide other transport, infrastructure and marketing studies for the City-Region. It was envisaged that the statutory Development and Local Area Plans of the two local authorities would then determine more detailed local level policies and actions. In addition, subsequent action would be initiated by the private sector or through joint public/private partnership or by the public sector alone.

CASP refined and built upon the established spatial planning ideas for the Cork sub-region and brought forward a set of newly stated key ideas:

- ***Revitalising the city centre***: CASP aimed to strengthen considerably the role and profile of the city centre – as the engine of growth for the city-region – through comprehensive redevelopment in the city centre and docklands;

- ***Compact city and satellite towns***: CASP supported and enhanced the compact city and satellite towns approach, to include provision for more development to the north and east along a new rail corridor, a proposed new town at Monard, further restrictions on growth in the south and west;

- ***Rail based growth*****:** CASP included the rail service idea as the basis for the wider spatial strategy for the city and metropolitan area. This was a key element in the economic development policy for the northern and eastern corridor and a key structuring principle for the entire plan;

- ***Modal shift and choice in Transport*****:** new emphasis on an integrated transport system, promoting transport choice and ''total journey quality'' concept. CASP included measures to promote higher levels of public transport use through the provision of a connected and integrated bus and rail network to include new infrastructure such as rail stations, Green Routes for bus corridors, Park and Ride facilities;

- ***Thinking and working at the Metropolitan Scale*** CASP promoted explicitly the concept of *strategic metropolitan thinking* – this was based on the consideration of a defined spatial unit as an integrated and coherent 'place'. Metropolitan Cork therefore became a way of thinking as well as a statistical unit. It was constructed around the idea of a unified zone, defined by a high quality environment, with a series of compact settlements and a clearly defined green belt – all producing a high quality living and working space;

- ***Addressing the imbalance between the north and south sides of the city***: CASP noted that there had been little modern economic development in the Northside of the City, which had one of the most significant concentrations of social and economic deprivation outside Dublin. It aimed to rebalancing of the City socially, economically and spatially by providing for growth.

This produced a continuous forty year strategic planning framework, and is especially notable because of its inter-institutional and collaborative approach in providing a jointly agreed framework for future development between two separate local authorities (O'Sullivan et al, 2013: Brady and O' Neill, 2014). However, it is equally significant for the ways in which it attempted to integrate economic, environmental and physical planning concerns in a spatially coherent way. This was a fundamental departure from previous sector-based plans prepared within established local authority boundaries which tended to generally address individual themes such as traffic and transport, ecology and

environment, economy and employment, land use zoning, conservation and heritage social and community, without any meaningful integration or vertical and horizontal coordination. In strategic planning terms, an argument can be made that these different sectors, which would otherwise have been subject to a tendency towards separation and specialisation, can have a reasonably clear, integrated and geographical manifestation at the city-region scale.

THE CORK SUBURBAN RAIL CORRIDOR – 'MAJOR URBAN DEVELOPMENT PROJECT'

CASP's defining characteristic as a strategic planning initiative was its attempt to resist established market trends in the region by policy aimed at redirecting development activity from the south and west of the city using a rail based development mechanism to focus growth to the north and east. This was an attempt to recalibrate the development trajectory of the entire city-region by refocussing urban growth pressures from areas that had clear market preferences to areas that were considered less attractive in market terms. In order to translate this fundamental shift in development patterns, it required a substantial commitment in terms of infrastructure provision, active and protective zoning interventions, and persuading elected members, development interests and central government that such an approach was worth pursuing. That this most interventionist ingredient of the strategy was agreed and maintained during a period of unparalleled development pressures and a highly pro-growth political atmosphere was significant and is likely to be the strongest legacy of CASP in the longer term.

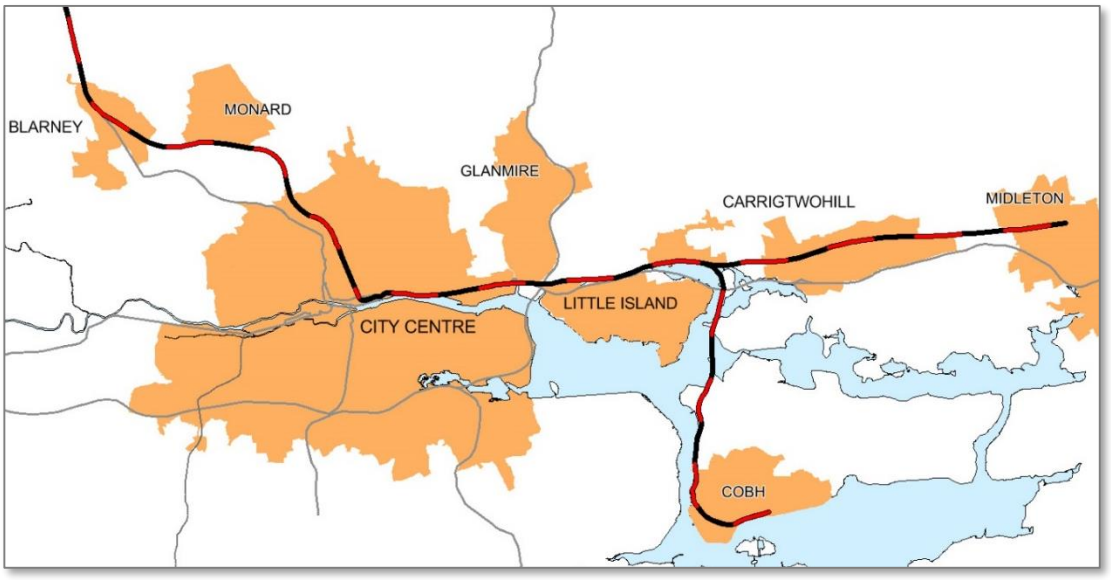
The rail corridor project is one of the more distinctive initiatives to emerge from sub-regional planning in Cork. It can be characterised as a transformative strategic spatial planning project which combined transport policy with land-use measures to try to instigate a radical reconfiguration of development trends. This was a notable attempt to integrate decision-making around sustainable transportation infrastructure and development patterns in the sub region. Its origins lie in the LUTS Review in 1992 when the idea of using the existing/unused rail infrastructure as a way of delivering regeneration to the north and east of the city was first proposed. These areas had experienced significant economic decline and had generally underperformed since LUTS 1978 was published.

The LUTS Review 1992 suggested that the development of a suburban rail service on the northern and eastern zones was more than just a transport/commuter device – it was to form a key element of the economic development policy for these areas. It was also foreseen as a way of improving levels of accessibility and economic opportunity for people living along this corridor, by improving access to jobs and services for existing residents. This corridor, running from Mallow and Blarney in the north, through Blackpool and the city centre continued eastwards through Little Island/Glounthaune and onwards to Cobh.

The LUTS Review 1992 recommended therefore that the rail service be subject to public investment and would provide a substantial public transport service along what would become a zone of high density activity – in employment and residential terms. The principal initial measures were to include a new city centre rail spur, a new rail station in Blackpool/Kilbarry on the city's northside, new rolling stock and improved rail station access. Another key measure was the reconfiguration of Kent Station to allow through-routing of suburban rail from the northern to eastern zones, providing integration along the corridor. It also suggested that future consideration be given to re-opening the defunct line between Glounthaune and Midleton to the east of the city.

CASP in 2001 subsequently incorporated a much more explicit rail corridor strategy, which built upon the LUTS Review's early suggestions. This was contained within its proposals for 'An Integrated Transport System for Metropolitan Cork'. This approach reinforced the concept of using transport infrastructure as a key shaping device and proposed a major growth corridor between Blarney (North) and Midleton and Cobh (East); this was presented as a measure to aid social inclusion and accessibility by improving access to jobs, housing, services, recreation (Figure 1). This rail-based economic development strategy formed a major part of the CASP thinking, which concerned itself with encouraging more economic opportunities in the northern and eastern parts of the city-region. Development was to be concentrated along this growth corridor in order to maximise infrastructural investment and avoid traffic congestion that continued urban sprawl would produce. The key intervention therefore was the improvement of rail services through the reopening of the rail line to Midleton, the improvement and expansion of existing services to Cobh and the development of commuter services to the north – towards Monard/Blarney.

Figure 1: CASP Rail-based growth locations



Mapping: Centre for Planning Education and Research, UCC

Diagram Features: Coloured areas indicate areas of existing and planned urban development.

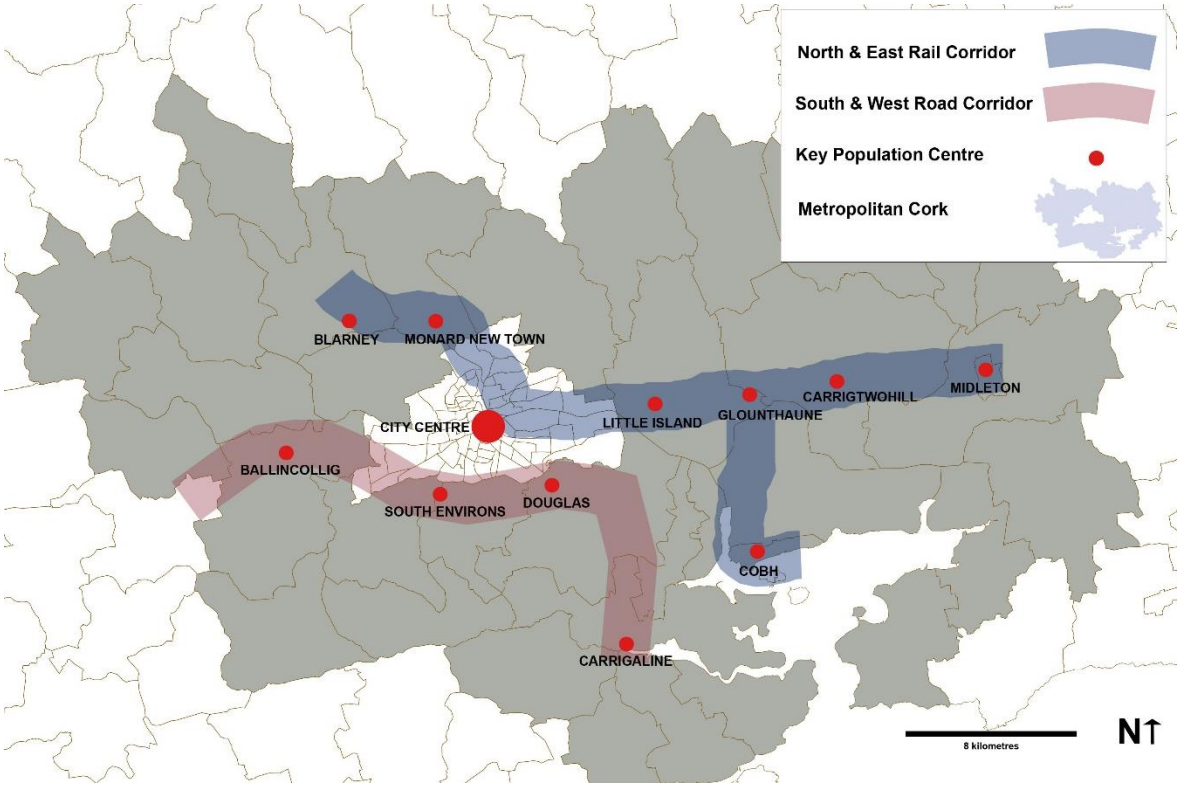
This major growth corridor in the northern and eastern part of the Metropolitan area started in Blarney and continued through to Midleton, and included significant regeneration of the city's docklands and city centre. The location for development was in close proximity to the existing rail system along this route, to include extensive development in Blarney, Carrigtwohill and Midleton. Smaller scale rail opportunities were identified in Glounthaune, Little Island and other locations accessible to rail services. Longer term growth was identified for Monard, a new satellite town to the north of the city, while Blackpool was identified as a key rail opportunity for the northern inner city. CASP included an outline 'Metropolitan Rail Cost Benefit Summary' which demonstrated marginal positive benefit of €9.65M over the 30 years of the scheme and a cost benefit ratio of 1.03. Then, following adoption of CASP, the Department of Public Enterprise, Iarnrod Eireann, Cork County and City Councils agreed to carry out a feasibility study into the rail aspects of the Plan. This ultimately supported the CASP rail measures in general terms and recommended the reopening of the rail service between Cork city and Midleton and improvements to the existing Cork to Cobh services.

IMPLEMENTING THE STRATEGY; PROJECT, DEVELOPMENT AND CONFORMANCE

This project can be perceived as a framing device for the city-region's efforts to address place quality/livability/sustainability in the face of economic impulses that threatened to accelerate suburban sprawl, car dependency and the general trend of dispersed development. The effectiveness of the rail strategy therefore can be measured by an overview of how subsequent population and commuting patterns changed across Metropolitan Cork and the wider city-region since the publication of the CASP strategy in 2001 and the subsequent revisions to the local planning regimes. The purpose of this part of the research is to determine the extent to which the rail strategy has managed to shape patterns and forms of development within the metropolitan area. In this way, the analysis takes a deliberately instrumentalist approach, concerning itself with outcomes of planning and the extent of project conformance.

The strategic purpose of the rail initiative was twofold; firstly, it attempted to influence the location of population growth in Metropolitan Cork away from the south and west of the city and towards the north and east; secondly, it aimed to re-shape travel behaviour in the region by building up a commuter rail system to help reduce levels of car dependence and effect modal shift. In summary, the strategy was concerned with limiting road-based development along an arc from Ballincollig to the city's southern/western fringes to Carrigaline (areas with limited public transport provision and with no rail infrastructure) whilst simultaneously promoting rail based development in a corridor stretching from Blarney to the north, through the city centre and eastwards to Cobh/Midleton. These are illustrated in Figure 2, using a one-kilometre corridor either side of the railway line between Blarney and Midleton/Cobh and a one-kilometre corridor either side of the N25/N40 road links between Ballincollig and Carrigaline. The following discussion compares the performance of these two corridors and organises the analysis using a pre-CASP and post-CASP structure.

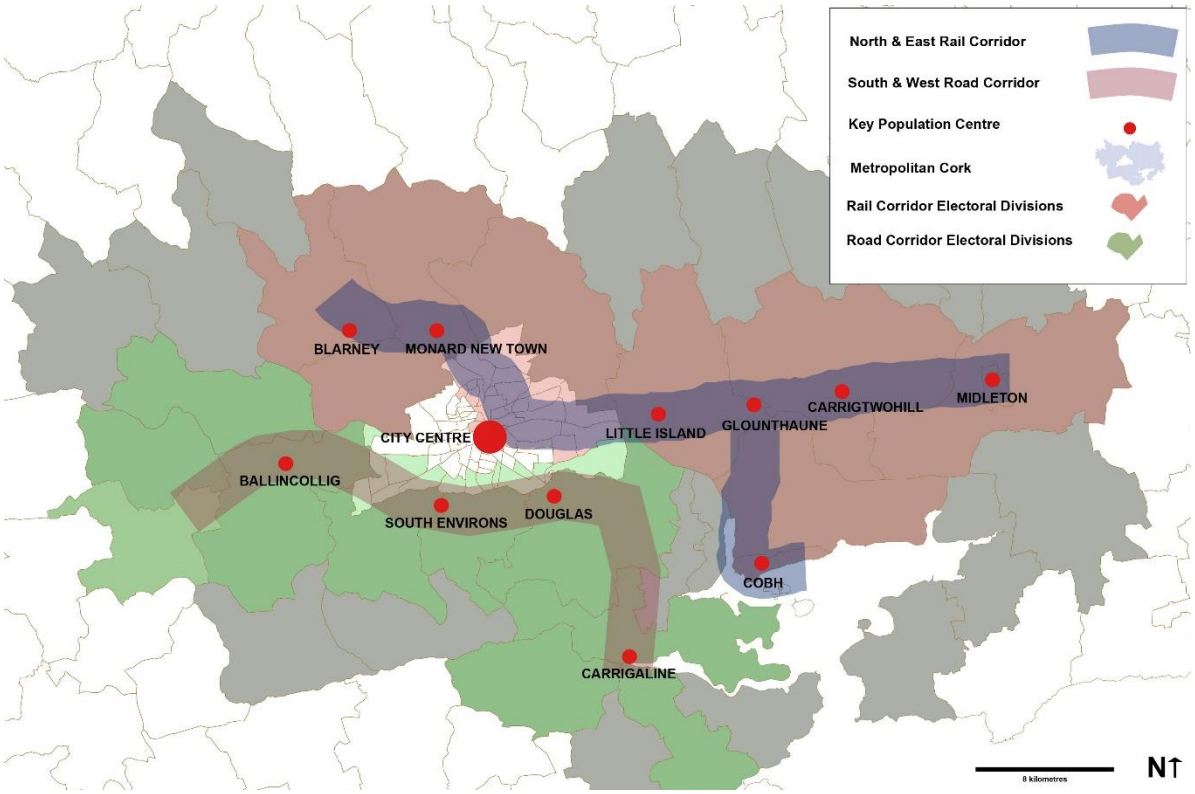
Figure 2 Metropolitan Cork, the Rail and Road corridors



Mapping: Author - Centre for Planning Education and Research, UCC

For the purposes of this analysis, all of the Electoral Divisions (EDs) which constitute each zone (within the Rail and Road 'corridors') are used to compare the demographic data for each census period between 1991 and 2016, as well as commuting and transportation data from the 2002 and 2011 census. EDs from each corridor located within the city (coloured white in Figure 2) and county (coloured grey in Figure 2) administrative areas are included in the analysis. The EDs provide a consistent and uniform spatial unit from which accurate chronological and territorial analysis can be made. The selection includes all of those EDs through which each 'one-kilometre' corridor sits (See Figure 3). The analysis examines population data by comparing the relative performance of each zone for the pre-CASP period (1991-2002) with the post-CASP period (2002-2016). This helps provide an understanding of the broad patterns of development in the Cork area and the influence of the policy set out at metropolitan and city-region scale.

Figure 3 Metropolitan Cork, the Rail and Road corridors' Electoral Divisions



Mapping: Author - Centre for Planning Education and Research, UCC

The analysis of population change presented in Tables 1 and 2 reveals a mixed set of results. In the ten years prior to CASP, the road corridor exhibited strong average annual population growth of 1.76% (13,489) which was ahead of the rail corridor's rate of 1.13% (9,836) and ahead of Metropolitan Cork's overall rate of 1.11% (25,741). This issue of over-development in the southern and western parts of the metropolitan area had been acknowledged in CASP, and the strategic purpose of the rail project was to arrest and ultimately reverse this trend. In the period following CASP, 2002-2016, the rail corridor recorded strong average annual growth of 1.64% (22,306), compared with the road corridor 1.35%/17,102 and Metropolitan Cork 1.33%/47,980. In addition, the rail corridor's share of metropolitan growth increased from 38.2% in the pre-CASP period to 46.5% in the post CASP period, whilst the road corridor's share decreased from 52.4% to 35.6%. In addition, it is worth noting that the rail corridor has performed relatively well in the latest intercensal period recording 1.12% annual growth – higher that that recorded for the road

corridor, Metropolitan Cork and the CASP region. This is important as the post 2011 period captures population change after the full commuter service had commenced in 2009.

Table 1 population change for road and rail corridors in Metropolitan Cork 1991-2016

	Pre CASP				Post CASP				Pre Rail Opening*		Post Rail Opening	
	Pop change 1991-2002	Average annual increase %	% Share of Metro Growth	% Share of city region growth	Pop change 2002-2016	Average annual increase %	% Share of Metro Growth	% Share of city region growth	1991-2011	Average annual increase %	2011-2016	Average annual increase
Rail Corridor	9,836	1.1	38.2	16.0	22,306	1.6	46.5	40.44	25,812	1.5	6,330	1.1
Road Corridor	13,489	1.8	52.4	21.9	17,102	1.4	35.6	31.00	26,590	1.7	4,001	0.8
Cork City & Suburbs	11,839	0.7	46.0	19.2	22,430	0.9	46.7	40.66	24,182	0.7	10,087	1.0
Metropolitan Cork	25,741	1.1	100	N/A	47,980	1.3	100		58,021	1.3	15,700	1.1
CASP	61,600	1.9			55,163	1.1			94,905	1.5	21,858	1.1
Cork County	41,651	1.5			92,444	2.0			116,686	2.0	17,409	0.9
Ireland	391,484	1.1			844,662	1.5			1,062,533	1.5	173,613	0.8

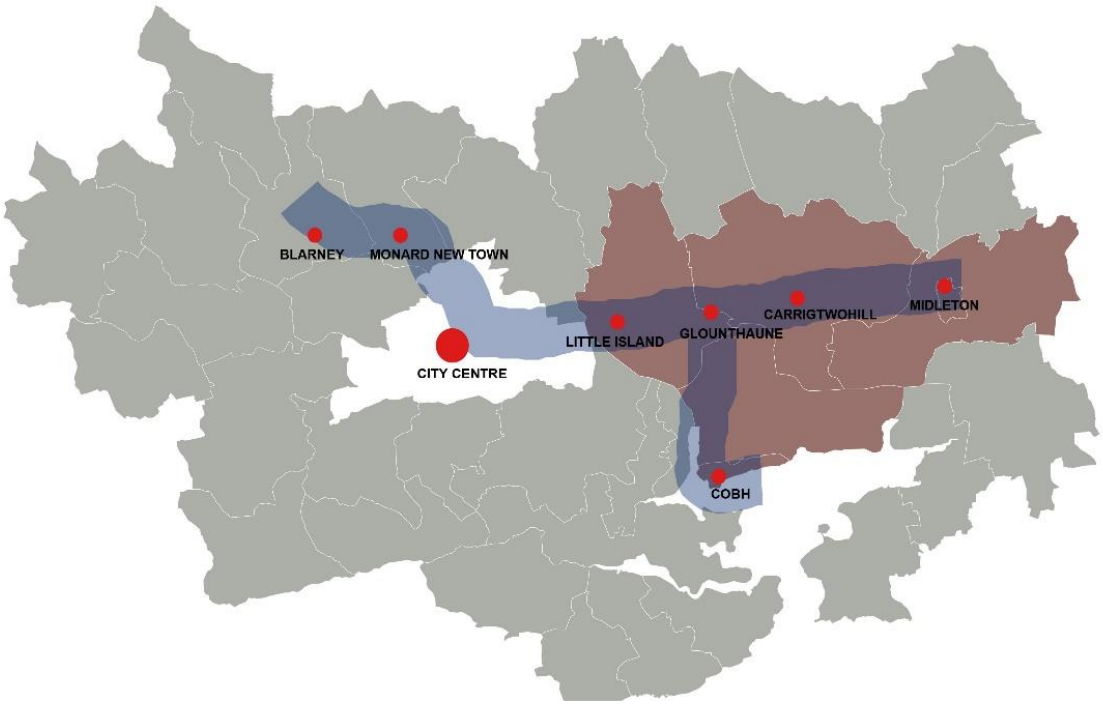
*Pre-rail opening & Post rail opening refers to the commencement of new commuter rail services between Cork city (Kent rail station) and Midleton in mid-2009. Pre-existing rail services between Cork city and Cobh were enhanced after 2009.

