



NUI MAYNOOTH

Gilacól: na hÉirann Mhá Muad

**Theorising neo-liberal reforms and the shifting contours
of local governance in Dublin:**

**A case study on the metamorphosis
of the local partnership model under the
2000-2006 Local Development and Social Inclusion Programme**

Ph.D. thesis submitted by Matthias Borscheid in November 2007
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ABBREVIATIONS

A & CG	Auditor and Comptroller General
ADM	Area Development Management (renamed into Pobal on 11/08/2005)
AIT	Area Implementation Team
ANT	Actor-Network Theory
APC	Area Partnership Company
CBD	City/County Development Board
CLÁR	Ceantair Laga Árd-Riachtanais
CPA	Combat Poverty Agency
CWC	Community Workers Co-op
DCC	Dublin City Council
DoCRGA	Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs
DoE(H)LG	Department of the Environment (Heritage) and Local Government
DoJELR	Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform
DoETE	Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment
DoSFA	Department of Social and Family Affairs
DoT	Department of the Taoiseach
DWS	Developmental Welfare State
ESF	European Social Fund
EU	European Union
FF	Fianna Fáil
FG	Fine Gael
GDA	Greater Dublin Area
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
IPA	Institute of Public Administration
LAB	Labour Party
LAC	Local Area Committee
LDSIP	Local Development and Social Inclusion Programme (2000-2006)

ABBREVIATIONS

MIF	Management Information Framework
NAPS	National Anti-Poverty Strategy
NDP	National Development Plan
NESC	National Economic and Social Council
NPM	New Public Managerialism
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OPLURD	Operational Programme for Local Urban and Rural Development (1994-1999)
PD	Progressive Democrats
PESP	Programme for Economic and Social Progress (1991-1993)
RA	Regulation Approach
RAPID	Revitalising Areas by Planning Investment and Development
R & D	Research and Development
SIM	Social Inclusion Measure
SITF	Social Inclusion Task Force
SMI	Strategic Management Initiative
SPC	Strategic Policy Committee
URT	Urban Regime Theory
VFM	Value For Money

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ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the relationship between contemporary governance restructuring in Dublin and funding arrangements for Area Partnership Companies (APCs) under the 2000-2006 Local Development and Social Inclusion Programme (LDSIP) by means of an empirical case study. It analyses how governance changes and associated impacts on funding arrangements for APCs are experienced, perceived and explained by individuals from different professional and institutional backgrounds. Particular emphasis is placed on the rise of control-focused business-like performance and monitoring practices and their impact on the plans and activities of APCs.

The analysis of empirical material indicates that contemporary neo-liberal policies and practices associated with the Strategic Management Initiative (SMI) have been instrumental in modifying the local partnership model in Ireland and more specifically, the governance framework and practices of APCs. These policies and practices are investigated against the backdrop of three sets of key themes that have been identified based on the review of empirical material: first, the gradual alignment of APCs with the apparatus of the state; second, the design and implementation of accountability procedures underlying the allocation of funding; and, third, the adoption of managerial practices and value-for-money (VFM) criteria for the public sector. This thesis underscores that the re-organisation of the local partnership model has been influenced by the ethos of the New Public Managerialism (NPM), which became a prominent strategy for governance re-structuring in OECD countries throughout the 1990s.

Empirical evidence suggests that the influence of governance restructuring on contemporary funding arrangements for APCs in Dublin facilitated:

- their transition from quasi independent players into a new regulatory framework for local development controlled by the state, and
- their transformation from area-based development models based on the ethos of local partnership and participatory democracy towards service delivery agencies of the state.

The key objective of the research is to investigate the extent to which the theoretical frameworks provided by actor-network theory (ANT), urban regime theory (URT) and the regulation approach (RA) can explain the current design of funding arrangements for APCs in the context of contemporary governance restructuring in Ireland and the associated proliferation of market-led principles and practices. The assessment of the empirical data in the light of the three competing theories suggests that theoretical concepts associated with the regulation approach are best suited to explain the observed relationship between governance restructuring and funding arrangements for APCs during the metamorphosis of the local partnership model in Dublin.

INTRODUCTION

This study examines the extent to which funding arrangements¹ for Area Partnership Companies (APCs) have been affected by public-sector modernisation and related changes in power relationships within Dublin's institutional governance landscape. Moreover, it explores the associated implications for the *modus operandi* of APCs. It is argued that the contemporary governance changes at sub-national level which affect APCs are inextricably linked to national political priorities the origins of which can be traced back into the mid-1980s.