Source: Central Statistics Office (CSO, 1996, 2002, 2011, 2016).

This suggests that Metropolitan Cork's population patterns have begun to shift towards locations closer to the rail corridor and that the dominance of the zones to the south and west of the city may be lessening. It is worth noting however that the strong growth rate in the rail corridor in the post CASP period (22.9%) after 2002 mirrored very strong national growth levels (21.5%) and was lower than the rate of growth experienced in Cork County (28.4%). Moreover, strong growth rates in the Electoral Divisions along the rail corridor does not necessarily imply a shift from car based commuting to rail based travel; hence this broader shift does not translate into rail-based development *per se*.

In order to examine more closely the territorial distribution of population change, Table 2 compares the rates of growth in six Electoral Divisions within the rail corridor (outside the City Council jurisdiction) which have an operating rail station facility with the rest of Metropolitan Cork's Electoral Divisions along the rail corridor (Figure 4). This allows for a more detailed assessment of the relationship between growth and rail accessibility.

Figure 4 Rail corridor Electoral Divisions with/without rail stations



Mapping: Author - Centre for Planning Education and Research, UCC

Diagram Features: Blue corridor represents railway line; red dots represent existing or planned rail stations; areas coloured red represent Electoral Areas with functioning rail stations.

Table 2 Population change in rail corridor, Electoral Divisions with/without rail stations 1991-2016

Electoral Division	Population			Average Annual Population Growth %			Share of Metropolitan Growth		
	1991	2002	2016	1991-2016	1991-2002	2002-2016	1991-2016	1991-2002	2002-2016
Electoral Divisions with rail stations (Metropolitan Area, Cork County)									
002 Cobh Urban	6,227	6,767	6,506	0.18	0.87	-0.28	0.38	2.10	-0.54
008 Midleton Urban	2,990	3,798	3,879	1.19	2.70	0.15	1.21	3.14	0.17
081 Caherlag	4,009	5,270	7,480	3.46	3.15	3.00	4.71	4.90	4.61
085 Cobh Rural	3,721	4,614	8,270	4.89	2.40	5.66	6.17	3.47	7.62
249 Carrigtohill	3,035	3,507	7,333	5.66	1.56	7.79	5.83	1.83	7.97
260 Midleton Rural	3,728	4,675	8,916	5.57	2.54	6.48	7.04	3.68	8.84
Sum	**23,710**	**28,631**	**42,384**	**3.15**	**2.08**	**3.43**	**25.33**	**19.12**	**28.66**
Electoral Divisions without rail stations (Metropolitan Area, Cork County)									
080 Blarney	3,588	4,917	5,310	1.92	3.70	0.57	2.34	5.16	0.82
101 Rathcooney (Part Rural)	5,409	6,593	8,181	2.05	2.19	1.72	3.76	4.60	3.31
103 St. Mary's Part	2,910	4,100	5,158	3.09	4.09	1.84	3.05	4.62	2.21
104 Whitechurch	1,534	1,833	2,813	3.34	1.95	3.82	1.73	1.16	2.04
Sum	**13,441**	**17,443**	**21,462**	**2.39**	**2.98**	**1.65**	**10.88**	**15.55**	**8.38**
Rail Corridor	87,285	97,121	119,427	1.47	1.13	1.64	43.60	38.21	46.49
Road Corridor	76,749	90,238	107,340	1.59	1.76	1.35	41.50	52.40	35.64
Metropolitan Cork	**231,501**	**257,242**	**305,222**	**1.27**	**1.11**	**1.33**	**100.00**	**100.00**	**100.00**

Source: Central Statistics Office (CSO, 1996, 2002, 2011, 2016).

Overall, the part of the rail corridor containing a working commuter rail service generally performed better than those locations without rail services. The most significant trend is the difference between the two zones within the rail corridor during the pre- and post-CASP period. Electoral Divisions with rail stations experienced an increase in the average annual population rate from 2.08% in the 1991-2002 period to 3.43% in the 2002-2016 period, whilst Electoral Divisions without rail stations experienced a decrease in the average annual population rate from 2.98% in the 1991-2002 period to 1.65% in the 2002-2016 period. Furthermore, the share of metropolitan growth located in the Electoral Divisions with rail stations increased from 19.12% to 28.66%, and the equivalent share in the Electoral Divisions without rail stations decreased from 15.55% to 8.38%.

The most significant component of the rail project, the re-opening of the Glounthaune to Midleton line, was only completed in mid-2009 and much of the development that preceded that in the north and east of the metropolitan area was therefore much more likely to be reliant on road-based commuting. Table 3 for instance shows that there has not been a significant reorientation of travel behaviour within Metropolitan Cork. Motorised forms of transport increased in both the rail and road corridors between 2002 and 2011 and public transport usage remains low at below 8% for the two zones combined. Although rail travel has increased within the rail corridor (1.6%) motorised forms increased markedly from 60.2% to 68.2%. However, despite the underperformance of rail transport to 2011, the spatial distribution of growth is important, even though much of this may not be directly associated with the delivery of the rail service. The rail strategy was unlikely to result in short term modal shift considering the timescales involved and the inflexibility of the land development process. Commuting patterns, however, can be altered once rail infrastructure is in place and efficient and reliable services are made available. Therefore, the orientation of growth to locations close to the rail corridor allows for future modal shift in these areas through Park and Ride usage and further concentration of development in close proximity to rail stations.

Table 3 Change in journey times road and rail corridor, 2002-2011

	means of travel to work, school or college	means of travel to work, school or college	means of travel to work, school or college	means of travel to work, school or college	means of travel to work, school or college	means of travel to work, school or college	
2002	On foot	Bicycle	Bus, minibus or coach	Train or DART	Motorised	Other	total
Rail Corridor	12,760	671	5,860	690	36,581	4,212	60,774
%	**21.0**	**1.1**	**9.6**	**1.1**	**60.2**	**6.9**	**100.0**
Road Corridor	8,993	966	5,060	63	43,286	3,453	61,821
%	**14.5**	**1.6**	**8.2**	**0.1**	**70.0**	**5.6**	**100.0**
2011	On foot	Bicycle	Bus, minibus or coach	Train or DART	Motorised	Other	total
Rail Corridor	12,365	955	5,055	1,037	44,716	1,437	65,565
%	**18.9**	**1.5**	**7.7**	**1.6**	**68.2**	**2.2**	**100.0**
Road Corridor	8,581	996	4,453	79	50,658	1,338	66,105
%	**13.0**	**1.5**	**6.7**	**0.1**	**76.6**	**2.0**	**100.0**

Source: Central Statistics Office (CSO, 2002, 2011).

Under CASP, the towns of Midleton and Carrigtwohill were each to receive uplifts of 143% and 159% respectively by 2020, compared to a 42% increase across Metropolitan Cork generally (excluding the city) and 14% for the wider 'Rest of CASP' zone (Ring Towns and Rural Areas).

Using the 2016 Census returns, the relative underperformance of the rail corridor towns since CASP 2001 within Metropolitan Cork becomes apparent, with Midleton (-58%) and Carrigtwohill (-16%) recording significantly lower-than planned growth, when measured against CASP's original estimates. Overall, the East Cork rail corridor towns underperformed by 26%, whilst Metropolitan Cork and the remainder of the CASP area over performed by 32% and 214% respectively. This key shortcoming can be explained in particular by a lack of substantial progress close to the rail station sites in Carrigtwohill and Midleton.

Table 4 Performance of East Cork rail corridor towns 2000-2016

	2020 CASP forecast population	Planned Increase 2000-2020	% Increase 2000-2020	Inferred Growth by 2016[12]	Actual Population Growth by 2016	Performance 2016	Performance 2016 %
Midleton Town	21,010	12,350	143	9,750	4,135	-5,615	-58
Carrigtwohill & Midleton Hinterland	17,220	10,570	159	8,344	7,008	-1,336	-16
Glounthaune & Little Island	5,340	400	8	315	2,540	2,225	706
Sum East Cork Corridor	*43,570*	*23,320*	*115*	*18,409*	*13,683*	*-4,726*	*-26*
Total City	135,820	12,010	10	9,481	1,812	-7,669	-81
Total Metropolitan Cork	180,710	53,010	42	41,850	55,423	13,573	32
Total Rest of CASP	106,620	13,030	14	10,286	32,318	22,032	214

Source: (WS Atkins, 2001: CSO, 2016).

[12] 'Inferred Growth by 2016' is calculated by using a simple averaged annual growth figure, applied to the 15 years to 2016

When population data for the post-2006 period is examined, the overall East Cork corridor zone has in fact recorded relatively strong growth. Table 5 shows that these locations recorded population growth of 28% between 2006 and 2016, compared with Metropolitan Cork (17%) and the remainder of the CASP area (19%). However, the lack of progress on the key development sites close to the rail stations has meant that much of this growth has occurred in locations away from the rail corridor and in places that are unlikely to support the rail service. The 2011 and 2016 Census results show strongest population growth in the more rural parts of the Electoral Districts along the rail corridor. Furthermore, with one-off housing accounting for 59% of all housing completions in 2015 (up from 28% in 2006) in Cork County, it would appear that much of the growth along the rail corridor locations has taken place in locations and formats that did not in fact underpin the rail strategy, as it was unlikely to result in population growth that would deliver rail passenger potential.

Table 5 Performance of East Cork rail corridor towns 2006-2016

	Population Change 2006-2016	Population Change 2006-2016 %
Midleton town	2,480	24.04
Carrigtwohill & Midleton Hinterland	3,973	41.02
Glounthaune & Little Island	925	14.11
Sum East Cork Corridor	7,378	27.78
Total City	6,204	5.20
Total Metropolitan Cork	26,214	17.13
Total Rest of CASP	20,143	19.05

Source: (CSO, 2016).

The foregoing analysis largely involves a traditional approach to plan/project assessment based on goal attainment, impact and effectiveness using a simple end means logic. It traced the conformance of the strategy by examining evidence of population distribution changes in the region. This is a valid exercise because the rail strategy was devised with particular spatial and behavioural outcomes in mind. The reopening of the rail line to Midleton, and the associated investment in rail infrastructure, can be understood as a

direct outcome of policies created within the CASP process. It is possible therefore to interpret a direct causal relationship between the strategic project and a physical outcome; an important part of the project was delivered. Other elements, such as the redevelopment of Kent Station, the Dunkettle Park & Ride facility, and Blackpool-Kilbarry, Monard and Blarney stations have not been completed. The rail strategy however was not concerned solely with infrastructure delivery and it was also intended to underpin a significant shift in population and development trends in the metropolitan area. The data would suggest that there appears to have been a slow but gradual shift in population growth towards areas along the rail corridor. However, the analysis here suggests that this growth pattern cannot be defined as evidence of rail-based development. What does this mean then as part of the assessment of the rail project?

Given the complex and contested nature of planning in postmodern times, and the often conflicted relationships between processes, participants, external factors and outcomes, it is notoriously difficult to assess the effectiveness of plans or strategies in the public domain. Unlike a construction project or an exercise in product development, the success or otherwise of planning activity cannot be assessed solely be the degree to which a plan's agreed proposals have been implemented precisely as envisaged, and on time. This is true even when the time and scale horizon is comparatively limited e.g. statutory city or county development plans which have a typical life of five or six years. Recently introduced requirements in Ireland for reporting on the achievement of development plan objectives or for meeting certain environmental targets (through Strategic Environmental Assessment for example) have attempted to make the assessment of plans more systematic.

However, it is yet unclear whether these techniques amount to narrowly instrumental reporting for bureaucratic purposes or meaningful appraisals of how effective the planning principles and strategies have been. When it comes to larger sale strategic planning for infrastructure and sustainable development – an exercise where time horizons are longer, where the range of actors is broader, where the spatial extent is larger and where vulnerability to uncertainty is greater – these prescriptive ends/indicator approaches appear to be even more problematic.

RAIL STRATEGY PERFORMANCE

In an important discussion on strategic plan evaluation, Mastop and Faludi (1997) suggest that the relationship between a project plan and a particular outcome is conditional rather than prescriptive. A strategic plan or project is therefore an instrument to be used as opposed to an object to be consumed. The preceding discussion on conformance takes a deliberately instrumentalist approach, tracing neat empirical lines of thought between plan and outcomes. This approach is clearly rooted in a rationalist methodology and is therefore somewhat limited when used alone as a form of social inquiry. It is used here to lead towards a complementary discussion on performance.

An influential paper on the performance of spatial planning by Faludi (2000) provides a useful framework for assessing sub-regional plans, making a distinction between two kinds of plan. Unlike 'Project plans', 'Strategic plans' are open-ended in terms of their timeframes and objectives. As frameworks for decision-making, their scope is continuous: evaluation is more concerned with their effectiveness in influencing the choices that are made; even when decisions depart from the strategy during its lifetime. This approach, which takes account of the uncertainty and 'wickedness' inherent in real-world planning arenas is analogous to the 'recursive model' of public administration described by (Sabel & Jordan, 2015) as a more appropriate alternative to traditional linear goal- and ends- based assessment. In their discussion on models of 'delivering delivery' in public administration settings, Sabel and Jordan (2015, 8) distinguish linear models which track the achievement of set goals from recursive approaches which "…reshapes familiar notions of accountability to encourage the re-examination and adjustment of initial goals and the means of achieving them in the light of efforts at implementation." Using this lens, strategic plans can be examined as live processes rather than static objects of public policy.

According to Faludi (2000, 306), this kind of plan "is performing ('fulfilling its purpose') if and only if it plays a tangible role in the choices of the actors to whom it is addressed. In such a situation the plan performs a useful role irrespective of whether the outcomes correspond to the plan". Recognising in particular that departures from the provisions of a strategic plan in themselves are not an indication of failure of the plan, four principles cited

by Faludi (2000) (derived from G. Wallagh's (1994) work on the Dutch planning system) are also considered useful:

- Where an operational decision conforms to the plan and explicit reference is made to it then this demonstrates that conformity has not been accidental;

- Where arguments for taking non-conforming decisions are derived from the plan decisions, then departures are deliberate;

- Where the plan provides the basis for analysing consequences of an incidental decision which happens to contravene the plan.; that decision comes under the umbrella of the plan;

- If and when departures become too frequent and the plan must be reviewed the original plan may still be said to have worked for as long as the review takes that plan as its point of departure (described as the regenerative capacity of the plan)

  (Faludi, 2000, 310).

The following discussion on the performance of the rail strategy is structured to facilitate a narrative to complement the preceding analysis of conformance. This attempts to consider the processes and dynamics of governance that lie beneath the surface of decision-making, investment, policy formulation and planning action. This commences with an examination of how the suburban rail project was *framed as a public policy discourse*. Following this, there is a reflection on how the project emerged as a form of *collective action and collaborative governance*. Finally, the discussion addresses the *transformative structural impact* of the project.

PROJECT FRAMING AND THE POLICY DISCOURSE

The framing of policy discourses is a key consideration as part of the inquiry into the social-institutional processes around strategic spatial planning projects. This reflects an interest in analysis that concerns itself not only with policy and outcomes, but also with the strategic

conduct of actors and their modes of interactions in specific institutional settings. Such an approach is influenced by theories of communicative planning which promote the normative use of planning ideas, concepts and images as a means of formulating discourses in public policy settings to promote certain spatial and environmental outcomes (Healey, 1997). For planning concepts to succeed they "…must have the capacity to travel across different levels of consciousness: for instance, from the level of conscious embracing of planning notions to their routinization within current practices and, even further, within broadly accepted cultural norms and values." (Gualini and Majoor, 2007, 202). This permits a focus on the role of ideas and concepts of urban spatial development and on the discourses of place making within policy development and implementation. In examining strategic urban projects as 'framing' practice, Gualini and Majoor (2007) propose an emphasis on how planning practices shape policy arenas and institutional interaction on one hand (procedural framing) and on how they express ideas, visions, concepts about places that shape public and private action (symbolic-cognitive framing).

In the case of Cork's experiences then, the interest is in how the framing of a planning process influenced various actors' perceptions of a situation and shaping their conduct. CASP's strong message in favour of a commuter rail scheme was transmitted quite rapidly with the commissioning of a detailed feasibility report by Iarnród Eireann (Irish Rail) in 2003. The consultants (Faber Maunsell and Goodbody Economic Consultants) were commissioned to carry out a detailed appraisal of the rail proposals in CASP and to determine if there was an economic case for developing the proposed rail services. This analysis indicated that there was strong potential for growth and commuting business in the Cork area with patronage of up to four million extra passengers per annum projected in the medium term, with a possibility of nine million in the longer term. This technical analysis was shaped directly by the communicative substance of CASP – which expressed a very explicit policy narrative in relation to the rail strategy. The cost-benefit analysis for example included an account of the material impact of land use zoning and development trends that would accrue from the types of CASP-inspired zoning and financial contributions in the two local authorities' respective development plans. There was, as a result, an apparent transmission of strategic thinking into the technical judgement of CASP's measures. This suggests that the CASP framing of the rail project was influencing the modes of communication, and of action, by third parties. This can be seen in the nature of

the language deployed in the study conducted for Iarnród Eireann, and the way in which the technical assessment was shaped by the CASP narrative. This suggests a conscious embracing of planning ideas by those third parties and a degree of routinisation of some of CASP's core concepts around the rail corridor.

When the then government's commitment to the Cork Suburban Rail project was secured, the land-use strategy for the Metropolitan area in successive Development and Local Area Plans was based on increasing the proportion of new housing located in the hinterland of the rail stations on the rail network. Both local authorities incorporated the rail corridor as a strong organising concept as part of their settlement strategies and included explicit measures in their respective development plans. In the city, Local Area Plans for the North Docks area and North Blackpool incorporated a rail-oriented development approach and were targeted towards supporting rail services as well as realising the regeneration opportunities associated with rail-based development. This activity by the local authorities was not just a technical land use zoning exercise – it was a highly visible, politically-explicit promotion of the project, which included overt symbolic messages about place-making, environmental sustainability and socio-economic aspirations for the city-region. As the local land use regime was being modified in this way, the government fulfilled its role by directing the national transport agency, Iarnród Eireann, to prepare the necessary delivery structures.

The formal procedures required to advance the delivery of infrastructure also reflect the influence of CASP's framing of the project. Iarnród Eireann published its Rail Order in 2006 under the Railway Order Transport (Railway Infrastructure) Act 2001 and was followed by a public inquiry, including consideration of the impact of the scheme under Environmental Impact Assessment procedures. Within those legal-technical arenas, the scheme was explicitly presented and justified using strong planning-inspired discourses of urban sustainability and growth management derived from CASP,

> *From the viewpoint of Iarnród Eireann the financial viability of an improved rail service could only be achieved where the land use development is focused within the rail corridor as provided for in CASP. In the view of Iarnród Eireann, the two are inextricably linked. Transport links would not*

> *be viable without population growth, and population growth had to be centred on Transport Corridors*
>
> (CIE, 2006, 8).

The adoption of the 'rail corridor' as a spatial metaphor by a wide range of interests suggest that the rail policy shaped the cognitive as well as procedural dimensions of the initiative. The content of the rail order application, and the discussions that followed as part of the public inquiry, clearly reflected the way in which the CASP policy had been articulated by the two local authorities. The supportive actions of these third parties (central government and the national transport agency) did not emerge simply as a result of CASP's existence as an object of public policy; it also relied on the way in which that strategic initiative was transmitted into the local land use planning framework.

Cork County Council had prepared rail-based *Special Local Area Plans* for Blarney-Kilbarry (Stoneview), Carrigtwohill and Midleton in September 2005. This was an important step in the attempt to secure a critical mass of future population in the locations that are best suited to use the new rail service. Subsequently, an additional rail station was proposed in successive development plans at Monard, between the city boundary and Blarney, to serve a planned new settlement for approximately 12,500 people. The site of this railway station was identified in the *Blarney-Kilbarry Special Local Area Plan*. Thus, the post-rail zoning framework had been modified to include provision for 23,310 additional housing units to 2020 and the Special Local Area Plans in the County areas set out a clear framework for development of housing, retail, education and employment uses in the hinterlands of the existing/proposed rail stations. In general terms, land use proposals sought to radically increase population levels within the catchment of the rail stations.

However, these new rail stations needed passenger patronage and it was clear that the success of the rail strategy would depend on the ability of the planning and development system to deliver growth in the locations that would support the new rail service; this meant concentrating developments in proximity to rail services and accommodating higher residential and employment densities in these locations. Residential densities along the corridor were set to offer the potential to support the critical numbers of users to support

the proposed rail corridor. Further detailed statutory development plans would be needed to detail future development in line with the strategy and a broad partnership of interests (all state agencies) would work together to deliver the necessary rail infrastructure.
The Cork County Development Plan 2003 had reinforced the CASP strategy and specifically the proposed eastern rail corridor.

> *The CASP also envisages that towards the end of this Plan, there will be a major increase in the amount of growth along the rail corridor and more modest growth in the south and west." It set the context for a comprehensive coverage of Special Local Area Plans and specifically defined the future roles of Carrigtwohill and Midleton.*

It stipulated a more challenging residential density target:

> *Objective HO 2-3 High Density Housing Development: It is an objective to ensure that new housing development within established town centres, proximate to existing or proposed public transport corridors or on land that is referred to in a specific zoning objective in this plan as suitable for "high density housing development" is carried out at a net density in excess of 50 dwellings per hectare.*

The subsequent Special Local Area Plans (SLAPS) created a framework for rail-based development in close proximity to the rail facilities. However, within these plans, it was decided that the various landowners would be responsible for preparing the detailed masterplanning that would be required to facilitate the delivery of essential infrastructure and services in these areas. Given the multiplicity of landownership on those key sites and the complexity of infrastructure provision required, it was possibly optimistic to expect a diverse collection of competing interests to coordinate such a task. The Midleton site had 19 principal landowners while Carrigtwohill had 41. Given that the local authority had led the rail corridor strategy through the roll lout of SLAPS and a special financial contribution scheme, it would have been essential to continue to lead the process of unlocking those key sites. Furthermore, the critical nature and likely costs of coordinated infrastructure delivery (water supply, wastewater, roads, and communications) meant that a state-led approach was probably more appropriate.

The planning practices that emerged from CASP certainly influenced both the procedural and cognitive framing of the rail initiative. The way in which the rail initiative was translated from *strategy* to *policy* to *project* suggest that it performed quite effectively as a piece of policy-shaping planning practice. This is evident in the manner in which the CASP policy rapidly became part of the everyday policy discourse of the local authorities and third parties, and the degree to which it became normalised as the de-facto strategic planning credo for the city-region. The framing of those planning ideas also served to encourage the formation of alliances which emerged around this key planning project.

COLLABORATIVE GOVERNANCE & COLLECTIVE ACTION

The governance arrangements for the Cork rail strategy were developed in an innovative manner. In the absence of formal structures for advancing these types of strategic inter-local authority projects at the city-region scale, or an established procedure at the national – local interface, a bespoke delivery model was required. What emerged can be understood as a temporary, informal, project-based coalition of interests that emerged in a particular institutional-administrative setting. Within this broad coalition, the two local authorities clearly positioned themselves as project promoters, with Cork County Council in particular taking an active lead. CASP had provided the critical policy context for the project, and as joint CASP signatories, the two local government bodies were positioned as the organisations responsible for kick-starting its implementation. Hence, it was the responsibility of the local authorities to persuade national government, the national transport provider and local development interests to support the project. Even though CASP had been implicitly endorsed by national interests, including the transport provider, as the de facto strategic planning framework for Cork, the implementation of its individual components was clearly dependent on local initiative; national endorsement did not automatically translate into guaranteed financial or political support.

Securing such support from national interests was essential. This was a considerable challenge for a number of reasons. Firstly, the capital investment that was required was substantial and beyond the capacity of local actors to deliver, considering their limited resources and revenue-raising capacity. Secondly, funding efforts effectively had to compete with more conventional infrastructure projects (roads/water/wastewater) which

had clearly-understood socio-economic rationales. Thirdly, the Cork rail network project was a relatively unusual transportation initiative in historical terms; it was the first investment in new rail network infrastructure outside the Dublin area in the history of the state and was a project that had met with a degree of institutional resistance. As a result, there was no precedent to assist in the implementation of this project and no obvious and clear institutional architecture in place to aid its delivery.

Hence, early implementation of the suburban rail project required a concerted effort on behalf of both local authorities to persuade government to invest in Cork's rail infrastructure. The project involved significant capital cost outlay associated with the resurrection of a rail line and its associated station facilities, as well as the costs related to the purchase of rolling stock. Therefore, there was a need to capture the planning and property market momentum, and provide the project with credibility to ensure that land use trends and transport improvements would be mutually reinforcing. This was ultimately dependent on delivering a strategic land use response, combined with a bespoke financial contributions mechanism, aimed at delivering population and funding in a way that would support the viability of the rail service.

The reopening of the Cork-Midleton railway service was estimated at almost €90 million at 2002 prices, and was funded under the then Department of Transport's budget for public transport, some EU funds, and the Special Contribution Schemes put in place by both Cork City Council and County Council. At the announcement of support for the rail strategy, the then Minister paid particular tribute to the influence of CASP, "I see the CASP as a model plan for the integration of land use and transportation strategies, an area on which Cork has been to the forefront." (Department of Transport, 2004). The government's statement also supported CASP's specific approach to rail-based development, recognising that it,

> *calls for a re-direction of future development in the Cork area that can be served efficiently by public transport, especially rail. The report calls for planning for the physical environment (residential, commercial or industrial or other development) to be closely integrated with transport planning and more particularly with planning for high quality and high frequency public transport services.*

By then, the two local authorities' land use zoning framework and its special rail based financial contributions schemes had been put in place; this was a significant formal response in support of the rail service and a proactive approach to a key CASP measure. For the local authorities, the concept of the rail corridor acquired an agenda-setting status, providing a platform for securing public and private investments upon which the project largely depended. The individual local planning regimes included a move towards strong rail-based principles, with new zonings located close to the rail stations, in appropriate densities commensurate with their importance for capturing passengers. This move was designed to capture private sector interests by enticing developers and investors.

Significantly, local development interests indicated a clear commitment to the rail corridor and much of the zoned lands along the corridor had been purchased during the period after CASP was published and following the government's announcement of formal support for rail investment. Various development interests (a mix of house builders, development consortia, investment vehicles) purchased sites around Stoneview (Blarney), Monard, Carrigtwohill and Midleton stations and became active in establishing projects for residential and commercial developments at these locations. The development community appeared to accept, and even embrace, the concept of rail-based development - although this was from an admittedly pragmatic perspective. The housing market in the mid-2000s was an expansive one, and there was very strong demand across the city-region for new homes. This was aided by a liberal credit regime and low interest rates, which had fuelled a generally aggressive development sector. Hence, the development activity along the rail corridor also undoubtedly reflected the broader macro-economic conditions as well as local planning conditions set out within CASP.

Notwithstanding the diverse motives of various actors, there was evidence of an early alignment of interests in support of the rail corridor strategy, with developers, landowners, local authorities, national government and the transport providers moving in a similar direction. The rail infrastructure was progressed, the local planning regime was adjusted, and development interests followed. The successful delivery of development close to the rail line required a continuation of this coordinated approach; this, however, proved to be more challenging.

Against a background of an underperformance of the rail station locations in population terms, Cork County Council's Development Plan (2009, 57) was clear in the continued support of the imminent development of the eastern rail corridor.

> *The new railway line from Cork to Midleton scheduled to open during the first quarter of 2009 will play a major role in the development of this strategy to the east of the city. From a land use planning perspective, the Special Local Area Plans (2005) prepared for Midleton, Carrigtwohill and Blarney (Monard) have set out the preferred and agreed location for each new station within its urban setting and also the future development of the settlement, in line with the projections in the Cork Area Strategic Plan.*

However, it appeared to be somewhat frustrated that the development proposals for key sites at Midleton and Carrigtwohill had not progressed as quickly as expected; threatening that because of "the critical importance of this [these] development area[s] to the Cork Suburban Rail Network Project, County Council intends to take steps in addition to those identified in the Special Local Area Plans to ensure that a Masterplan[s] is put in place in a timely and efficient manner." (Cork County Council, 2009, 63) This indicated a degree of frustration with the lack of progress in these areas by the developers and landowners and suggested that the local authority remained committed to the rail strategy.

At the same time, developers who had purchased land at rail station locations expressed concerns that the local authorities and national government had not been forthcoming in committing to the provision of essential local infrastructure (roads, water, wastewater, communications) required to unlock these development sites. Furthermore, it was also suggested that successful progress on these developments in fact depended on the state playing a coordinating role – especially considering the complex land ownership profiles and the scale of additional infrastructure. Ultimately, in the absence of substantive progress on these lands in Midleton and Carrigtwohill, Cork County Council decided to take responsibility and progress the preparation of Masterplans for these locations. These comprehensive reports provide a clear framework for advancing the development of these locations, and were published in 2015, 9 years after the publication of the first statutory land use plans and 6 years after the opening of rail facilities in these locations.

However, the Cork County Council Development Plan 2014 took a quite different approach, apparently resigned to a slow take up of development in the rail corridor, and has effectively downgraded the policy for promoting higher residential density in the rail corridor stating the following;

> *Although there has been significant public investment in rail infrastructure in the corridor between Cork and Midleton/Cobh (including Carrigtwohill) the current peak hour service frequency on many parts of this route is only 30mins, with an hourly service outside peak hours. It is considered, therefore, that at present and in the absence of proposals to enhance the frequency of service, these locations do not currently meet the requirements identified in the Guidelines as Public Transport Corridor locations generally suitable for higher densities. Indeed, the best location for high densities in the Cork Region is within the Cork City area.*
>
> (Cork County Council, 2014, 45)

This would suggest that because of deficiencies in the present public transport provision, the higher density policy along the railway corridor is being relaxed which in turn will in the long term diminish potential demand and further undermine the viability of the public transport provision which is being identified as the cause of the problem. The change in policy to relax housing densities is not only driven by the perceived shortcomings of the present public transport provision; it is also driven by the perceived concern that the imposition of high densities drives the market for housing into much less sustainable "one off" situations in rural areas.

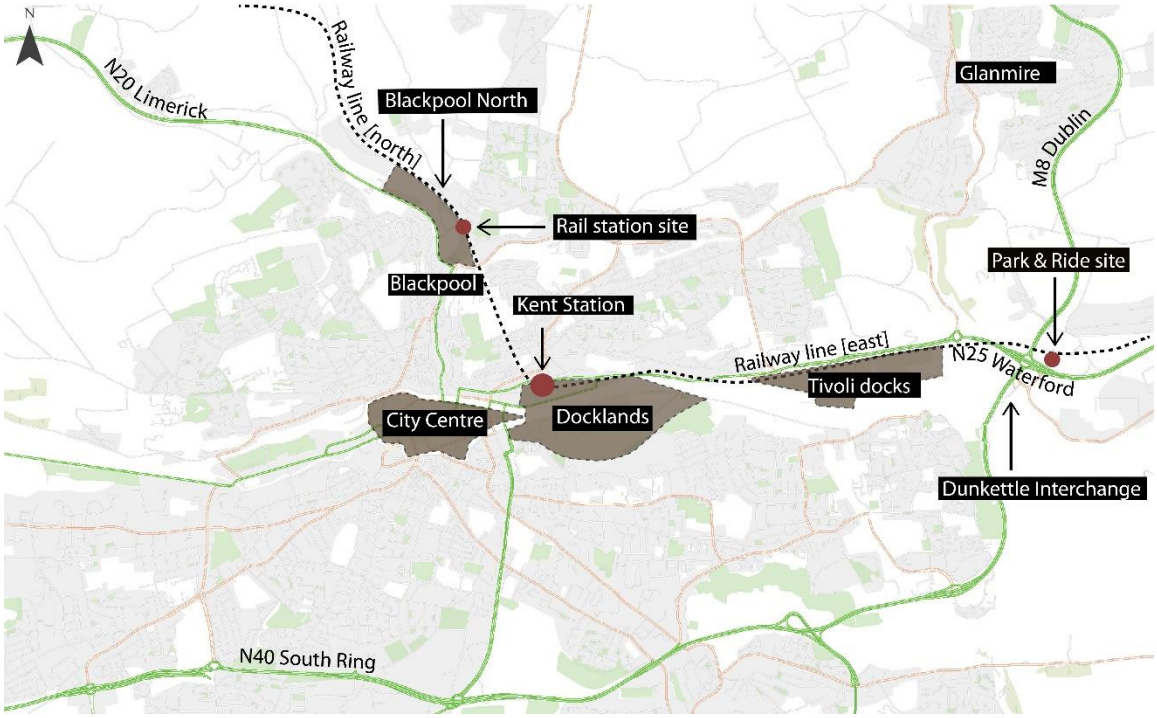
> *Previous County Development Plans have sought to achieve higher densities where practical, however concerns have been expressed that the generalised application of higher density policies to the supply of zoned development land were restricting the range of house types available and encouraging a significant number of households to locate in rural areas outside Metropolitan Cork in order to secure their desired dwelling type.*
>
> (Cork County Council, 2014, 44)

Thus, the principle of promoting higher density housing along the rail corridor, supported by government policy and reiterated in relation all the strategies for Metropolitan Cork is

diluted, not because it can be demonstrated to have failed, but because of its possible impact on choice at the higher end of the housing market.

One significant other shortcoming of the East Cork rail corridor initiative was the lack of progress on the delivery of a Park & Ride facility. CASP proposed a dedicated Park and Ride facilities either at a new station in the Tivoli/Dunkettle area or at Little Island Station. This was subsequently endorsed in the Cork County Development Plan 2003 in Objective INF 1-10, which stated that "It is a further objective to develop park and ride facilities to support the new suburban rail network and the proposed green routes. These will offer fast, frequent services linking the City Centre with Metropolitan Cork and the Ring Towns" (Cork County Council, 2003, 79). Cork County Council also formally varied its County Development Plan in November 2006 to amend the Metropolitan Cork Green Belt designation in order to facilitate the development of a new railway station and park and ride on the subject site.

Figure 5 Cork city context map [showing city centre/docklands, Dunkettle and Blackpool areas]



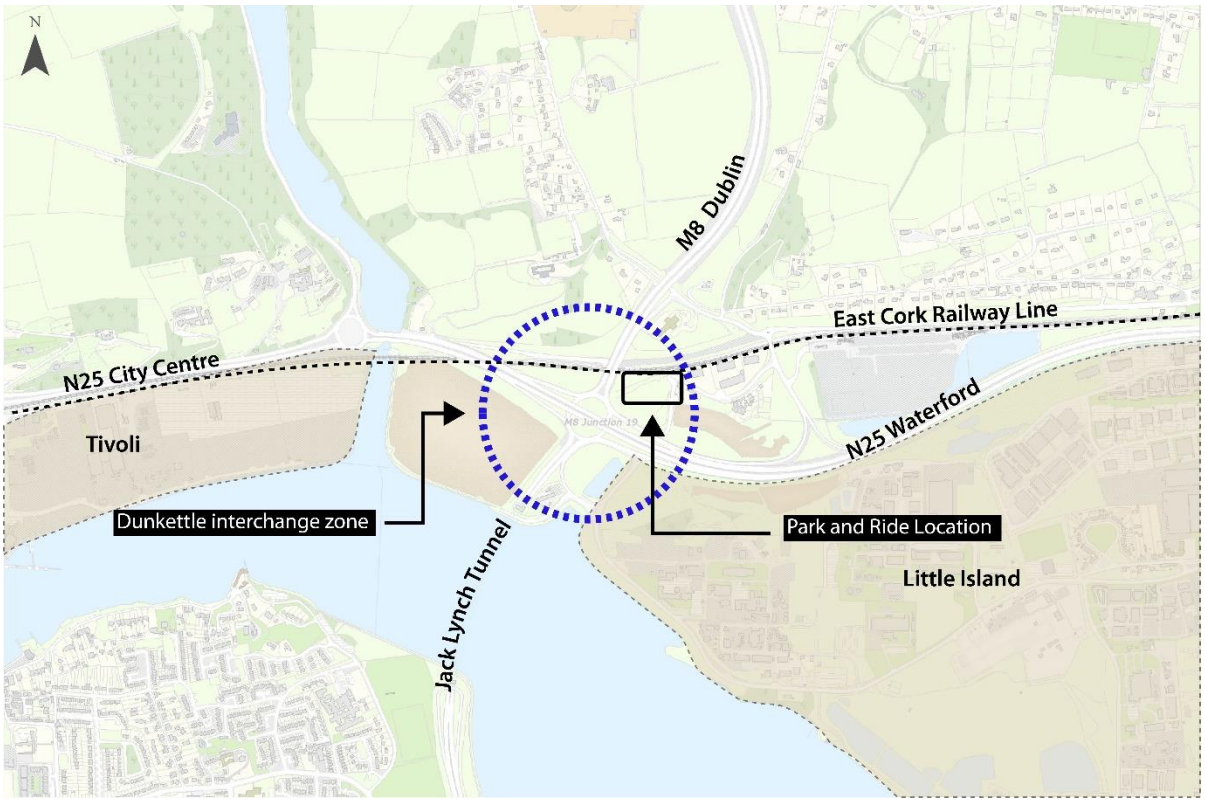
Mapping: Author - Centre for Planning Education and Research, UCC

Diagram Features: Shaded areas represent key development zones in Cork city.

This was a particularly important opportunity as this location offering significant potential to intercept vehicular traffic from both the M8 (Dublin/North) and the N25 (Waterford/East) directions entering the city (See Figure 5). A fixed-line (rail) based Park and Ride facility at this location was likely to fulfil a very important part of the overall rail and public transportation strategy. Rail-based Park and Ride facilities offer reliable onward journey times, and provide a strong incentive in favour of modal shift when located at strategic 'gateway' locations. The Dunkettle station site was again endorsed in the County Development Plan 2009.

Iarnród Éireann subsequently applied for and secured planning permission for a Park and Ride facility in 2009, immediate north-east of the Dunkettle Interchange on the east side of Cork (See Figure 6). The interchange is a critical node in the strategic road network around Cork being the junction between the N8, Cork – Dublin Road, and the N25, Cork – Waterford Road, and it is immediately to the north of the Jack Lynch Tunnel. The planning application included a new station facility, to include 2 no. passenger platforms, lift and footbridge access, park and ride facility for 367 no. cars and new access route via existing North Esk. The decision however was subject to a Third-Party Appeal, with the National Roads Authority raising a range of objections in relation to traffic impact on the interchange, the impact on future interchange upgrade measures and land ownership. The objection meant that two national level transport providers (Iarnród Éireann and the National Roads Authority) were in direct opposition in respect of a critical piece of Cork's transportation infrastructure.

Figure 6 Dunkettle interchange context map



Mapping: Author - Centre for Planning Education and Research, UCC

Diagram Features: Shaded areas represent key urban redevelopment and employment zones.

An Bord Pleanála (the National Planning Appeals Body) subsequently overturned the decision and refused planning permission. Although the board acknowledged the strategic importance of the Park and Ride facility, it considered that the development as proposed would be unacceptable because "development of the kind proposed would be premature pending the determination by the planning authority and the National Roads Authority of a road layout for the Dunkettle Interchange." (An Bord Pleanála, Planning Reference 04.229796.) The Board considered that the location of the site of the proposed development immediately adjacent to the Dunkettle Interchange was problematic, it being a key junction on the strategic road network around Cork City. The interchange design was eventually finalised, and the junction re-design is considered to be one of the strategic road infrastructure projects for the Cork region. The scheme included a specific objective to provide consideration of access to a future Park & Ride railway station in the vicinity, and

the scheme now includes such considerations in the form of proposed access routes to and from a potential station site. Iarnród Éireann's 'Moving into the Future' publication includes for the provision of a new railway station and park and ride facility at Dunkettle as part of its Cork Commuter Network, and Cork County Council's Development Plan 2014 still contains a specific objective to deliver a Park and Ride facility at Dunkettle. However, the Park and Ride development cannot be progressed until the interchange is completed, and consequently, there has been no material progress on the development of a Park and Ride facility at Dunkettle. This provides evidence of a critical weakness in the collaborative framework for the rail project; despite strong commitment to the project, one of its key elements was ultimately sacrificed because of sectional interests and a failure to coordinate the various infrastructural circumstances at a key transport interchange in the region.

Initially, local government provided a framework for establishing commitment among stakeholders to advance the project. This loose, informal coalition of interests was effective in translating a key piece of strategic infrastructure – the new rail service. This was achieved because the local authorities managed to persuade state and private interests of the viability of the project – using limited powers at their disposal (a coordinated, bespoke land zoning and financial development contributions scheme). This demonstrated what appeared to be a serious commitment on behalf of the local state to support passenger potential by reorienting the region's entire land use regime to support rail based travel. The government's willingness to invest in rail infrastructure, Iarnrod Eireann's subsequent implementation of the necessary works, and the property industry's decision to invest in land acquisition, indicated an explicit commitment from a broad coalition of interests.

The loose alliance that emerged around Cork's rail initiative is not a concrete example of a defined governance model; instead it may be interpreted as resembling something closer to a temporary *urban regime* identified for example by Stone (1989, 1993), which gave expression to certain public policy aspirations for a period of time. This urban regime, or loose coalition, generated a certain governing capacity which was created and maintained by bringing together partners with necessary resources. This regime was effective in mobilising resources commensurate with its main policy agenda – the delivery of the rail infrastructure. It established early collaboration among key actors in support of the project

and presented an alternative to a formal, all-encompassing partnership-based approach. This urban regime produced long-term commitment around a strategic vision of urban development and growth management, however, this regime of interests proved to be fragile and transitory. The alliance of local and national interests in the public and private sphere effectively disappeared once the first tranche of rail infrastructure was delivered and it appears that there was no conscious attempt to continue this mode of governance beyond that point.