The launch of the *1987-1990 Programme for National Recovery* in Ireland led to a transition of the political system from traditional principles of direct state interventionism or *statism*² towards the development of conceptual approaches leaning on *neo-corporatism*³ and *neo-communitarianism*⁴ (Harvey 1997; Putnam 2000; Atkinson 2002; McCarthy 1999, 2006). Under social partnership, the Irish state system underwent a change from a traditional hierarchical government (in a Weberian sense), where the state is strictly divided into a public and a private sphere, towards a more flexible system of corporatist governance involving groups from civil society in *selected* areas of decision making (Adshead 2003). In Dublin – reflecting international trends towards *neo-liberal*⁵ policies and entrepreneurial planning (Newman and Thornley 1996; Swyngedouw *et al.* 2002) – a variety of partnership-like urban development projects have been established as public-private partnerships between the local authorities and private investors (MacLaran and Williams 2003) or, to a lesser extent, tripartite urban regeneration groups involving community participation (Hogan 2005; Bartley and Shine 2003).

APCs were first piloted in 1991 under the *1991-1993 Programme for Economic and Social Progress (PESP)*. 12 APCs were established in designated disadvantaged neighbourhoods as an area-based response to limitations of the statutory governance apparatus in addressing local symptoms of social, economic and political marginalisation experienced by individuals and households situated at the edge of society (NESC 1990; CPA 1997). The provision of core funding from the European Union (EU) was instrumental in establishing APCs as formally independent

¹ Throughout this thesis, the term *funding arrangements* refers to processes, procedures and protocols that regulate, influence and/or impact on the receipt, the processing and the allocation of funds by APCs.

² Here the term *statism* refers to a social or political system which is characterised by a high degree of state intervention in the field of economic and social policy.

³ A *neo-corporate model* involves the collaboration of actors representing the state, the private sector and civil society with a view to negotiating a national social and economic strategy in response to international economic pressures (Jessop 2000).

⁴ A *neo-communitarian approach* is based on targeting economic development and social cohesion in less competitive areas by means increasingly involving citizens and groups representing the voluntary and community sector (bottom-up approach) (Jessop 2000).

⁵ The terms *neo-liberal* and *neo-liberalism* generally refer to contemporary processes of economic restructuring. At its core, they emphasise the superiority of free markets over statutory regulatory efforts in regards to achieving human welfare (Watts 2000). State interventions, according to neo-liberalism, should be minimal and, if necessary, only of a corrective nature; i.e. the state should only interfere to "constrain private activity to promote public interest only in situations of market failure – where desired goods are not supplied at acceptable prices" (O'Neill 1997: 291).

companies limited by guarantee. By establishing APCs outside the direct control of central and local government, it was intended to increase the scope for innovation in tackling issues related to long-term unemployment and social exclusion in a 'neutral space'; i.e. the approach was based on shared responsibility and ownership among the parties invited to the partnership table. Throughout the 1990s, APCs developed into an integral part of Ireland's landscape of local governance. They operated alongside a variety of quasi-independent, state-funded area-based initiatives and programmes involved in delivering anti-poverty and welfare-related programmes in designated disadvantaged areas that typically suffer from high levels of long-term unemployment and poverty (CPA 1994; Walsh *et al.* 1998; Walsh 1999).

The pilot programme of 12 APCs was extended under the *1994-1999 Community Support Framework*⁶ and 26 new 'second generation' APCs were established in the mid-1990s under the *1994-1999 Operational Programme for Local Urban and Rural Development (OPLURD)*. APCs were encouraged to pursue a bottom-up⁷ approach, which finds expression in the development of programmes utilising local know-how. The focus of the pilot-stages was ultimately directed to developing local responses to long-term unemployment. Programmes, for example, supported local enterprise creation or the development of training and education initiatives to up-skill local people who did not have qualifications to find a job in the (local) labour market. This involved the provision of employment-related advice, outreach activities to engage with those most distant from the labour market, and, moreover, the promotion of attitudinal change and self-confidence (CPA 1994). As the programme continued, the remit of APCs became more diverse. APCs became more involved in information and advocacy campaigns targeted at encouraging a more tailored and co-ordinated statutory service delivery to disadvantaged individuals and providing new opportunities and life chances for disadvantaged groupings such as lone parents, early school leavers or workers in the black economy.