The strategic purpose of CASP's rail policy was to effect a complete transformation of the city-region's settlement pattern by re-orienting development in certain forms, in particular locations. The rail infrastructure was only a part of this strategic initiative; it also required a governance culture that could somehow extend the interests and commitment of the local-national regime from implementing rail infrastructure towards securing development, and therefore, passenger potential in locations close to the rail facilities. The case of the Dunkettle Park and Ride, as well as that of the station developments in Carrigtwohill and Midleton, highlight the fragility of the local regime; in these instances, there was an ambiguity regarding the operation the local regime and the governance landscape had become uncertain and contested. These shortcomings reflected a key weakness in the performance of CASP's rail policy and the momentum and clarity of purpose that marked the rail infrastructure phase was no longer present. This resulted in key decision-making and policy developments that undermined the strategic intent of CASP and which threatened to affect the type of transformative practices it had envisaged.

URBAN TRANSFORMATION & STRUCTURAL IMPACT

Strategic planning projects are often deployed as catalysts for effective structural and fundamental changes in city-regions because they intervene in a concrete way in spatial and social terms (Oosterlynck et al, 2010). In addition, they are highly visible, politically-appealing action projects which can reverse established patterns of decline or stagnation, acting as frameworks for urban change and underlined by visions of sustainability.
The concept of *Transformative Practice* outlined by Albrechts (2011), Oosterlynck et al, (2010), Salet and Gualini, (2006), Van den Broeck (2008) is helpful as a way of interpreting the performance of strategic planning efforts in the case of Cork. Transformative practice

refers to the capacity of projects/actions to alter the spatial, economic and cultural context of large territories. For Albrechts (2011, 18) strategic projects "become meeting places for strategic spatial planning and socially innovative initiatives… breeding grounds for experimentation, reflective learning and transformative practice". As part of this, planning projects often construct large scale visions and images of imagined futures which are deployed to address structural social problems. This type of urban transformation reflects the evolution in planning practice away from its narrow focus on regulatory matters towards a more entrepreneurial, place-shaping agenda.

CASP required an effort of behalf of Cork City Council to support the rail strategy. However, for the city, the promise of rail based development was more than just a commuter infrastructure programme involving the provision of rail services and housing opportunities; the rail project was a centrepiece for the advancement of two other strategic initiatives in the city – the redevelopment of the city's docklands and the regeneration of the Blackpool are on the city's northside. These were both versions of public transport oriented development (PTOD) – relating to the careful coordination of new urban structure around the public transport network, and public transport stations in particular. This reflected a particular spatial expression of sustainable development which emphasised the importance of linkages between urban structure and transport infrastructure which had evolved from the mid-1990s (Breheny and Rookwood, 1993: Hickman & Hall, 2008). In addition, the policy framework advanced by the city council after CASP in respect of the docklands and Blackpool represented an explicit attempt to take advantage of the regeneration potential of rail-oriented development. This was connected to a policy narrative around urban renewal which promoted mixed-use development and urban living (Stead and Hoppenbrouwer, 2004) with a new emphasis in spatial design terms on the concept of urban accessibility.

The city's principal interchange at Kent Station was to be subject to significant upgrade, involving the development of a new concourse to the west of the existing station, designed to provide for better integration with the city centre, improve accessibility and user experience. The Cork Docklands Development Strategy (2002) had already set out a programme for such an approach and the North Docks Local Area Plan (2005) was produced to provide a statutory basis for these initiatives. This established a

comprehensive land use and regeneration framework and the lands in proximity to the rail station would be developed as part of a major mixed use commercial scheme to take advantage of its strategic location and associated economic opportunities.

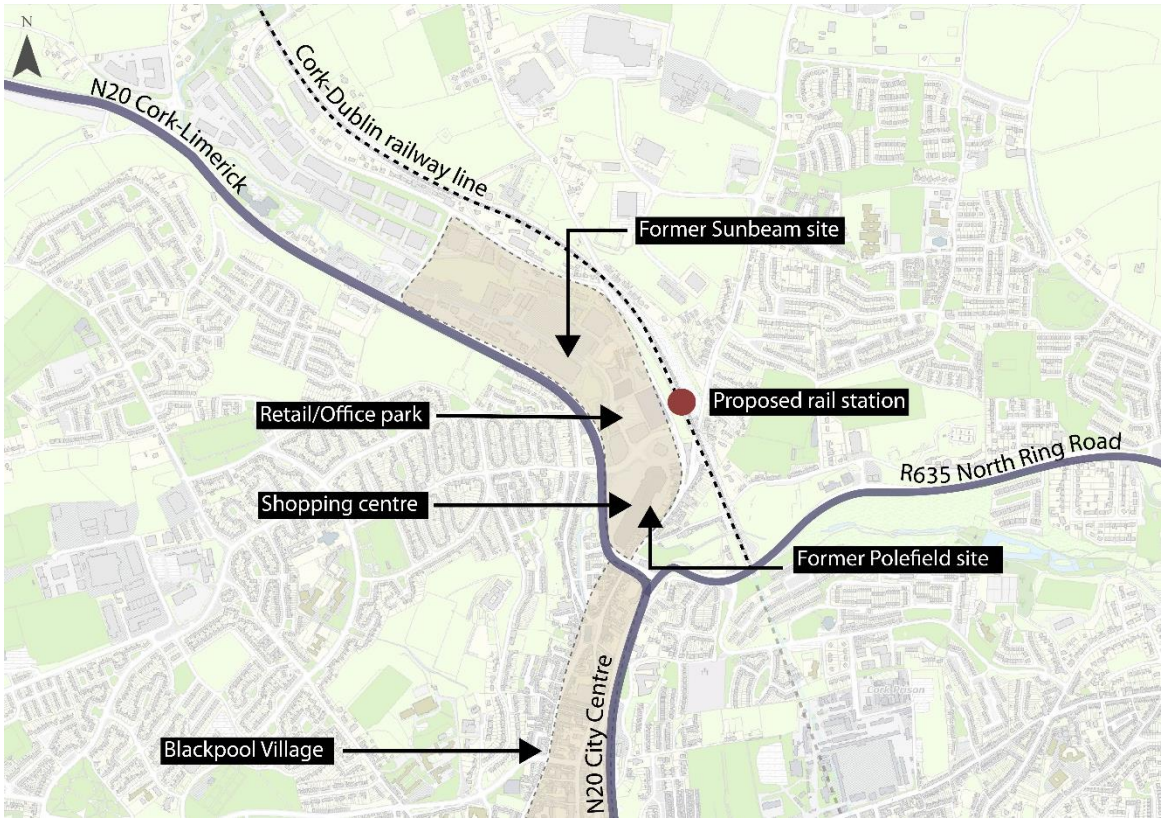
Blackpool North refers to a large expanse of brownfield land of approximately 60 hectares located to the north of Blackpool's historic village at the heart of the city's northside (See Figure 5). The Blackpool Valley was the traditional economic heart of the northside of the city and played a key role in the development of Cork City as an industrial centre. The area referred to here as Blackpool North had played an important role as an industrial location since the 18th Century and provided thousands of manufacturing jobs in tanning, distilling and various elements of the textile industry. The last large traditional employer, Sunbeam, which had once employed 4,000 people at peak production times, finally closed in 1995. The historic village core to the south has gradually been absorbed by the city's outward growth and is now very much considered an inner urban neighbourhood.

The decline in the area's economic fortunes, accompanied by large scale job losses and increasing levels of unemployment, served to accentuate the general socio-economic imbalance in the city which is characterised by a clear north-south division. The social and economic decline was accompanied by physical decline with the gradual reduction in the fortunes of the established Blackpool village centre as a commercial and retail centre. The wedge of lands running north of the village – between the N20 Cork-Mallow/Limerick road and the Cork-Mallow/Dublin railway line at the Polefield and the former Sunbeam site – were subsequently identified as the key regeneration opportunity for Blackpool and the entire northside of Cork City (See Figure 7). This regeneration story forms an important component of the CASP Strategy – as the key opportunity for addressing the city's social and economic imbalance.

In line with CASP, the proposal to provide a rail station in North Blackpool/Kilbarry was also advanced in policy terms, with successive City development plans supporting a new rail station facility. The North Blackpool Local Area Plan (2009) was then prepared and provided a detailed planning framework to support the delivery of a new rail station. The County and City Councils had by then agreed a scheme under S49 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, to secure the payment of financial contributions towards the cost

of this project from developers close to the route and it was envisaged that the monies collected in this way would contribute about 50% to the costs of the project.

Figure 7 Blackpool North context map



Mapping: Author - Centre for Planning Education and Research, UCC

Diagram Features: Shaded areas represent key development zones in Blackpool and Blackpool North.

The rail station for Blackpool was a fundamental ingredient of the original regeneration package for Blackpool and the northside of the city, forming part of an integrated sustainable transportation and land use strategy. This was conceived of as a transformative project which would be used to stimulate economic regeneration of the city's underperforming northside and to reverse the types of social and environmental degradation that the area had experienced. The planning and design approach for the regeneration project was based largely on the type of opportunities that would be presented by a well-located local rail station. This would provide access via the new

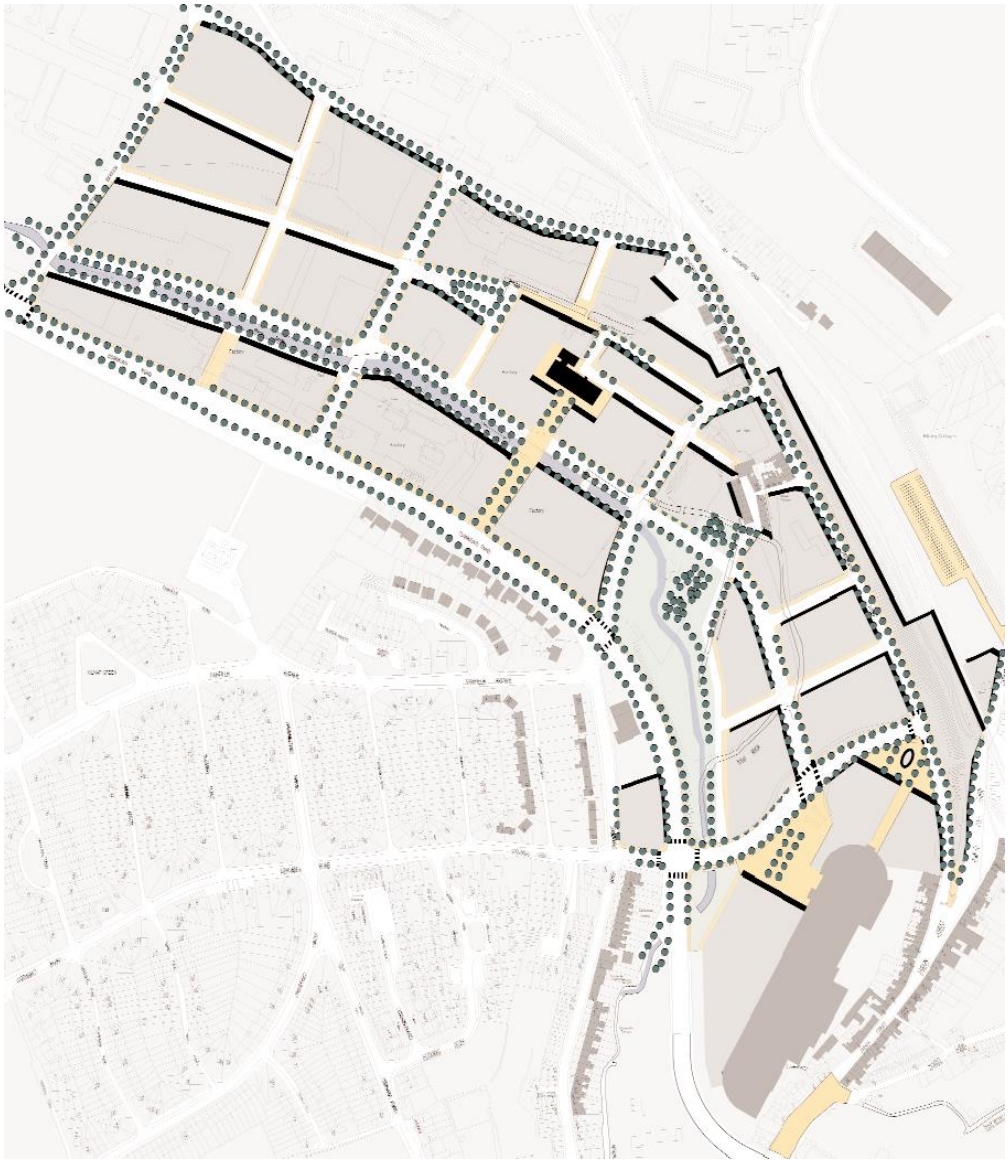
suburban rail service (north to new stations in Blarney, Monard and to Mallow) and south to Kent Station and onwards to East Cork (Little Island, Glounthaune, Carrigtwohill, Midleton, Cobh), as well as to the national rail network via Kent Station. The service would provide both local and strategic accessibility for the large residential and working population in Blackpool Valley, enhance the commercial appeal of Blackpool as an employment location, increase its attractiveness as a residential opportunity and support the emergence of more sustainable travel patterns. This included a distinctive policy discourse of urban sustainability and regeneration. The new vision for Blackpool was based on the development of a high density, mixed use urban hub providing new office and service oriented economic activities, new retail and recreational facilities as well as new urban living opportunities. Blackpool's economic credentials were related specifically to its proximity and accessibility characteristics, which provided it with strong advantages in terms of both its local and strategic connectivity.

The proposed provision of a rail station in Blackpool (on the site of a previous rail station close to the shopping centre) was a key influence of the original North Blackpool Development Brief (Cork City Council & Blackpool Developments, 2002); in fact, the land use, urban design and accessibility strategy was created as a direct response to the location of a suburban rail facility at that location. It illustrated a development framework – including new building forms, streets and open spaces radiating out from the rail station location (See Figure 8). Policies for car parking, employment density, retail provision, pedestrian routing were all shaped by the location of a rail station, and the premise of a sustainable mixed-use quarter as a regeneration aim depended on this being delivered.

The North Blackpool Development Brief 2002 was subsequently endorsed by the Cork City Development Plan 2004, under Policy Objective S8, which provided an explicit statutory framework for advancing the regeneration strategy. In a deliberate effort to expedite the regeneration strategy for Blackpool following CASP, Cork City Council also adapted their city-wide area development strategy to include the Blackpool Valley as one of the four 'Key Development Opportunities' for the entire city. Also including the City Centre, Docklands and Mahon, the overall objective was to concentrate investment and new development in these strategic locations which could accommodate the growth anticipated under CASP. Blackpool's role as the key economic opportunity for the city's northside was therefore

confirmed in policy terms. The plan envisaged large scale mixed-use development in North Blackpool, an expansion of the existing shopping centre northwards as part of a major retail-led expansion, and new employment/residential uses – all facilitated by the kind of transportation/environmental improvements which were anticipated to accrue from the opening of the Blackpool bypass and the new rail station.

Figure 8 Blackpool North development framework diagram



Source: North Blackpool Draft Area Plan July 2001, Cork City Council/Urban Initiatives

In order to provide specific support for the area's large-scale renewal, Cork City Council had to make an important change in respect of its established office policy. The general approach previously had been based on concentrating office uses in the city centre core and resisting the migration of such uses to other parts of the city, in order to protect the city centre's vitality as a commercial entity. However, to address the city's economic imbalance and support the strategic aspiration to encourage renewal, the City Development Plan 2004 introduced a policy exception. Under the plan, 'general offices' and 'office-based industries' would now be permitted in the City Centre *and Blackpool* (Policy E2 – General Offices). This policy shift was justified on the basis that there was a strategic objective to promote a high-density employment zone in Blackpool – to address the imbalance of economic opportunity in the city. Critically, this new urban quarter was considered an appropriate location based also on the promise of a new rail station facility in Blackpool which would enhance its accessibility and general sustainability profile.

The period from 2001 onwards saw substantial progress in the Blackpool area. The completion of the by-pass made a positive contribution to the urban environment, and there was major progress on what was known as the Polefield site (immediately north of the Blackpool Shopping Centre) – on lands which formed a central element of the regeneration strategy under the 1998 tax incentive scheme and the North Blackpool Development Brief (Cork City Council, 2002). These lands, for which a detailed development brief had been agreed, were transformed into a large mixed-use district, with a large volume of retailing uses, local shopping, offices, technology, professional services as well as cafes/food offering, residential and cinema. This was developed as a high-density scheme, with a series of new streets, a new public park/riverside walkway and a multi-storey car park.

In addition to the existing 13,500 m² of retail space in the pre-existing Shopping Centre lands, the Pole field site accommodated a total of 37,000 m² of new commercial development as well as 5,000 m² of new residential development (apartments). This included approximately 20,000 m² of new office space and 14,000 m² of new retail space. The new development has provided approximately 1,550 new jobs (FTE), most of which is in office spaces accommodating a variety of employment functions; this brings the total employment levels on the lands to approximately 2,200 (FTE). In addition, there has been a

variety of new retail, office and food/café developments between the Polefield site, the shopping centre and the northern tip of Blackpool village, which has served to support the rejuvenation of the core of the area around the proposed rail station site. The idea of a new rail station in Blackpool had first emerged in the LUTS Review 1992 and was strongly endorsed in CASP 2001. All subsequent statutory plans prepared by the City Council supported the provision of a rail service and identified a location for the rail station. The various area-based planning initiatives (Integrated Area Plan, Local Area Plan, Development Brief) established a clear and explicit context for the station facility.

The success of the regeneration process focused to date on the Polefield lands, inclusive of the shopping centre and the retail/office park, and major regeneration opportunities still need to be fulfilled; to the southeast, the established village of Blackpool experienced some early improvements in terms of physical upgrades and new development activity, however it still requires major uplift to fulfil its role as an attractive and prosperous urban village. To the northwest of the Polefield lands, a framework for redevelopment has been put in place by the North Blackpool Development Brief. There are a number of key large-scale development sites that can be progressed in the short and medium term, extending the focus of activity towards the former Millfield and Sunbeam industrial lands, whilst opportunity for the consolidation and redevelopment of the existing Shopping Centre also emerges.

Overall, the local authority and the development interests in Blackpool north have fulfilled their regeneration objectives in providing a development that largely corresponds to the original planning/regeneration brief. The planning and zoning regime was constructed in detail around the principles of the original regeneration vision, and the physical planning framework for the area was confirmed through zoning and planning policy objectives. The changes in this part of the city have been substantial, with many new employment, local services and retail opportunities. The Cork City Employment and Land Use surveys show that the city's northeast quadrant has seen a 10.7% (900) increase in jobs between 2001- and 2016 and the Census figures show a growth figure of 9% for the Commons Electoral area from 2001-2016. However, although the initial development efforts from 2001-2006 appear to have succeeded in instigating a process of renewal, the momentum has not been maintained; the North East quadrant for example more recently accommodated a 2.9%

increase in jobs between 2011 and 2016, while the other suburban areas grew by 11%. More broadly, the northside's growth figure of 4.9% compares unfavourably with that of the southside suburbs which experienced a 13.1% increase in jobs over the same period

The opportunity for Blackpool to emerge as a strategic development area in the city-region has been constrained by some key infrastructural deficits. The key infrastructural elements that will be essential to enhancing the area's accessibility profile are the Northern Ring Road and a new rail station at Blackpool. The former project is a very large scale strategic road scheme which will provide the northside of the city with the type of road infrastructure necessary to provide both relief and strategic accessibility. The necessity for a Northern Ring Road is seen as an important strategic infrastructural requirement to complete the existing road network around Cork city. The project is expected to reduce traffic congestion, improve access and redress the development and infrastructural imbalance towards the northern part of the City. CASP 2001 highlighted the importance of the completion of the Northern Ring Road as part of the strategic and spatial development of the Greater Cork Area. The NRA have progressed the scheme through to route selection stage but there is currently no formal commitment to this project at government level.

The rail station for Blackpool was another fundamental ingredient of the original regeneration package for Blackpool, forming part of the strategy that supports a sustainable transportation and land use strategy. The planning and design approach for the regeneration project was based largely on the type of opportunities that would be presented by a well-located local rail station. The service would provide both local and strategic accessibility for the large residential and working population in Blackpool Valley, enhance the commercial appeal of Blackpool as an employment location, increase its attractiveness as a residential opportunity and support the emergence of more sustainable travel patterns.

A planning application for a rail station on the site identified in the Blackpool Area Plan 2001 was submitted by Iarnrod Eireann in 2008 (Planning Reference 08/32741), including provision for a small park and ride facility as well as local vehicular, cycle and pedestrian facilities and new access arrangements. This was subsequently permitted by Cork City Council on February 28th 2008, however no progress was made on the delivery of the rail

station. As the planning permission was due to expire after 5 years, Iarnrod Eireann applied for, and secured, an extension of duration in April 2013 for a period of a further 5 years. This planning permission expires on April 1st, 2018. As part of the planning application documentation, Iarnrod Eireann stated that the reason that the development had not progressed was a ''delay in project funding approval by the exchequer/DTT&S". The planning application form also indicated that the commencement and completion dates were ''undetermined".

As part of its recommendations for a new suburban rail service, the Cork Suburban Rail feasibility study conducted by Faber Maunsell in 2002 had suggested that a new station facility be opened at the Blackpool site in the first phase in 2008. The Study suggested that this would cost €3.8 million to construct. As part of the City and County Council's combined efforts to raise funding to support the introduction of a new rail service, the two local authorities had introduced a Supplementary Development Contributions Scheme under Section 48 & 49 Planning & Development Act, 2000. This was a bespoke development charge designed to leverage infrastructural investment by raising monies from developments permitted in proximity to the rail corridor. In Cork, the scheme commenced in 2004 and remains in place today. Charges are levied on residential, office, retail and other non-residential developments permitted within 1,000 metres of the rail line. Under this scheme, the local authority levies and collects the contributions, which are then transferred to the Rail Procurement Agency to carry out the project. If no substantial works have been carried out or commenced within 10 years, following the date of receipt of the supplementary contribution by Cork City Council, the contribution will be returned with interest to the developer.

In the case of Blackpool, the total monies paid to Cork City Council under the Supplementary Development Contribution Scheme (Commuter Rail Project) on the Polefield lands (known as 'Blackpool Park'), between 2004 and 2011 was at least €550,000. Because this scheme has not been progressed in Blackpool, it is understood that the development interests, from whom this charge was levied, are now entitled to a full refund as each permission passes the 10-year threshold. It is likely that Cork City Council has collected a substantial amount of fees under this scheme since 2004 within the Blackpool Valley area, and which will need to be reimbursed.

In addition, material changes to car parking standards for Blackpool were made in anticipation of the opening of a rail station. For instance, car parking standards in Cork City are now related directly to the level of accessibility of any location to a public transportation system. In the case of Blackpool, there are reduced car parking standards in place for lands located 500 metres from the site of the permitted rail station. This was made on the basis that developments located close to rail stations should be required to have lower car parking provision to reflect their proximity and accessibility to fixed line public transport services. There are major infrastructural deficits that are likely to undermine ongoing efforts to secure regeneration in Blackpool (north and south) – and the lack of commitment on the Northern Ring Road and Blackpool Rail Station are key shortcomings. Both of these projects are important as part of the area's regeneration as they will enhance the overall levels of accessibility across the city-region, unlock new development sites and facilitate large volumes of residential and commercial development.

On the specific rail infrastructure issue, it is clear that the ongoing evolution and success of North Blackpool is dependent on the delivery of a new local rail service. Despite this being promoted as part of national urban renewal programmes and in successive development plans and local planning regimes for over 10 years, there is no indication of material progress. This lack of progress on a relatively small-scale infrastructure project represents a key shortcoming in the Blackpool regeneration story. More broadly, the success of the suburban rail service itself is also dependent on the ability of that existing rail service to capture passenger potential. In Blackpool however, the significant localised employment and residential catchment is ignored because of the lack of a rail facility to serve these locations. As a result, the considerable regeneration efforts in Blackpool have not contributed to Cork's suburban rail service.

The case of Blackpool's relationship with the rail strategy illustrates the limitations of transformative practices in strategic spatial planning projects. Despite the absence of a key ingredient of rail based development – the rail station – the planning vision has still prevailed and remains relevant; the central concept of the project, a mixed use, high density, rail oriented urban district, continues to emerge in a shape and form which resembles the masterplan vision, despite conflicting priorities among key actors. The

relative successes in economic and physical terms can be traced to the development of a coherent regeneration discourse that included an explicit commitment to an integrated land use and transportation programme. The precise critique of the project relates to timescale of the rail station element, not the fundamentals of the project which remain largely intact.

Transformative planning practices however need to be able to consider universal institutional and political realities which shape the efficacy of public policy. When these involve large scale public investments, the ability to secure commitments becomes a key test; Hickman and Hall (2008, 336) suggest that this is an enduring issue for planning, "How do we accommodate the possibility that key parts of the planned infrastructure may remain unfunded? How do we plan for the permanent problems of inertia, uncertainty and long lead times in the delivery of major transport schemes? Securing a coordinated timescale for designing and delivering urban developments of a particular form and character is always difficult. More so if there are different dimensions in terms of place-making aspirations and major transport infrastructure investments." The Blackpool project retains the logic and form of a rail based initiative but there was an underestimation perhaps of the complexity involved in securing real commitment from all stakeholders.

Therefore, the absence of material progress on the delivery of a rail station indicates a critical weakness in the project's framing as it has failed to materialise its public potential and serves to undermine the core planning logic for key principles such as car parking, urban density and land use policies, as well as the local practice of levying special rail based financial contributions. The key collaboration in the case of Blackpool was limited to a loose but productive partnership between a key developer and the planning authority who co-produced the original masterplan vision, and ultimately delivered a large amount of new development. Apart from the early involvement of central government in tax incentive schemes, the involvement of national interests however has been limited to small bargaining and exchange processes around planning consents for the rail station. There was no clear compelling strategic incentive to support the project at a national scale and the project's framing appears to have had a local rather than a sub-regional or national flavour.

Unlike the Glounthaune to Midleton rail infrastructure scheme, there is no evidence of the emergence of an urban regime or coalition of interests combining national -local, and public-private stakeholders around the Blackpool project. In the arena of city-region planning, Blackpool was a local rather than strategic concern and it did not permeate public policy narratives to a significant degree. Its appeal was only partially able to overcome some fundamental local-supralocal conflicting frames about the importance of the project and there was a degree of conflict about the public and political meaning of the project in a sub-regional perspective of development.

CONCLUSIONS

The Cork case study presents a series of valuable insights into contemporary governance processes around a major strategic spatial planning initiative. Despite some of the institutional and political specificities associated with the local context, Cork's experiences allow for an exploration into the kinds of universal socio-economic and political impulses that have characterised contemporary spatial planning in Europe's cities over the past 40 years.

There appears to be evidence of a deliberate transition in the role of local authorities towards proactive local economic and socio environmental modes of governance. Through the prism of strategic spatial planning exercises, we can see the ways in which local governments have become more assertive and more directly involved in the process of place-making, environmental management and economic development in localities. The Cork experience illustrates also a recognizable shift in the style of sub-regional planning and governance generally. A comparison of that LUTS approach in the 1970s with that of the CASP project in the 2000s suggests that there has been a move away from a technical style of land use and infrastructure management towards an approach characterised by the strategic management of resources and decision-making.

This is certainly suggestive of increasingly entrepreneurial approach to planning at the city-region scale; indeed, there is evidence contained in both the policy and practice experience of the case study to suggest that this transition from and managerial to entrepreneurial style of public policy was a conscious and deliberative one; the authors of the strategic

plans for the Cork city-region, and the decision makers and stakeholders involved in its implementation appeared to understand clearly that strategic planning was now dependent on a multiplicity of interests and contributions, and that the success of the project was dependent on the strategic management of resources, influence and powers, rather than on traditional project and provide methods.

The case study however does not suggest a neat evolution in the style of local governance from managerialism to entrepreneurialism. Instead, we see the coexistence of traditional comprehensive planning methods [zoning mechanisms, regulatory devices] with strategic spatial planning devices [non-statutory policies, coalitions, public-private/central local coordination] and the combination of both entrepreneurial and managerial modes of governance at the level of the city-region. This echoes the position held by Wievel (2004), who argues that planning at this level relies on a combination of comprehensive and strategic techniques and approaches.

Strategic spatial planning exercises are clearly now employed as framing devices within which various social, economic and environmental objectives are asserted. These strategic initiatives are, as a result, much more than large scale land use planning and infrastructure management devices; they become broad canvas is for articulating strategic city-region aspirations and assume a quasi-formalised status as legitimate local manifestos of development, regeneration and sustainability.

Cork's experience of strategic spatial planning certainly reflects a version of what Healey (2010) identifies as conscious place-making efforts, whereby the overarching objective is to coordinate and mobilize public activity and private sector initiative to create new visions and 'new pieces of city'. This scale and character of the planning projects involved in LUTS and CASP for example certainly reflect the kind of grand ambitions, big ideas and imagined futures which are necessary to recalibrate the social and environmental conditions of the city-region in favour of more sustainable forms of development.

From the perspective of interrogating conformance and performance in strategic planning, the Cork case study is quite informative. In describing progress in the case of the rail strategy, there are instances– some more subtle and nuanced than others - of departures

from the LUTS / CASP priorities and strategic aims in respect of the rail project. Having said that, even in these departures, the sub-regional strategy has continued by and large to fulfil its purpose and retain its broad legitimacy as a guiding framework for the city-region. Continuing with the Faludi /Wallagh 'test', it is evident that conformity with these plans over the years has not been accidental. Whilst there have been examples of where the CASP, in particular, has been opportunistic, significant numbers of operational decisions have been justified by specific reference to the strategy and so conformity may be considered to be deliberate.

In terms of non-conforming decisions, it is possible to say that for the most part – especially for policy level decisions in development plans - they are generally derived from the principles of the strategy even where there is a departure. Where the departure is deliberate then the strategy is still seen, theoretically at least, to be serving its purpose. There are also examples (such in as the current draft proposals for 'strategic land reserve' options in the county area) where the CASP actually 'provides the basis for analysing consequences of an incidental decision which happens to contravene the plan'. The Faludi / Wallagh test suggests that decisions such as this come 'under the umbrella of the plan'.

The city and county's recent joint submission to the National Planning Framework - 'Cork 2050' – provides an indication of how the tradition of sub-regional planning in Cork is likely to continue. This submission reflects the two local authorities' vision for national level strategic policy support for the designation of Metropolitan Cork as a complementary location to the Greater Dublin Area. This submission, which contains a very comprehensive set of proposals and an ambitious strategic proposition for Cork, is likely to be the forerunner of a full replacement for CASP. Although the submission does not yet include a detailed spatial strategy and takes a whole Cork rather than a sub-regional approach, it suggests that the tradition of close cooperation around spatial planning in Cork is set to continue – the submission suggests that the two local authorities will extend the model of partnership around city-region planning and that the soft spaces of governance in places like Cork can be an effective framework for an ambitious and forward thinking strategy. In addition, the consolidation of the Metropolitan Cork concept is notable – and it is now clearly established as the basis for concerted action in the city-region – this is now being put forward in a very explicit way as the primary organising spatial-economic and

environmental unit for planning in the region – and the primary device through which a place like Cork can advance its credentials as Ireland's main candidate for a more balanced territory and economy.

This research has combined an instrumentalist conformance-based analysis of the rail project with an assessment of the project's performance as mode of strategic spatial planning in practice. It is suggested that the mixed conformance-performance analytical mode of inquiry is an appropriate methodological framework for interrogating strategic spatial planning at the metropolitan or city-region scale. The rail initiative can be understood as an archetypal large-scale strategic urban project which has become a popular mode of public policy and political action in Europe's cities. This type of strategic spatial planning action has emerged in response to the increasing complexity of interconnected, economic and environmental issues associated with rapid and haphazard development in urban regions. The work of the local authorities in this space would appear to echo the kind of fundamental structural changes identified by Harvey (1989) describing a shift from managerialism to entrepreneurialism within local government, a collaboration between the public and private spheres and a generally more proactive role for the planning discipline in these new governance spaces.

This comprehensive investigation of a single large-scale urban project in a small/medium sized European city-region provides a rich array of insights into the various governance characteristics of these experiences. The adoption of a multidimensional scheme of analysis means that the different approaches, rationales and processes of strategic framing adopted for these projects are investigated systematically, but still on the basis of an awareness for the context dependent conditions – cultural, political, economic and institutional – which are defined by particular preferences and attitudes of local and national actors. Set against the background of this awareness, these findings may be interpreted in a cautiously generalised manner to other urban regions in Europe.
This analysis of the Cork case also addressed a methodological consideration relating to conformance and performance of strategic spatial planning projects. It would suggest that a complete and rigorous analysis of strategic planning projects includes consideration of both. Moreover, it is argued here that a full understanding of the operation and impact of

strategic spatial planning cannot be conducted without combining an assessment of both conformance and performance of projects.

In addition, the research demonstrates the importance of communicating the ways in which strategic spatial planning can be measured using performance based criteria. Public policy discourses often tend to be concentrated on an assessment of spatial planning projects using conformance based criteria. The Cork case study would suggest that the achievements of strategic spatial planning projects can be understood more clearly if traditional conformance tests at complemented by performance based assessments. This would support the suggestion by Faludi (2000, 306) that a spatial plan at this scale is fulfilling its purpose "if and only if it plays a tangible role in the choices of the actors to whom it is addressed' and that … (in such circumstances) 'the plan performs a useful role irrespective of whether the outcomes correspond to the plan".

Transformative projects such as Cork's rail project need to be situated concretely within the institutional as well as the conceptual arenas of planning. According to Gualini & Majoor (2007, 316) strategic spatial planning projects need to be more explicitly established with governance challenges in mind, "In order to be viable planning concepts need to be articulated along multiple dimensions of framing. This requires innovative institutional capacities to play out planning ambitions at different scales." In addition, these types of projects can only acquire socio-spatial transformative characteristics if the established modes of governance that are in place are themselves moderated. Achieving the kind of wide and large-scale urban change envisaged in CASP's rail initiative for the city-region depends on attaining political-institutional credibility and ways of working as much as it requires social and environmental logic. It is also a question of moderating strategic planning aspirations in public policy settings because "Collective action is difficult to sustain and complex institutional environments may be less amenable to the normative ambitions of strategic spatial planning with its focus on transformative institutional change" (Newman, 2008, 258). This is an argument for more emphasis on political processes, and it suggests that the normative expectations of strategic spatial planning may be unrealistic because sustained collective action is exceptional rather than typical (Stone, 2002: Newman, 2008).

The Cork case study illustrates the way in which strategic spatial planning, as a normative mode of action, attempts to moderate the relationships between economic, environmental and social forces as part of the broad goal of sustainable development. Integrated approaches to spatial strategy making, like those seen in Cork, are concerned with the pursuit of spatially-explicit strategies which try to shape economic impulses to minimise negative environmental and social effects on places and people. The rail strategy for example can be interpreted as an attempt to transform the economic footprint of development in the city-region using a series of arguments around environmental and social quality based on a grand place-making concept.

Finally, this suggests a need to consider carefully the institutionalised governance processes that surround the discourses and practices of strategic spatial planning. The experience in Cork certainly reflects Healey's (2007) assertion that transformations in practice rarely proceed at the same pace as transformations in discourse; Healey suggests that in order for strategic planning initiatives to become transformative, they need to penetrate the practices and discourses of those interests who have the resources and competencies to implement change. Thus, the relationship between discourses and practices as part of strategic place-making exercises should be seen as a permanent political tension that involve a wide range of governance processes, and which relies upon stratified governance practices at the level of the city-region.

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7. CONCLUSIONS AND REFLECTIONS

7.1 KEY RESEARCH CONCLUSIONS: TRANSFORMATIONS IN PLANNING AND GOVERNANCE AND THE NATURE OF STRATEGIC SPATIAL PLANNING

The aim of the research is to develop an understanding of how strategic spatial planning is taking place in practice and how it is manifested within the urban governance regimes of metropolitan areas and city-regions. In addition, it is also concerned with examining the extent to which these strategies are shaping the process of territorial development in real-world settings. The research, therefore, is directed towards the development of insights into both the processes behind, and the outcomes of, strategic spatial planning. Thus, the core scholarly exercise is concerned with relating the ways in which transformations in spatial planning and governance emerge in real-world settings and in real place-making contexts. Hence, it was decided pursue a series of empirical enquiries directed towards an analysis of development, population, commuting and economic trends at different spatial scales as a way of interrogating the extent to which policy is manifested in decision-making terms. In this way, the research explores the idea of the 'planning project', as both an object (of place-making) and a process (of decision-making), and representing a distinctive mode of governance.

Such a research approach is helpful for developing critical reflections on how strategic spatial planning is evolving, and how to develop theorisations about strategic spatial planning. The main research objective for this research has been:

> *To develop an understanding of how strategic spatial planning is expressed and delivered as a specific mode of governance in response to the particular challenges facing Europe's second tier cities in the context of a variety of spatial, environmental, social and economic forces. It is therefore concerned with how planning, as a particular form of public policy and a form of governance-in-action, materialises at certain spatial scales and how it is influencing territorial development.*

The study therefore concerns itself with the exploration of both process and outcome. Hence, it conceives the various episodes of strategic spatial planning as an opportunity for interrogating contemporary aspects of planning's instrumental and normative foundations in a contemporary setting. Through an analysis of the various processes and outcomes surrounding Cork and Ireland's relatively recent encounters with strategic spatial planning initiatives, it is possible to reflect upon the ways in which planning policy and planning

practice materialise as a particular expression of the discipline's basic instrumental and normative impulses.

This section synthesises the findings from the analysis into a discussion on the nature of the strategic spatial planning in Ireland. It provides a brief summary of the key findings that emerge from the empirical work and relates these to the four core research themes. Following this, a series of broad reflections and conclusions are presented.

CORE-THEME I: SPACE, PLACE AND TERRITORY: CONSTRUCTING A NATIONAL PLANNING PERSPECTIVE FOR SECOND-TIER CITIES.

DESCRIPTION: This theme confronts the issue of central-local dynamics as part of strategic spatial planning at the national scale. It is concerned with exploring the phenomenon of second-tier cities within the evolution of a national spatial planning agenda.

KEY RESEARCH QUESTIONS:

- *Is there evidence to suggest that planning strategies for national territories are evolving as part of a reconfiguration of strategic planning in the favour of place based territorial development?*
- *What are the prospects for second-tier cities as agents for the regional development agenda?*
- *How is the concept of territory being interpreted as part of contemporary episodes of strategic spatial planning?*

The episodes of strategic spatial planning examined as part of this research combined a national and metropolitan scale perspective to address the issue of place based territorial development and to analyse spatial planning from the particular perspective of second-tier cities. Although the example of Cork presents a case whereby strategic spatial planning has emerged as a clearly recognisable form of territorial management with distinctive governance dimensions, this would appear to be an example of an exceptional case – certainly in Ireland's national context. The national spatial planning agenda that emerged

in Ireland following the publication of the National Spatial Strategy in 2002 certainly introduced a distinctive approach to spatial planning as a public policy instrument. It included an attempt to formulate an urban and regional policy perspective and promoted an explicit approach to place-oriented territorial management. The gateways strategy at the heart of the regional agenda measures had a strong urban emphasis, and the regional development agenda was based on the establishment of a series of loosely defined urban gateways which extended beyond the established administrative urban structures. This did signify an important shift towards a place based approach within the national planning strategy, whereby the city/metropolitan region emerged as a spatial unit which had the potential to integrate a variety of spatial and sectoral policy streams, address institutional and organisational complexity and encompass the real territorial needs associated with ecological and environmental pressures (Boulton, 2008: Harrison, 2010: Scott, 2001).

This, however, has not created the kinds of new geographies of governance identified for instance by MacLeod and Goodwin (1999) because the implementation of Ireland's National Spatial Strategy for the gateway cities, as an urban policy measure, proved to be largely ineffective – relying on a loose, informal governance framework at the urban level. Despite a strong policy commitment to the development of strategies for the various gateways, this did not manifest itself in a new spatial policy landscape at the metropolitan scale. Instead, regional policy in a formal sense was to be rolled out within the established hierarchy of the existing state architecture. Ireland's experience in this regard is at odds with the European version of 'new regionalism' – involving a deliberate recasting of spatiality to secure more economically robust regional frameworks (Brenner, 1998: Ward and Jonas, 2004). In the Irish case, there has been no reform of urban government systems, and responsibility for activating those urban gateway policies resided with the regional authorities and the existing local government units. This reflects the prevalence of state centralism in the Irish context and a general ambivalence towards local government. Thus, existing structural and institutional frameworks prevailed and there is no evidence of the rescaling of power within the state and around cities and city-regions, which has been outlined in literature for example by Brenner (1999, 2003).

This resulted in something of a functional-administrative mismatch. The analysis of demographic, economic and commuting data as part of the case studies revealed a significant development trend in all of the second-tier cities. This has generally been

characterised by low density forms of development and substantial increases in the physical and functional footprints of those urban areas. These extended functional areas produced fragmented local government landscapes. Consequently, without any attempt to address the governance capacity of these city-region/metropolitan entities, and with no apparent incentives to encourage inter municipal cooperation, this fragmentation tended to discourage the kinds of integrated territorial development that the National Spatial Strategy had envisaged. Thus, planning at the metropolitan and sub-regional levels was advanced through the use of semi-formalised, non-statutory planning strategies and was not accompanied by a substantial or material alterations to governing regimes.

This reflects what Tosics (2007) characterised as a functional urban area disparity. In essence, fragmented governance at a local level, combined with the lack of effective sub-regional and metropolitan-scale governing structures, served to undermine strategic policy aims which favoured concentration over dispersal. The move towards placed-based spatial strategies was limited to new frames of reference rather than new forms of governance. Consequently, although the functional and economic realities of metropolitan areas was apparently acknowledged at the national level, there is no evidence to suggest that the institutional and political obstacles which often characterise conventional planning and governing regimes were to be reformed. Instead, new efforts around place-based spatial strategies largely took place within the soft spaces of governance (Haughton et al, 2009) with an emphasis on coordinated actions and collaborative strategies.

Some of the research in the field of urban governance appears to downplay the importance of fixed administrative boundaries and of institutional factors more generally in shaping the future of cities and regions and in influencing planning strategies. This research would appear to emphasise the resilience of established administrative structures within the wider evolution of governance landscapes. In the Irish case, strategic spatial planning initiatives were mediated within a somewhat rigid institutional governing framework at national, regional and local levels. Delivering the kinds of transformative social and environmental initiatives that were central to the National Spatial Strategy and the Cork Area Strategic Plan depended on an informal process of institutional filtering and political dialogue. Although this form of communicative action in policy development is a regular feature of strategic spatial planning, in Ireland's case the role of institutions and established administrative structures was certainly neglected. The case studies would

suggest that efforts to steer strategic spatial policy initiatives through the central and local states' administrative architecture was the result of informal, ad hoc practices rather than programmes of deliberate action.

The research has established an absence of clarity about governance needs at the city-region and metropolitan scales, particularly at the second-tier city level. This ambiguity, which is evident within the literature on governance and planning, is also reflected in how strategic spatial planning is manifesting in real-world settings. The experience of Ireland would suggest that governance at these spatial scales it is contested and fragmentary. In deconstructing Ireland's National Spatial Strategy in the early 2000s as an episode in strategic spatial planning, it becomes clear that second-tier cities and city-regions had become important building blocks within Ireland's emerging spatial planning landscape. The proposed settlement strategy based on 'Gateways and Hub towns', was part of a multi-dimensional and multi-functional approach to territorial management which combined *agglomeration economies* arguments with *placed-based* rationalities around environmental priorities. These spatial-economic conceptualisations drew heavily upon ideas contained in the ESDP, and this reflected a very deliberate turning point for spatial planning in Ireland. However, these conceptualisations were heavily contested at national and local levels, and the kind of strategic institutional and civic commitment that would be necessary to deliver the kinds of transformations envisaged in the NSS was lacking.

Although there was a deliberate, if not somewhat subtle, inclusion of an urban policy flavour within the National Spatial Strategy which promoted the role of second-tier cities, the subsequent articulation of policy through investment and local government reforms appear to largely ignore this governance concern. The city-region concept was used as a territorial-economic device to deal with the complex array of economic and social forces, but did not materialise as part of a wider process of governance rescaling. In fact, there was very little evidence that the city-region 'gateways' concept at second-tier city level permeated the political narratives around the NSS; this created a degree of ambiguity in terms of development and environmental priorities. As a result, whilst the economic, physical and functional reality of metropolitan thinking has been acknowledged within the spatial planning policy communities, it has largely been ignored in policy, legislation and governance reforms. Indeed, subsequent reforms of the regional and local government structures would point towards further centralisation and dilution of urban

administrations, and suggests a policy trajectory that ignores the emerging political, economic and cultural impulses driving change and reforms across many urban and regional contexts in Europe. Consequently, spatial initiatives that promote nationally important territorial and economic solutions cannot be the sole responsibility of local actors, unless there is an institutional architecture in place at the sub regional or regional level that promotes strategic commitment around metropolitan development aspirations.

In the case of Cork however, the established spatial planning regime at the city-region level promoted a more explicit city-region strategy. This relied on a kind of 'collaborative urban place governance strategy' (Counsell et al, 2012: Healey, 2006) was the product of a long established coalition of interests (local and national) that had evolved over an extended period. Cork's experiences reflect what Healey (2006, 265) describes in "shaping place qualities through conscious attention, through some kind of strategy, which embodies and expresses a conception of the place of an urban area." This may be described as a 'place-governance and place-making strategy' which has been formulated as a way of overcoming the rigidities of the established institutional and administrative frameworks that govern metropolitan areas. The Cork experience illustrates also a recognisable shift in the style of sub-regional planning and governance generally, which may be described as a move away from a technical style of land use and infrastructure management towards an approach characterised by the strategic management of resources and decision-making. There is a clear transition in the form and content of spatial strategies in Cork - from the Land Use and Transportation Study in 1978 to the Cork Area Strategic Plan 2001. This certainly mirrors the trend in European strategic spatial planning towards active sustainable development based upon visioning, action and collaboration (Van den Broeck et al, 2010) and reflects the kind of "transformative and integrative" purposeful planning efforts described by Oosterlynck et al (2010, 3).

The material contained in CASP may be interpreted as an important evolution in how sub-regional planning was presented. In contrast to the technical and rationalistic narrative that defined the LUTS policies, the use of spatial imagery in CASP displays distinctly post-modern perspectives. Among the key messages emerging from the maps and diagrams are the importance of concepts like concentration, connectivity, spatial differentiation and compactness. The diagrammatic material and the accompanying text in CASP certainly signified a move away from traditional Euclidean representations of space towards a much

more relational perspective. Here, new ways of considering and representing space are invoked – and there is an increasing awareness of the role of the extent to which functional spaces are fluid and based on networks that are less place-bound, and inconsistent with administrative areas.

The publication in late 2017 of 'Ireland 2040: Our Plan – The Draft National Planning Framework' (NPF) – as a replacement for the NSS - is an important development in the evolution of the national spatial planning agenda. The draft strategy has attempted to avoid the kind of local political controversies that emerged under the previous plan, and the lack of explicit detail on strategy reflects a deliberate attempt to depoliticise the process. Significantly, the draft document contains very little mapping and almost no visual representation of policy. One important distinction from the previous strategy is that the NPF is proposed to be placed on a statutory footing and will be overseen by a new Office of the Planning Regulator (OPR). Much of the detail and decision-making will be delegated to three new regional assemblies through the preparation of proposed Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies (RSES). The 'Gateways' and 'Hubs' of the NSS have been replaced with a broad commentary on Ireland's five main cities and a general objective of achieving 'regional parity' in population growth.

In Ireland, despite considerable academic and public critiques of national spatial planning, there continues to be a general commitment to the idea of strategic spatial planning as a form of public policy. This is reflected in continuing support for the development of spatial strategies at a national, regional and metropolitan level. The government is currently finalising a new National Planning Framework; this will in turn be implemented through the establishment of the three new 'Regional Spatial Economic Strategies', whilst each city will be required to prepare a 'Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan.' This introduces a significant expansion in terms of strategic spatial planning's reach within the formal arena of planning policy.

Despite its caution, and conservative tone, Ireland 2040 contains a clear hierarchy for the urban centres outside the capital, with Cork being promoted as the state's second city of international scale, fulfilling a nationally important role in counterbalancing the Greater Dublin Area. Limerick, Galway and Waterford in turn are designated as key regional centres, and important locations for supporting the regional development agenda. The document, albeit quite subtly, appears to reflect the move towards a recognition of the

importance of second-tier cities as agents of regional development, and a more explicit recognition of the stratified nature of that urban hierarchy. In addition, there is a more overt recognition of the need to produce integrated spatial planning visions at the metropolitan and city-region scale – and proposes that each of the five cities prepares statutory 'Metropolitan Area Strategic Plans' as part of the hierarchy of plans and policies. However, this has not been accompanied by any proposals around the governance of these functional spaces or consideration of whether existing administrative arrangements in the cities need to be adopted.

Thus, while this suggests an important development in terms of a formal recognition of the importance of metropolitan spaces in strategic spatial planning terms, there is a structural- and institutional reluctance to translate this into comprehensive governance reforms. It is likely that the spatial extent of such strategies in practice may be inhibited by the formal structures of governance through which they are produced. This is unlikely to succeed in addressing the increased complexity and fragmentation of metropolitan areas because of the limited appetite for addressing the functional relations beyond the boundary of local authority areas.

CORE-THEME II: SPATIAL IMPERATIVES IN DECISION MAKING: STRATEGIC SPATIAL PLANNING AS A MODE OF METROPOLITAN GOVERNANCE.

DESCRIPTION: This theme is concerned with understanding how strategic spatial planning frames policy and practice for metropolitan areas. It explores the emergence of strategic spatial planning as a framework for articulating urban governance strategies.

KEY RESEARCH QUESTIONS:

- *How is spatial planning expressed as a specific mode of governance in response to the particular challenges facing Europe's urban areas in the context of a variety of spatial, environmental, social and economic forces?*
- *How does spatial planning interact with decision-making processes both within and outside formal government structures in order to pursue basic spatial planning principles through policies, plans and other initiatives?*

The research was concerned with the ways in which strategic spatial planning is invoked as a mode of urban governance. This involved analysing various policies, projects and initiatives that constituted episodes of spatial planning in Ireland and in Cork, and interpreting these as part of the evolution of wider decision-making environments. On one hand, the analysis of these episodes of spatial planning illustrates the dynamic nature of governance as part of a rapidly evolving economic and social global order, which is characterised by flexibility, speed and innovation. On the other hand, these episodes illustrate the stability of established institutional and administrative structures and norms, and a degree of resistance to the kind of emerging governance changes - particularly those expressed at the regional and metropolitan scales.

At a national scale, planning narratives took a very deliberate turn towards the articulation of an integrated and holistic approach to territorial management. This reflected the emergence of the sustainable development agenda as a key part of policy discourse during the 1990s. The foregrounding of the sustainable development agenda within Ireland's planning policy landscape was clearly a reflection of concerns about the impact of rapid economic growth that have been experienced. By the end of the 1990s, it was evident that although the macroeconomic indicators for Ireland were converging towards the EU's more prosperous regions, this had been achieved at the expense of regional balance and a strong urban hierarchy. At the same time, development patterns in the principal urban areas produced extremely low-density metropolitan centres, which were accompanied by the phenomenon of long distance commuting and extensive suburban sprawl. Along with the strategic objective of positioning Ireland more advantageously within the broader global and European economy, this concern with development and transportation patterns was an important motivation for the development of the National Spatial Strategy.

Concerns about spatial patterns of development were expressed in discourses around a number of policy areas - which helped to identify the need for a high level strategic spatial planning policy initiative. The government's strategy for Sustainable Development (GoI, 1997) had confirmed an attempt to connect environmental and development policy, and promoted the sphere of planning as a way to facilitate sectoral integration. In Ireland, therefore, the first governance challenge at a national level related to the challenge of

framing a policy discourse of sustainable development, seeking the "elusive centre of the triangle" (Campbell, 1996, 301) within a political and administrative context that appeared to be quite ambivalent. The second strategic challenge in governance terms was to promote a particular form of policy integration, using spatial planning systems as a device for capturing various social, economic and environmental concerns.

The government's decision to legislate for the concept of sustainable development under the Planning and Development Act, 2000 also represented an important moment for the governance of spatial planning. This introduced the concept of 'planning and sustainable development' as the organising conceptual framework, within which all planning policies and all planning decisions were to be situated. Furthermore, this served to embed the sustainable development paradigm, not only within the national policy making framework, but also into the hierarchy of planning and local government. However, the absence of a working definition of the sustainable development concept within the legislation meant that those responsible for its regulation largely relied on emergent practices and context specific policy landscapes to effectively govern this challenging environmental agenda.

This, however, highlights one of the important features of strategic spatial planning as a mode of governance. The NSS is not a policy per se; rather, it is a *policy for policies* – in that its strategic intention concerns its ability to influence and indeed shape policies within and outside the realm of spatial planning. This reflects Albrecht's (2004, 747) defining of strategic spatial planning as "…a public-sector-led sociospatial process through which a vision, actions, and means for implementation are produced that shape and frame what a place is and may become." The NSS therefore can be construed as an example of a 'planning project' (Healey, 2010), within which various political and institutionally grounded decision-making processes mediate spatial planning ideas. In this way, the NSS is an archetypal 'planning project', as both an object (of place-making) and a process (of decision-making), and represents a distinctive mode of governance, from which various environmental, social and economic objectives are advanced.

In the absence of strong sub-regional or metropolitan governance structures, the roll-out of spatial strategies at this scale in Ireland's second-tier cities was generally fragmentary and the kind of unified territorial, placed-based approach advocated in the NSS never materialised. However, Cork exists as a particular exception in this regard and the

empirical studies provide an insight into how strategic spatial planning framed policy and practice for the metropolitan and city-region areas. Cork's experiences certainly reflect what Haughton et al (2009) consider to be a rescaling of planning emerging at metropolitan and sub-regional levels where a mix of top-down and bottom-up forces are combining to produce a form of semi-formalised, non-statutory planning strategies. This new scale of city-region and metropolitan governance emerged in Cork as a product of a bottom-up, locally-constituted coalition of interests, but which also attained a degree of political and institutional legitimacy by the direct involvement and tacit support from central government and its agents.

Consequently, the rescaling of planning thinking in this region can be understood as a distinctive outcome of central-local relations using an explicit spatial construction. Notably, the formal structures and administrative-institutional parameters of municipal government in Cork have not been amended in favour of either a metropolitan or city-region framework. In place of such structural or legal reforms, a form of metropolitan and city-region governance has been identified. This has allowed for the creation of 'soft' spaces for planning strategies to emerge that reflect the functional realities of the city and metropolitan region whilst at the same time avoiding the institutional and political obstacles associated with regulatory planning and governing regimes.

Planning policies and practices that evolved under the LUTS – CASP framework produced a series of distinctive metropolitan and city-region governing narratives. These 'governing narratives' developed over a forty year period, and sub-regional and metropolitan scale policy conversations were customary within the local government and wider economic and social landscape. In contrast to the experiences of the other second-tier cities, the existence of an established and widely accepted sub-regional planning consciousness in Cork undoubtedly contributed to the emergence of quite a resilient narrative around place making at these scales. This facilitated, through the presence of an active sub regional agenda, a particular set of important activities that contributed to patterns of coalition building, agenda setting and political advocacy at the scale of the city-region in particular. Cork, through CASP especially, began to produce collective political and public policy narratives around issues like international economic competitiveness, metropolitan aspirations, regional development, environmental quality and liveability. This was certainly a reflection of a rescaling of planning thinking, and the infusion of a series of new

ideologically-oriented themes linking its urban development with strategic spatial planning activities.

The CASP metaphor of the compact city-region provided not only a spatial concept for articulating sustainable development imperatives, but also a launchpad for Cork's strategic aspirations to transition from being a provincial Irish city to a dynamic European city-region. The research would suggest that this was a broadly popular sub-regional aspiration, and it has clearly emerged as a critical meta-narrative from which various strands of planning thinking were directed. This concept of Cork's transitioning was an important feature of the broader governance environment in the region. The analysis of the Cork case shows how the development of a strategic vision for the region served to animate a broad range of interests – including important contributions from outside the realm of local government. In this way, we can identify a very clear governance phenomenon that emerged in Cork, and which is largely absent in the other second-tier cities. This is characterised by the creation of loose alliances as well as informal coalitions – whose broad point of reference was the idea of a strong, growth-oriented city-region vision. This aspect of CASP was universally popular, and may even be interpreted as a deliberately populist form of strategy. Such a transition may be understood as a nebulous, aspirational objective, which is difficult to define and measure, however it has been influential in creating a sense of mission and establishing a collective agenda amongst diverse stakeholders.

The concept of the Cork city-region (and of the metropolitan area), as an outward looking, internationally competitive and dynamic European city certainly appealed to the boosterist impulses of local business coalitions and political interests. The growth-oriented strategies of CASP in particular, with the associated investment and expansionary measures such as docklands and harbour projects, major infrastructure programmes and strong population and employment initiatives, generated strong appeal within this pro-development community. At the same time, the kinds of policy thinking that such a vision invoked – that of a compact city, with all of the attendant environmental and liveability credentials of a 'European City' appealed to the broad spectrum of environmental and community interests across the region. CASP had constructed its strategic growth-oriented narrative using the policy architecture of sustainable development – employing key framing measures such as a green belt, rail corridor, urban renewal, and environmental protection. Finally, and

critically, the city-region/metropolitan concept managed to combine the interests of both local authorities and served to transcend the administrative boundary issue by creating a shared functional space and a collective aspiration around the 'construction of a city-region'. This was not accidental; it may be perceived as a calculated approach which deployed a particular vision around the making of a city-region which would incentivise collaboration as a template for governance.

The city-region and the metropolitan area had no inherent status as an administrative entity, and no quasi-institutional visibility beyond the local context, but it accrued what might be understood as a latent 'governance capacity' (Le Galès, 2002) and functioned over time as an arena in which a city-region and in particular, what is described here as a *metropolitan consciousness* emerged. Thus, what was conceived originally in LUTS as a statistical boundary became a spatial planning policy device; it then became an important feature in the governance of what may be understood as a typically complex urban society. This clearly-defined, but informal unit of spatial planning policy and practice has subsequently become an important feature of strategic spatial planning in both *government* and *governance* terms. Firstly, its practical use has extended beyond the realm of strategic spatial planning, and it is firmly institutionalised within the ordinary language of statutory planning. It is for example a consistently-defined unit used for the city and county councils' joint housing and retail planning policies, it functions as one of the county council's 'Strategic Planning Areas' and it is being used increasingly as a basis for the development of transportation, infrastructure, and green belt policies for the region. Secondly, it is also clearly emerging as an object of governance – used for instance as a descriptive device to represent various iterations of the region's metropolitan aspirations. The concept has infiltrated public policy and economic discourses in recent years – particularly in the context of debates surrounding local government reforms.

The examination of the evolution of the rail strategy as part of the CASP project illustrates how spatial planning interacts with decision-making processes both within and outside formal government structures to pursue basic spatial planning principles. In this instance, a particular episode of strategic spatial planning may be interpreted as a framework in which an urban governance agenda emerged. The way in which the rail initiative was translated from *strategy* to *policy* to *project* suggests that it performed quite effectively as a piece of policy-shaping planning practice. This is evident in the manner in which the CASP policy rapidly became part of the everyday policy discourse of the local authorities and third

parties, and the degree to which it became normalised as the de-facto strategic planning credo for the city-region. The framing of those planning ideas also served to encourage the formation of alliances which emerged around this key planning project.

The loose alliance that emerged around Cork's rail initiative is not a concrete example of a defined governance model; instead it may be interpreted as resembling something closer to an urban regime identified for example by Stone (1989, 1993), which gave expression to certain public policy aspirations for a period of time. This urban regime, or loose coalition, generated a certain governing capacity which was created and maintained by bringing together partners with necessary resources and political legitimacy. This urban regime produced long-term commitment around a strategic vision of urban development and growth management, however, this regime of interests proved to be fragile and transitory. The alliance of local and national interests in the public and private sphere effectively disappeared once the first tranche of rail infrastructure was delivered and it appears that there was no conscious attempt to continue this mode of governance beyond that point.

CORE-THEME III: THE TRANSFORMATIVE CAPACITY OF PLANNING: STRATEGIC SPATIAL PLANNING AND THE PLACE-MAKING CHALLENGE FOR CITY-REGIONS.

DESCRIPTION: This theme addresses questions around the efficacy and impact of strategic spatial planning initiatives as instruments for the promotion of sustainable development practices at the level of the city-region.

KEY RESEARCH QUESTIONS:

- To what extent does strategic spatial planning as a mode of policy and a form of practice succeed in delivering spatially-explicit territorial outcomes in favour of sustainable development?
- Does strategic spatial planning have the capacity to perform effectively as a framework for delivering transformative measures within city-regions?

One of the core objectives of this research was to conduct a series of comprehensive, empirical studies into spatial development patterns in Ireland's second-tier city-regions as a way of exploring the performance of strategic spatial planning as a framework in which principles of sustainable development are articulated. It was also concerned with developing insights into the transformative capacity of planning policy and practice, and to reflect upon its normative basis as a mode of public policy. This particular research strand was directed towards what may be conceived of as a somewhat routine concern with policy efficacy and outcomes. However, this empirical work is aimed at addressing a core theoretical dimension of contemporary planning by investigating the interfaces between discourse and practices.

The research was also concerned with advancing, in a modest way, the kind of intellectual inquiry outlined by Louis Albrechts, Patsy Healey and Klaus Kunzmann in 2003 when they presented their extended argument for the potential of strategic spatial planning by asking "why do strategic planning?"

> *The motivations for these efforts are varied, but the objectives have typically been to articulate a more coherent spatial logic for land use regulation, resource protection, and investments in regeneration and infrastructure. Strategic frameworks and visions for territorial development, with an emphasis on place qualities and the spatial impacts and integration of investments, complement and provide a context for specific development projects… The focus on the spatial relations of territories holds the promise of a more effective way of integrating economic, environmental, cultural, and social policy agendas as these affect localities.*
>
> (Albrechts et al, 2003, 113-114)

In this testimony, the authors would appear to present the concept of strategic spatial planning as an affirmative framework for promoting the integration of a variety of social economic and environmental priorities, to locate perhaps the ''elusive centre of the triangle" of sustainable development (Campbell, 1996, 301). Furthermore, it also responds to Healey's (1997, 244-255) contention that strategic spatial planning can, and should be, a deliberately transformative form of practice, "…strategy-making is a process of deliberative paradigm change. It aims to change cultural conceptions, systems of understanding and systems of meaning. It is more than just producing collective decisions. It is about shifting and re-shaping *convictions"* (author's emphasis). Thus, the empirical studies were aiming to

establish if strategic spatial planning is, as Friedmann (2004) asserts, more than merely a technical response to spatial or environmental challenges, and part of a paradigm shift in planning for territorial development.

The examination of the impact and influence of spatial policies established at a national scale focussed on the degree to which this shaped particular development patterns across the territory and within the context of the regional/urban development agenda. The analysis of the post-NSS landscape demonstrates clearly the limitations of these strategic initiatives, with evidence of a divergence of economic and settlement patterns, which has potential long-term sustainability implications. In this case, it is clear that spatial initiatives oriented towards the pursuit of strategically-important territorial and economic solutions cannot be the sole responsibility of local actors, unless there is an institutional architecture in place at the sub regional or regional level that promotes strategic commitment around metropolitan development aspirations. Recent experiences in Ireland's key gateway cities would suggest that although the 'soft spaces of governance' are a necessary feature of the urban decision-making landscape, they are not conducive to making hard decisions. While CASP is correctly regarded as an effective collaborative spatial planning tool, its capacity to accommodate some of the wicked planning issues is clearly limited.

This does not mean, however, that strategic spatial planning initiatives situated within and across these 'soft spaces' are inadequate framing devices for the articulation of sustainable development endeavours. The detailed examination of Cork's experiences found a notable convergence of influences in the way that economic issues, environmental quality of life, local government structures and landscape can be mutually reinforcing drivers in terms of urban form, spatial development patterns and about how sustainable development priorities can be articulated. The LUTS-CASP framework, as a broad policy meta-narrative, has had an identifiable impact on spatial development agendas in the region. It has helped for instance to cement the city-region and metropolitan conceptions within everyday planning policy settings, and to advance the core place-making and place-management tools of the compact city, the green belt, city centre renewal, and the rail corridor. These are significant policy achievements as they altered the policy narrative that governed the arena of territorial development in the region, serving to, in policy terms at least, formalise the process of policy integration at the scale of city-region. Whilst the analysis does not suggest that this is necessarily the manifestation of an explicit *programme* that deliberately

espoused the combination of different disciplinary traditions, it can be interpreted as a continuous, tacit *project* consisting of a set of overlapping and coordinated initiatives. This is the product of strategic spatial planning endeavours developed over a long period of time.

Through the case study of Cork, and its experiences with spatial planning initiatives, it is possible to interrogate the application of the concept of *Transformative Practice* outlined by Abrechts (2011), Oosterlynck et al, (2010), Salet and Gualini, (2006), Van den Broeck (2008) in real-world settings. The kinds of strategic planning initiatives deployed in Cork certainly resonate with the concept of transformation as outlined in the literature. Some of the core ingredients of CASP for instance, the docklands strategy, the rail project and Metropolitan Cork, were formulated deliberately as a way to advance substantial material changes to the spatial character of the region. They were designed to consciously interrupt path dependency, and resist the dominance of market trends in influencing development patterns. Collectively, these were aimed at, perhaps optimistically, fundamentally altering the entire development trajectory of the region - by reconstituting its established strategic [growth-oriented] economic aspirations into a broader, more integrative package of planning ideas with a particular temporal and spatial reach. The kinds of projects undertaken as part of LUTS and CASP would appear to have been deliberate attempts to construct a series of 'big' initiatives which would serve as a catalyst for delivering the kinds of fundamental, structural changes in city regions because they intervene in a concrete way in spatial and social terms (Oosterlinck et al, 2010).

The rail strategy, for example, can be interpreted as an attempt to transform completely the economic footprint of development in the city-region, using a series of arguments around environmental and social quality based on what can be considered a *grand place-making concept*. This became an archetypal strategic spatial planning project which certainly reflects a version of what Healey (2010) identifies as conscious place-making efforts, whereby the overarching objective is to coordinate and mobilise public activity and private sector initiative to create new visions and 'new pieces of city'. This was a project with a certain scale and character - reflecting the kind of grand ambitions, big ideas and imagined futures necessary to recalibrate the social and environmental conditions of the city-region in favour of more sustainable forms of development.

However, the study of Blackpool's relationship with the rail strategy illustrates both the opportunities, and limitations of, transformative practices in strategic spatial planning projects. Despite the failure to deliver the key component of the rail project for this part of the city - the rail station – the planning vision endures and remains relevant. The project's core logic remains, and despite conflicting priorities amongst key stakeholders, the vision of a mixed use, high density, rail oriented urban district, continues to emerge in a shape and form which resembles the masterplan. However, unlike the East Cork rail project, in the case of Blackpool, there was no clear compelling strategic incentive to support the project at a national scale and the project's framing appears to have had local rather than a sub-regional or national legitimacy. As a result, the project had an inherent weakness, and that related to its failure to accrue the strategic importance as a framing project for the wider city-region. This created what may be understood as critical governance gap, because the essential infrastructure – the railway station – did not become embedded as a national level transportation priority. These insights make a case for more explicit emphasis on political processes as part of strategic spatial planning projects, and suggests that the normative expectations of strategic spatial planning may be unrealistic because sustained collective action is exceptional rather than typical (Newman, 2008: Stone, 2002).

Therefore, we can conclude that these kinds of strategic spatial planning projects are unlikely to acquire socio-spatial transformative characteristics unless established modes of governance are moderated. Achieving the kind of wide and large-scale urban change envisaged in CASP's rail initiative for the city-region depends on attaining political-institutional credibility and ways of working, as much as it requires social and environmental logic. This does not mean that such projects depend on the creation of new institutional or administrative structures, or comprehensive reform programmes. In order for strategic spatial planning to become "transformative and integrative" Oosterlynck et al (2010, 3), project framing becomes an important consideration; this suggests that transformative practices and policies are more likely to be progressed if their inherent logics can be articulated across a stratified governance landscape. This facilitates the development of mission, political legitimacy and establishes a broad project manifesto, from which a project's essential political and societal credibility can emerge. Therefore, if strategic spatial planning is a contemporary expression of planning's core concern with outcomes and with its ability to shape those outcomes, it needs to consider more actively the political-institutional landscape in which those outcomes will emerge.

If Healey's (2007) assertion that transformations in practice rarely proceed at the same pace as transformations in discourse, then the advocates and promoters of strategic spatial planning ought to develop modes of practice which can negotiate the complex societal and political terrain of urban governance. This challenge, for Friedmann (2000), means it is necessary to connect two sets of narratives – by being able to apply a set of clearly expressed planning objectives towards an open democratic landscape. Thus, processes and outcomes of planning are integrated because "The imaginary of the good city has to embrace both these terms" (Friedmann, 2000, 465). This idea is supported by the empirical studies which indicate that strategic spatial planning is now dependent on a multiplicity of interests and contributions, and that the success of initiatives like the rail project was dependent on the strategic management of resources, influence and power, rather than on traditional project planning mechanisms. This echoes Hillier's (2011) conception of *navigation* as an applied metaphor for strategic spatial planning, whereby planning projects and planning ideas are evolved organically rather than applied mechanically.

CORE-THEME IV: PRAXIS, PRACTICE AND PROJECTS: THE CHALLENGE OF ANALYSING PLANNING IN ACTION.

DESCRIPTION: This theme concerns itself with a methodological reflection which emerged in the context of the empirical inquires. It refers to the particular challenges associated with scholarly inquiry within the realm of strategic spatial planning.

KEY RESEARCH QUESTIONS:

- What are the appropriate methods for the analysis of strategic spatial planning as a mode of policy and a form of practice?
- Is there an effective methodological framework for combining conformance and performance-based assessments of strategic spatial planning?

This research was concerned with exploring the dynamics of urban governance and spatial planning at various spatial scales. This depended on the development of a series of insights into the way that governing arrangements have been changing in response to new economic and political circumstances, identifying processes behind these changing

patterns, and qualifying these changes in terms of governance planning dynamics in metropolitan contexts. In addition, it was also concerned with identifying ways in which planning practice applies its basic principles through planning policy, decision making, and by exploring the normative basis of the profession's activities.

Interest in developing some reflections on methodologies emerged during the conduct of the empirical studies. These involved a series of broad and deep enquiries into various episodes of strategic spatial planning, set at different scales of operation. The studies included the application of a combination of methodological devices, quantitative and qualitative in nature, to allow for a rigorous analysis of those planning episodes. By necessity, this mode of inquiry produced a set of scholarly and practical questions around both the processes and products of planning.

Research in contemporary strategic spatial planning presents a complex scholarly terrain. It is also true that research into urban issues is, by definition, research into complexity and it is this complexity that often attracts academic attention. The interface of planning and governance in cities, regions and national territories, which is constructed around large scale, long-term place-making strategies, inevitably produces a large number, and wide variety, of socio-cultural, political and economic considerations. As a result, it is difficult as Campbell (2003, 3) argues, to isolate phenomena from its context "…because it is this context itself -- the complex cluster that is a city -- that is the subject of study". This suggests, therefore, that it may not be possible to disentangle planning from its embedded social, cultural, political and economic settings, and that trying to isolate planning phenomena as discrete subjects of investigation is problematic. More importantly, it is not necessary to do so because studies of planning and governance phenomena by their very nature need to capture that socio-cultural, political and economic complexity.

In the last 50 years or so, theoretical discourses around planning have attempted to address the view that the desire for certainty and rationality is probably futile in a late 20th century context, which is characterised increasingly by fluidity, uncertainty and rapid change. The principal conceptual models of this period can be summarised as the *rational comprehensive*, *incremental*, and *mixed scanning* approaches to public policy. These present two broad frameworks for decision-making in a public administration context (mixed scanning being a combination of the first two) which are presented as either

normative or pragmatic models for addressing complexity in social and political contexts. The *rational-comprehensive* framework depends on greater resources than decision-makers actually possess whilst *incremental* strategies tend to promote pragmatic strategies but neglect social innovations (Etzioni, 1967). *Mixed-scanning*, as a combination of both, combines the comprehensive nature of rationalism with the pragmatic, conservative traits of incrementalism. This framework, which emerged from debates within political science and public administration, is a useful reference point when analysing the various episodes of planning. In particular, it provided a way in which governance processes that surrounded those episodes of planning could be interpreted as part of the analysis.

From the 1960s onwards, it was considered that planning issues have become too complicated to rely upon established theories and methods which did not effectively address procedural concerns. Each of the three approaches referred previously, according to Salet and Faludi (2000, 9), attempts to deal with the question of legitimacy and effectiveness in strategic spatial planning, by seeking "…to reconcile the collective spatial goals on the one hand, with the totality of social forces in which the actual spatial developments take place." Hence, the empirical studies conducted here consciously developed as exercises which focused on addressing the core concepts of legitimacy and effectiveness. For instance, the investigations of the various planning episodes, addressing spatial development patterns, demographic change, and commuting trends were all concerned with examining the extent to which spatial planning endeavours were legitimised as urban governance processes. In addition, these investigations were directed towards addressing questions about the effectiveness of strategic spatial planning as a way of securing particular social, economic and environmental outcomes.

In progressing the individual studies, it became increasingly evident that an appreciation of governance *processes* was essential for developing an understanding of development *patterns*. In other words, the efficacy of strategic spatial planning and its ability to deliver particular spatial outcomes, relied upon its ability to communicate effectively to its internal constituency as well as to an external set of audiences. In the examination of national and sub-regional episodes of strategic spatial planning in Ireland, which evolved over the course of the four essays, it was necessary to adapt and extend the methodological framework. This involved extending the empirical investigations beyond the confines of an instrumentalist perspective, and by engaging in more comprehensive analysis of

governance narratives. This then encouraged the adoption of a mixed performance-conformance model of assessment, presented in detail in essay four.

It has also been suggested that strategic spatial planning, as a form of policy and practice, has emerged in response to the increasing complexity of interconnected, large scale urban issues associated with rapid and haphazard development (Breheny, 1991). Using this perspective, strategic spatial planning itself can be interpreted as a specific mode of governance – with a particular set of normative and pragmatic concerns around place making at the urban, the sub-regional and national scales. This particular mode of governance has been devised specifically to deal with social complexity and to accommodate an integrated approach to policy development and decision-making (Friedmann, 2004). If then, as Bryson (2004, 57), argues, strategic spatial planning cannot be understood as a single object or process, "…but a set of concepts, procedures, and tools that may be used selectively for different purposes in different situations", research into contemporary planning episodes needs to reflect this and include stratified modes of inquiry. The adoption of a multidimensional scheme of analysis as part of the research meant that the different approaches, rationales and processes of strategic spatial planning episodes could be investigated systematically. This led to a concerted effort to apply a mix of methods as part of the research design. Thus, the intellectual inquiry was progressed using a variety of analytical devices, which combined a series of quantitative and qualitative methods. As a result, the comprehensive empirical studies, which relied heavily upon the use of quantitative data around development patterns, demographic, commuting, economic data, planning permissions and housing completions - were complemented by rigorous policy/document analysis and a broader study of political and economic narratives within the case studies. These are oriented towards addressing the complexity and scope of the various strategic spatial planning episodes.

The research also relied on a mixed conformance-performance analytical mode of inquiry, based on the 'Dutch model' of planning assessment. This was particularly important in developing a meaningful framework to assess projects as part of broader strategic spatial planning efforts. The assessment conducted on the rail initiative suggested it could be classified as an archetypal large-scale strategic urban project, a popular mode of public policy in Europe which has emerged in response to the increasing complexity of

interconnected, economic and environmental issues associated with rapid and haphazard development in urban regions. Because of this complex and stratified research terrain, the analysis of the rail initiative combined an instrumentalist *conformance*-based analysis with an assessment of the its *performance* as mode of strategic spatial planning in practice.

Furthermore, the evolution of analysis during the research process would suggest that a full understanding of the operation and impact of strategic spatial planning projects cannot be conducted without combining an assessment of both conformance and performance. This presents a particular research challenge because of the need to combine a comprehensive and broad statistical/quantitative assessment with depth and richness from a case study analysis. Such a combination will inevitably involve the application of significant time and resources, however it can be particularly powerful as a way of accommodating empirical breadth and theoretical depth.

In addition, public policy discourses often tend to be concentrated on an assessment of spatial planning projects using conformance measures. The Cork case study would suggest that the achievements of strategic spatial planning projects can be understood more clearly if traditional conformance tests are complemented by performance based assessments. This would support the suggestion by Faludi (2000, 306) that a spatial plan at this scale is fulfilling its purpose "if and only if it plays a tangible role in the choices of the actors to whom it is addressed" and that … (in such circumstances) the plan performs a useful role irrespective of whether the outcomes correspond to the plan". This has important consequences for how strategic spatial planning is observed, and for how it is assessed in applied and academic contexts. In research terms, communicating the performance-based approach, as a legitimate methodological framework, represents an important challenge. Specifically, this involves demonstrating the validity and value of a more nuanced and reflective assessment of spatial planning initiatives in a public policy context that tends to favour more reductive lines of enquiry that rely on linear, conformance-based assessments. The research conducted here has identified this methodological challenge and although it does not explore this very comprehensively, it prompted some reflections and some questioning about how planning can be evaluated as a mode of public policy.

As frameworks for decision-making, the scope of strategic planning is continuous; the process of evaluation therefore needs to take account of the inevitability of changing

circumstances and a guaranteed state of uncertainty. This certainly supports the consideration of the 'recursive model' of public policy outlined by Sabel & Jordan (2015, 9) which reflects the premise that "information problems are continuous, so that planning and doing are intertwined." This model, used as a public administration concept, presents a potentially useful context for the assessment (and conduct) of strategic spatial planning. It emphasises the limitations of ex ante knowledge, and stresses the role of local actors in incrementally improving strategies/plans, piecing together alternatives and responding to the particulars of the immediate situation. This mode of governance permits "…continuous adaptation and the fluid incorporation of the previously unexpected" (Sabel & Jordan, 2015, 6) and is particularly interesting for the practice of strategic spatial planning.

The conduct of this research also allows for a reflection on the value of integrating *phronesis* with epistemological and technical knowledge in pursuing planning inquiry. As an intellectual virtue, *phronesis* emphasises a balance of instrumental rationality with value rationality. The various planning episodes, set at a variety of spatial scales and in different social and political contexts, called for the application of a stratified analytical approach; this combined what may be perceived as a 'comprehensive-rational' set of studies of territorial development with a more interpretive treatment of governance narratives, with an appreciation of context and perspective. This mixed approach to knowledge production doesn't go quite as far as Flyvberg (2004, 284) who argues that we should "let rationalism go"; instead it is argued here that is more helpful to *put rationalism in its place*. Furthermore, this phronetic approach to planning research was helpful in that it allowed the detailed empirical work to be circumscribed and contextualised using judgement, and contributing to what Flyvberg (2004, 290) suggests as a means of facilitating "…an interaction between the general and the concrete." In this research, *poiesis* also emerges as an important intellectual quality – mainly through the kind of reflections on the discourses around strategic spatial planning episodes. The detailed analysis of governance narratives that evolved through the sub-case studies led to a very productive form of analysis that facilitated the development of insights into social and political contexts, as well as ideas about power and process in urban settings.

More importantly perhaps, this prompted some reflection about the potential of stories and storytelling in communicating research about strategic spatial planning. In an exploration of the relationship between storytelling and policy, Marris (1997) questions the

efficacy of social research in its ability to influence policy and outcomes. He argues that academics are powerful critics but weak storytellers, and that research in this field generally tends to communicate in a way that lacks plausibility and persuasiveness. For Sandercock (2003), storytelling is essential to planning practice and research, and suggests that communication of planning stories can be authoritative when empirical evidence is combined with convincing argument. Forester (2012) contends that planning practice stories are a rich source when used as a critically-pitched discourse analysis. One of the faults of planning research, however, has been the quality and effectiveness of communication. Finnegan (1998, 21) for example contends that "Academic story telling is ugly in its stark, cliche´d monotone manner. We tell the dullest stories in the most dreary ways, and usually deliberately, for this is the mantle of scientific storytelling: it is supposed to be dull." One of the problems in planning research, according to Sandercock (2003, 20), is the reliance on 'truth' in demonstrating the almost mythological virtues of objectivity and technical expertise, but "…this truthfulness is not, in itself, necessarily persuasive…if we want to be effective policy advocates, then we need to become good story-makers and good storytellers, in the more performative sense." Within this project, storytelling was not deployed as an explicit methodological device. However, in the conduct of the various empirical studies, it became clear that a complete and meaningful narrative around these episodes of strategic spatial planning would be incomplete without the development of stories about events and processes. Consequently, the case study of the Cork city-region relies upon the development of a story about the evolution of strategic spatial planning. This 'story' became an important organising concept and structural device in the development of empirical and conceptual insights. In the context of future research, it would be useful to deploy the storytelling approach to planning research in a much more structured and deliberative manner, and with a particular objective to clarify and assess its value as an instrument for planning practice and research.

7.2 FINAL REFLECTIONS; STRATEGIC SPATIAL PLANNING AND THE DYNAMIC EQUILIBRIUM IN SECOND-TIER CITIES

In this thesis, a series of discussions were presented about the nature of strategic spatial planning and urban governance. Using Ireland and Cork as case studies, we can observe ways in which new ideas in strategic spatial planning, encapsulated in high profile policy settings, are transmitted and mediated through a variety of governance processes and mechanisms. Broadly speaking, it has attempted to interrogate urban governance by

combining an institutionalist understanding (emphasising processes and discourses) with a relational perspective (considering scale and space) – using the policy and practice framework of strategic spatial planning. This section follows on from the critical analysis of the empirical studies and the key findings to present a tentative, emergent set of reflections about the nature of contemporary strategic spatial planning – inspired by the empirical work and subsequent consideration of implications for theory and practice. This is largely an exploratory exercise and includes an identification of potential avenues for further research.

In 1961, Lewis Mumford was reflecting upon the nature of urban development and the kinds of opportunities that Ebenezer Howard's 'Social City' concept presented for advancement of the idea of balanced cities and balanced regions. He outlines his understanding of why Howard's prescriptions had not succeeded in arresting the types of unsatisfactory trends in urbanisation he was discussing,

> *So far, then, Howard's proposals have failed to halt, or even retard the automatic processes that are at work in our civilization. The underlying reason for this failure is that western civilization is still carried along by the inertia of three centuries of expansion: land expansion, industry expansion, and population expansion; and these movements have taken place at a rate that would have made public organization and containment difficult, even if the need for a more stable life – economy had been recognized. From the beginning all three movements exhibited irrational and disruptive features, and so far from having diminished during the last two generations, they have intensified. As both anxiety and disorder widen, the possibility of achieving planned distribution, a dynamic equilibrium, and normal growth decrease. The present planless suburban spread, with its accompanying metropolitan congestion and blight, is an ignoble substitute for civic order and regional design.*
>
> (Mumford, 1961, 596)

Here, Mumford highlights the permanent struggle in which planning is engaged, and his anxiety about the challenge of governing and containing urban development certainly appears to be a perpetual one. It suggests perhaps that Mumford's (and Howard's) quests for civic order and regional design might simply reflect the discipline's permanent condition. And that reaching the *dynamic equilibrium* of Mumford's imagination might actually be profession's dynamic purpose.

TRANSFORMATIONS IN PLANNING POLICY NARRATIVES: HIERARCHY AND INTEGRATION

The research in Ireland has demonstrated ways in which strategic spatial planning, if understood as a distinctive action-oriented mode of public policy, has permeated policy and practice. These experiences reflect much of the literature on strategic spatial planning in recent decades. These changes have been significant and have had substantial, material impacts on planning policy and practice. The style, content and form of planning at a national, sub-regional and metropolitan level in Ireland has been subject to a number of important changes in response to these developments. Although we can identify an important 'spatial turn' in the last twenty years, evidenced by the routinisation of 'spatial strategies' in the national and local planning discourses, this has been evolutionary rather than revolutionary. Planning in Ireland and in Cork has been experimenting with 'strategic' conceptions of policy and space since the 1960s and 1970s, with the emergence of new functional spatialities within the Buchanan and LUTS contexts – which introduced innovative narratives around planning for cities, metropolitan areas, city-regions, sub-national and national territories.

At a national level, however, those early encounters with strategic spatial planning did not translate into a new policy agenda and the momentum for the development of a new national spatial paradigm diminished. This only re-emerged in 2002 with a publication of the NSS, which represented an important move towards the establishment of strategic spatial planning at a national level. In contrast, the publication of CASP in 2001 can be seen as part of a continuum of spatial policy development in the Cork region since the late 1960s, and is much more embedded as a routine expression of planning policy and practice.

The research has suggested that these contemporary episodes of strategic spatial planning in Ireland and in Cork have produced new layers and new dimensions of policy and practice. The findings would support contentions in the literature that strategic spatial planning has not actually supplanted so-called traditional regulatory/comprehensive modes of planning. Instead, we can identify two ways in which these different strands of planning interact – one is *hierarchical* and one is *integrative*.

Firstly, strategic spatial planning in Ireland has emerged as a way of reflecting the functional reality of places and spaces which do not coincide with established administrative areas. Therefore, spatial strategies are developed for neighbourhoods, urban districts, metropolitan areas, city-regions and national territories –and are, in turn, inserted as new layers within existing *policy hierarchies*. This embellishes the existing hierarchy of planning policy, with strategic spatial planning instruments used to address the policy gaps within the state's administrative architecture.

Secondly, we see evidence of a degree of assimilation between the different styles of planning. On one hand, comprehensive land use planning in Ireland has absorbed many of the norms traditionally associated with strategic spatial planning – with development plan documents for example demonstrating much more explicitly strategic perspectives and policies. At the same time, Ireland is about to embed strategic spatial planning more formally within the institutional and policy framework of the state; the new National Planning Framework (published in February, 2017) will become a statutory planning document, and it is proposed also to establish statutory strategic planning instruments at the metropolitan level for Ireland cities – known as MASPs (Metropolitan Area Strategic Plans). Hence, the distinctions between the two styles of planning are increasingly blurred with a distinct trajectory towards *integration* of policy language, concepts, representations and material.

The case of strategic spatial planning in Ireland and in Cork demonstrates the way in which strategic spatial planning has penetrated policy and practice discourses over the last twenty years or so. This has produced new public policies, new planning languages, new planning instruments, new spatial discourses, new governance landscapes and new expressions of space and place. This has served to deliver a comprehensive transformation in planning as a discipline and within the broader arena of public policy. These transformations have had an important influence on both the processes and products of planning.

BRINGING CONCEPT TO PLACE: URBAN GOVERNANCE AND PLACE MAKING

Many of the theoretical discourses in planning include reflections on how and what planning should be doing, as a mode of social action and of public policy. In a very basic

way, it is generally supposed that there is a tendency for the discipline historically to shift its normative underpinnings between a core concern with processes to one based on ideas about outcomes. Thus, we have observed a number of important paradigm shifts which invariably concerned the discipline's teleological essence. As a result, as part of this narrative, there has been a tendency to produce neat taxonomies of planning - usually separating process and outcome. In a late 20th century context, this is distinguished by extensive discussions relating to the validity of comprehensive, incrementalist, and communicative planning models, and the relatively recent emphasis on substantive planning approaches emphasising urban and regional change, environmental policy and physical planning/place-making. Discussions of strategic spatial planning are inevitably situated within this reflective framework.

In the context of this research into strategic spatial planning, such a binary representation encourages us to establish the relative significance of place governance *processes* or place making *outcomes* in a policy and practice setting. In reality however, as Fainstein (2005, 159) argues, this conceptual framework, can be unhelpful because it *"… results in theoretical weakness arising from the isolation of process from context and outcome."* Instead, this research considers the coexistence and interactions between the different modes of planning. The production, representation, communication and application of the key planning instruments associated with strategic spatial planning in Ireland and Cork (the NSS and CASP), suggests that strategic spatial planning can be interpreted as being simultaneously concerned with process (communication devices, implementation methodologies, decision-making, politics, governance) and outcomes (territorial development, place quality, connectivity, balanced regional development). In policy and practice settings, whilst strategic spatial planning is clearly understood to function as a 'policy for policies', it appears to be equally directly concerned with the task of place-making.

In analysing the content of these documents, it becomes clear that they are concerned with establishing influence over decision-making processes and governance cultures. They employ deliberative techniques designed to shape decision-making narratives in various political and administrative contexts. The authors of these documents are clearly aware that the purpose of those strategies is to shape the environments in which decisions about places are made. As a result, much of the focus is directed towards framing a political and

social discourse about spatial planning and towards the construction of a communicative architecture to articulate the strategy. We can then consider strategic spatial planning in this way as a form of governance, as a mode of communication, and as a framework for advancing key structural conceptions about spaces and places at various spatial scales. These strategies are also equally concerned with substantive outcomes, and they had clear spatially explicit visions about the future of their territories. These modes of strategic spatial planning, therefore, appear to assume that the integration of the process and outcomes as an assumed position. It reflects Friedmann's (2000, 94) contention that planning should "…deny this separation of the ends and means" and instead combine democratic procedures with desirable outcomes.

As non-statutory documents with very little inherent political or institutional capacities, these documents relied on their persuasive and communicative content to articulate and advance those visions. In the case of Ireland's National Spatial Strategy, it would appear that its core structuring principles did not permeate public policy environments sufficiently well, and lacked conceptual authority. The key spatial planning concepts outlined in the NSS were based on robust conceptualisations of place and space, but these did not appear to translate into clearly understood ideas about place making. The concepts advanced - of concentration, gateways and hubs, critical mass, potential and complementarity - were defined, and applied generously across the urban hierarchy in a way that ensured a degree of constructive ambiguity. These constructs were not articulated in concrete ways to give effect to some kind of a place-making manifesto; they functioned instead as organising concepts - rather than planning devices. At the level of a city-region in the case of Cork, CASP would appear to have had a more compelling place making narrative and therefore infiltrated policy arenas in a more substantive manner. The research on the Cork case indicates that the substantive content of CASP – using spatial imaginaries of city-region and green belt, of docklands and satellite towns, of rail corridors and urban cores had clear territorial and placed-based expressions. As a result, the essential components of CASP in spatial planning terms relied upon explicit ideas about individual locations. Thus, CASP established a strategic spatial planning framework for the Cork region that managed to articulate its strategy effectively by linking, in an explicit way, concept to place.

SPATIAL COHERENCE AS A TIMELESS ENDEAVOUR

The research on Ireland and Cork provides an interesting perspective on the substantive dimension of strategic spatial planning. Davoudi (2009, 242) claims that while recent debates about space and place in strategic spatial planning "has influenced how planners plan, it has failed to change, in a meaningful way, what planners plan." This is part of what is described as an asymmetric development in spatial planning which posits that the last four decades of planning thinking have focused mainly on planning processes and procedures, and have neglected the substantive aspects of planning. According to Davoudi (2009, 241-243), this conceptual inertia in respect of planning that means that it is trapped in a mid-20th century positivist mind-set with outdated conceptions of space and place; which in turn is defined by an absolute, bounded and measurable understanding of space and which struggles in dealing with the concept of change and becoming.

The contemporary episodes of strategic spatial planning examined within this research would support Davoudi's (2009) contention that planning's substantive dimensions have not altered significantly. It is evident that the key concerns and basic measures developed within these strategic spatial planning episodes are not radically different to those expressed in planning documents at any time during the last century. Notwithstanding this, an analysis of Ireland's NSS indicates that it did in fact adopted an explicitly relational perspective on space, with spatial development treated as a dynamic process mediated through a hierarchical network of places. Taking a distinctly post-modern, non-Euclidean approach to spatial dynamics, it attempted to encourage particular spatial development patterns using a range of fuzzy concepts. Its fundamental intent, however, was based on long-standing concerns about controlling spatial development patterns. Hence, during this strategic spatial planning episode, policy makers engaged very directly with contemporary understandings of relational geographies, but retained spatial principles and aspirations derived from a different century.

However, the absence of a significant overhaul of planning content, and its apparent reluctance to embrace fully the conceptual developments in relational geography in applied settings may be reasonable. The analysis conducted here indicates that these relational concepts are powerful representations of spatial dynamics, and can be useful exploratory devices, but are not particularly practicable from a public policy perspective,

and particularly within a social-political-administrative context that requires a degree of certainty, fixity and boundedness.

Furthermore, the absence of a radical transformation of planning's substantive concerns might not be problematic in any case. Strategic spatial planning, similar to other planning traditions, has a general concern with spatial order, balanced development, connectivity, environmental protection and quality of life; these are not novel concerns. These strategies address long-standing concerns about the importance of spatial incoherence, reminding us of Mumford's (1961) apprehensions about "…*planless suburban spread, with its accompanying metropolitan congestion and blight" expressed* 50 years previously. In outlining his concerns about the nature of urban development in the 20th century urban America, Mumford wasn't just articulating the issue of his time; he was reciting what may be considered as planning's permanent predicament – securing spatial coherence in the face of resistant social and economic impulses.

The concern about spatial coherence can be considered universal and transcendent. The Cork Civic Survey 1926, one of the Ireland's first episodes of town planning remarked in its introduction that the need for a plan emerged because of concerns about the quality of spatial order,

> *We have schools where there should be warehouses, dwellings where there should be factories, fields where there should be houses, and factories in all sorts of inaccessible and inconvenient places, and no Civic Centre…there should be in existence a wisely prepared town plan, which will not only guide its future growth, but also so control its existing mass that no change can be made except by way of improvement.*
>
> (Cork Town Planning Association, 1926, vi).

In 1941, the Cork Town Planning Report (Robertson, 1941 10) suggested that the city needed to plan to prevent the scale of disorder associated with rapid suburban development, referring to,

> *…a menace which is threatening Cork at the present time, and that is the tendency to spread out into the country along the approach roads…It leaves a hinterland between the tentacles which is undeveloped and too often cut off from proper development in the future. This anti-social form of building must be stopped.*

By the beginning of the 21st century, the same concern remains when CASP is constructed,

> *The strategy aims to match the location of new housing as closely as possible with the location of employment growth centres in order to minimise commuting. It will significantly reduce the per capita cost of providing new infrastructure services by requiring an overall rise in housing densities and for development to be concentrated rather than dispersed, thus counteracting the current trend towards the suburbanisation of the Study Area.*
>
> (Atkins, 2001, 25)

It is clear of course that planning always needs to consider economic and social trends to reappraise potential for desired spatial outcomes. Political, cultural and business environments necessarily influence the scope of planning within a dynamic arena of governance. This was apparent from analysing Ireland's and Cork's experiences of strategic spatial planning (including the 'project review' exercises conducted in both instances), and there was evidence of iterative processes of negotiation and bargaining which influenced the content and form of spatial planning policy.

Overall, however, we can see a remarkable consistency in how planning episodes articulate their basic premise, which relates to an enduring focus on the arrangement of development in territories and with the idea of spatial order. The evidence of this research however would suggest that Salet and Faludi (2000, 4) may be correct in their assertion that "…certain spatial policy principles has remained constant throughout — particularly the need to concentrate urban growth as much as possible, and to protect surrounding areas from the urban onslaught". In the context of this study, can see how the NSS and CASP, as archetypal strategic spatial planning initiatives, were each particularly exercised by the challenge of reordering growth patterns to reduce dispersal by concentrating growth and limiting suburban forms of development. It is also clear however that whilst strategic spatial planning is certainly distinct from previous or traditional practice in urban and regional planning, its substantive concerns have been remarkably consistent.

CONTEXTUALISING STRATEGIC SPATIAL PLANNING AND GOVERNANCE

Finally, what are the prospects for second-tier city-regions in a contemporary European context and how does the research conclude on the theme of spatial planning and governance? This concluding section briefly reflects upon the following concepts; *containers for strategic spatial planning*, *metropolitan consciousness*, *spatial and thematic selectivity* and *strategic spatial planning as urban governance proxy*.

The research indicates that although there has been a general reluctance to institutionalise planning units like city-regions or metropolitan areas a formal government entities, they are being deployed increasingly as *containers for strategic spatial planning.* The use of the term 'container' in this instance suggests a more fluid and relational interpretation than its traditional understanding in planning literature, for instance by Healey (2006). In addition, it has become clear that although the use of fuzzy boundaries can be useful as a strategic tactic in governing urban issues, the soft spaces of governance are not necessarily conducive to making hard decisions. Notwithstanding this, as devices for capturing strategic spatial planning initiatives, they have proved to be useful in constructing meaningful representations of space into which different strands of spatially-relevant themes can be organised. For very pragmatic reasons, these spatial constructs can be utilised as a way to depoliticise planning initiatives at this scale, particularly where cross-sectoral and political-administrative complexities emerge. Using relational conceptualisations of space and place, they have been effective in situating a variety of economic, political and environmental impulses, in multidimensional settings, within a meaningful, tangible public policy context. The city-region and metropolitan concepts provide sufficient fuzziness to mediate potentially incongruous sectoral and political priorities, but using a spatial-governance construct that is sufficiently tangible to be comprehended in a public policy and wider societal-political context.

The research has also indicated that long term, coherent strategic spatial planning across administrative boundaries, based on consistent ideas about governing/planning spaces, can produce what may be understood as a *metropolitan consciousness,* which has important implications for the governance prospects of urban centres. This may be understood as a tacit project around an informal spatial construct, which over time, gains legitimacy as a strong governance space (in which decisions are brokered) and as a metaphor (for

articulating a collective vision for the area's long-term future). In contrast to the more conservative planning approaches found elsewhere in Ireland, sub-regional spatial planning in Cork has promoted the idea of a metropolitan city in a very consistent, overt way. In contrast, in Ireland's other second-tier cities, sub-regional or metropolitan scale strategies at this scale tended not to permeate local public policy frameworks, and have not been as influential in the development and planning of these city-regions. This can be important, as it has been in the case of Cork, in projecting strong urban governance credentials in favour of long term planning, and in demonstrating coherent and spatially-consistent policy frameworks.

Furthermore, this can be influential in promoting a city's economic or environmental aspirations at national and international levels, in generating political and public visibility and in securing investments for infrastructure and regeneration initiatives. For *metropolitan consciousness* to become a feature of the governance landscape, the metropolitan (and/or city-region) unit needs to possess a combination of *professional rationality* and *social-political meaning*. For *professional rationality*, it means using a defined space that has credibility in statistical, economic and administrative terms; for *social-political meaning*, it needs to be articulated in public policy spheres as a material construct that permeates governance and policy settings.

In Cork, it has accrued *professional rationality* as a formal object of public policy in planning and non-planning settings, and is used in a way that is consistent with its original delineation. The statistical boundary for the metropolitan area established in 1978 has not been altered, and it has since been deployed in multiple settings to articulate various public policy goals. It can therefore be considered as an instrument of governance that has been remarkably versatile and resilient. It is used as both a formal geographical space into which different economic, transportation, infrastructure, environmental policies are constructed, and as a container for land use planning and strategic spatial planning.

As a manifestation of territorial governance, it has also attained significant *social-political meaning*. This has transpired as the idea of Metropolitan Cork has expanded beyond the planning arena. It has entered political and public discourses in a variety of economic, environmental, transportation issues as a representation of the urban region. This relies on a looser understanding of its precise geographical extent; however, it appears to have clear

connotations as a spatial imaginary. Its perception within public/political arenas relates to a space that is larger than the formal and built up, contiguous city, and which captures a representation that relates to the city's functional extent, its hinterland associations, as well as its environmental and landscape qualities. Furthermore, it has also taken on an important role as a spatial metaphor within recent debates about local government reform in Cork. In the five years since the government announced a review of local government structures in Cork, the concept of Metropolitan Cork has become a cornerstone of the discussions – and probably the most influential concept within what was a very prolonged and contentious process. It became part of the everyday language in the discussions about the boundary, and became a regular feature of discussions at central and local government level, within the various statutory processes and amongst the various business and community stakeholders. It also had significant visibility as an object of media and public attention within the extended discussions. This spatial planning concept ultimately became a key part of the political-public discourses on territorial governance in the region. More than this, the concept largely dictated the terms under which this reform process concluded and it actively shaped the outcome. The government in December, 2017 signalled its intention to prepare legislation to give effect to a boundary extension to reflect an enlarged urban jurisdiction; this reflects a manifestation of *metropolitan consciousness* in a dynamic governance setting.

Strategic spatial planning involves dealing with complexity, and as a result deploys methods that encourage what may be termed *spatial-thematic selectivity*. Place-making and place governance, as the substantive and procedural concerns of strategic spatial planning, rely on the assimilation and management of an increasingly intricate array of social, environmental, economic, and political factors. The research would support the view that strategic spatial planning is a response to this complexity, and that it complements rather than substitutes comprehensive, regulatory planning. This style of planning is characterised by a development-oriented approach which intervenes in a more direct and discriminating manner. In the literature, it has been suggested that state selectivity has been a feature of neoliberal governance at state and local levels, exacerbating patterns of uneven development by favouring certain locations over others. However, this research would suggest that national spatial planning activities in Ireland appear to have applied 'spatial selectivity' as a way of promoting regional balance and to counteract uneven

development patterns. In other words, spatial selectivity was applied somewhat indiscriminately.

The research also suggests that at the city-region level, spatial selectivity was articulated quite differently. In the context of this study, it would appear that transformative spatial strategies at the city-region scale generally tend to rely on using a 'small number of big ideas'. This can be translated as prioritising a limited number of high profile interventions that are spatially and sectorally integrative. This manifests itself in large-scale, geographically expansive and often symbolic projects which are designed to reorient territorial trajectories and produce symbolic-political support across broad coalitions. The Cork case demonstrates the potential effectiveness of *spatial-thematic selectivity*, whereby strategic spatial planning produced a limited number of high profile, multi-dimensional initiatives which had clear territorial footprints and strong thematic qualities. These initiatives tended to be integrative rather than exclusionary. This selectivity in spatial and thematic terms facilitated a clear message about the future of the city-region using territorially differentiated initiatives and which secured the mobilisation of a plurality of actors with divergent interests, goals and strategies.

Finally, the research would suggest that in Ireland's post-economic crisis period, and in a broader neoliberal political setting in which the state appears to have shirked its responsibility for managing and sponsoring urban affairs, we see the emergence of *strategic spatial planning as urban governance proxy*. City-regions and metropolitan areas, despite conceptual and political ambiguity, have emerged as key policy spaces, propelled into the fault-line of globalisation and state rescaling. As the basic building blocks of global economies, city-regions have been transformed as agents of neoliberalism to fulfil an important role within global capitalism, and strategic spatial planning has been central to this discourse.

The 'region city' conceived by Patrick Geddes as a way of understanding and analysing cities and the 'central place /urban field' conceptualised by Walter Christaller to provide a deeper functional understanding of economic behaviour, are the foundations for contemporary interpretations of the city-region. In the Post-Fordist era defined by deregulated, flexible and re-scaled local and regional economies, urban areas have assumed greater importance as economic and functional spaces. This is accompanied by

new entrepreneurial paradigms and the exploitation of urban competitiveness of the city-regional scale in economic development. Linked to this, the prioritisation of territory as part of the general shift within economic-environmental realms of public policy means that planning has been positioned right at the centre of the place governance agenda. As a result, the concept of urban governance becomes an important concern as part of territorial rescaling and local government reform. In Ireland's case, these external forces which generally appear to enhance the importance of the local/urban scale have encountered a series of opposing political and institutional pressures. Reform of planning and local government spheres, for instance, has followed a particular trajectory, with decision-making and structures of government becoming increasingly centralised, and the formal competencies of local government have been further constrained. Therefore, the capacity of cities and city-regions to manage their affairs and navigate their way through what is a complex and multi-scaled social, political and economic landscape can actually be quite limited.

Despite this, cities and city-regions are expected to become *engines* of national economic growth, *drivers* of regional development agendas, *containers* for articulating sustainable development initiatives and *places* in which issues of social justice, livability, and environmental quality are to be accommodated. Cities, therefore, as part of the contemporary rhetoric of development and public policy, appear to have much more responsibility, but far fewer formal powers. Cork, as an illustration, has recently been re-positioned as part of Ireland's spatial structure within the National Planning Framework as a strategic counterbalance to Dublin. It is proposed to increase the city's capacity to fulfil this function through very substantial population and employment growth, generating critical mass, and enhancing its credentials as a metropolitan city of scale and ambition. The government has also recently sanctioned a major administrative boundary reform to reflect a metropolitan governing space, while it also proposes to introduce a directly elected mayor for the metropolitan area. In a post Brexit context, Cork is also expected to fulfil an important international role as a strong and dynamic European city-region, and as the second largest English-speaking city in the European Union. It is expected to respond to these challenges, without any real consideration of its autonomy, resources or governing capacity; Ireland's cities have almost no competencies in infrastructure, transportation, education or housing policy and have very limited financial and legal resources. Whilst

cities in this way are often personified as 'actors', their ability to act, in reality, is severely constrained.

Against this background, this research has identified an important phenomenon. As formal urban governing competencies are reduced as part of a clear centralisation agenda, and with city-regions assuming greater economic responsibilities, strategic spatial planning becomes an arena in which urban governance capacity is exercised. Consequently, strategic and fundamental decisions about urban development, infrastructure programmes and public investment are increasingly considered within the realm of strategic spatial planning - which performs as a substitute for traditional urban government. The discourses of planning in many instances have become the de-facto discourses of the city. Strategic spatial planning episodes, which are increasingly concerned with large scale, fundamental and long-term strategies for city-regions, have become much more than just spatial planning instruments; they incorporate and integrate a wide variety of social, economic, cultural, political and environmental issues as part of cohesive place making strategies. More than this, however, they increasingly resemble urban manifestos, encapsulating the imaginaries of the good city, reflecting contemporary visions about economic prosperity, life quality and sustainability. In this way, cities such as Cork, with very little inherent political and economic autonomy as governing units, look towards these planning arenas as opportunities for exercising control over their own destinies. Hence, we can observe and interpret *strategic spatial planning as urban governance proxy* – where strategic political and economic ambitions are assimilated into spatial policies - formulated with limited regulatory or democratic feedback. Under these episodes of planning, the culture of urban government is being transformed – increasingly being redirected towards the fulfilment of expansionary and growth oriented aspirations expressed as part of the city-region narrative. This is a space where strategic spatial planning and urban governance (and urban government) interacts, and the terms of this relationship represent an avenue for further research. In particular, it would be interesting to explore the dynamics of those interactions and to determine whether it is likely to result in more explicit, integrated territorial agendas within the discourse and practices of urban governance or the appropriation of planning spaces by various economic, political and environmental interests.

The detailed examination of Cork's experiences in this research illustrates the potential of strategic spatial planning at metropolitan and city-region scales to promote an integrated

place-based approach to articulating sustainable development priorities. It also suggests that the arena of planning appears to be an appropriate public policy framework in which these potentially conflicting priorities can be mediated. However, it also draws attention to the disruptive tendencies associated with spatially-blind economic impulses which tend to displace social and environmental priorities. This reflects the foregrounding of growthism as part of a recent transformation in strategic spatial planning, evidence of which has emerged in the empirical studies.

This, however, is not a novel development. For Lewis Mumford, writing in 1961, the impulses of growthism were characterised by what he described as the *Slavery of Large Numbers*. In this enterprise, cities tended to prioritise *aimless giantism* and "…concentrated on quantity, without paying attention to the necessity for regulating the tempo, distributing quantity, or assimilating novelty". In a way, contemporary planning at this scale is in danger of being appropriated as part of an urban governance agenda that perpetuates the concept of aimless growth as the foundation of urban policy. If strategic spatial planning is to serve a place governance agenda that is truly integrative, it will need to reassert its normative credentials as a form of practice and as a mode of public policy.

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