In the course of successive local development programmes⁸, measures increasingly aimed at the initiation of developmental work and capacity building in communities, which have often led to the creation of opportunities to counteract out-migration and infrastructural deficits or address local drug abuse and high levels of early school leaving 'from the bottom up' (OECD 1996; Geddes 1998; Parkinson 1998). It is noteworthy, that the more successful projects were joint initiatives where APCs

⁶ The CSF outlines the utilisation of EU Structural Funds within the corresponding Irish National Development Plan (NDP). Three successive CSFs (1989-1993, 1994-1999 and 2000-2006) were agreed between Ireland and the European Commission.

⁷ Pringle (1999) provides a structuralist reading of the term 'bottom-up' and defines it as the process of designating relatively small areas in order to address specific local needs influenced by the local public opinion, designed to supplement rather than to replace universalist policies of welfare provision. Walsh (1999) describes 'bottom-up', in a more pluralist fashion, as a situation where localities become prime movers in local economic development, linking it explicitly with local economic self-help.

⁸

1. The 1991-1993 PESP
2. The 1994-1999 OPLURD
3. The 2000-2006 LDSIP

managed to negotiate 'buy in' from a variety of different stakeholders: the local residents/communities, businesses, trade unions and – probably most relevant – statutory bodies and politicians. APCs are usually evaluated by their capacity to develop successful approaches to deal with concentrations of poverty, to encourage civil involvement in decision making and to reduce the financial burden of public consumption that curtails the national capacity for growth in more productive areas. As a result of Ireland's economic growth – which raised the GNP per capita above the EU average – Ireland received less structural funds under the 2000-2006 Community Support Framework. Therefore, EU-funding for APCs was discontinued in 2000. As a result, APCs became entirely dependent on exchequer funding under the *2000-2006 Local Development and Social Inclusion Programme (LDSIP)*⁹. This funding dependency facilitated state-led governance restructuring directed at the harmonisation and integration of state-funded local development initiatives and local government systems (cf. Borscheid 2005). It is argued that a growing emphasis on workfare principles in welfare restructuring (NESC 2005; Murphy 2006) and an increasing focus on public-sector modernisation under social partnership propelled plans to streamline local development bodies under the LDSIP encompassing the wider framework of governance restructuring (Government of Ireland 1997; NESC 2002b, 2002a; Boyle and Butler 2003; McCarthy 2006). For example, the NESC report *The Developmental Welfare State* provides a policy framework that refers to APCs as a mechanism which complements an interlocking system of service provision, income supports and activist measures (cf. NESC 2005: 156):

Their [i.e. APCs'] mission today can be expressed as seeking to improve the inclusiveness of Ireland's labour market by appropriately supplementing or influencing active labour market policies at the national level so that more of their clients in deprived areas can access Ireland's stronger economy (NESC 2005: 189)

Contemporary measures of welfare restructuring and public-sector modernisation both aim at coupling the value of public spending with quality outcomes through promoting a 'professionalisation' of individuals and structures throughout the statutory governance apparatus. The experience of APCs in Dublin is examined here to illustrate the extent to which the new managerial ethos of stepping up the performance of the governance system has permeated the *modus operandi* of state-funded local development companies through funding arrangements.

There is some evidence that funding dependencies facilitate the re-positioning of APCs in accordance with centrally-devised key principles of governance restructuring (Bartley and Borscheid 2003). Funding arrangements for APCs need to be seen as part and parcel of the contemporary reorganisation of Dublin's governance landscape

⁹ The LDSIP is the third local development programme (see Chapter 2). Similar to the targets of its predecessors, the LDSIP's key objectives are the development of local strategies and programmes from 'the bottom up' (see above) that counter social and economic disadvantage of individuals and groups in designated disadvantaged areas and neighbourhoods. Under the 2000-2006 National Development Plan (NDP), € 279.34 Million has been allocated to the LDSIP to support 38 APCs, 33 Community Groups and 4 Employment Pacts (cf. ADM 2002).

and associated principles emphasising value for money for state-funded services and activities. In the context of this study, the concept of value for money is based on Power's definition (Power 1997), which consists of the triad of fiscal efficiency (optimising the cost-benefit ratio such as the costs of placing a number of individuals into training measures), procedural effectiveness (substantive impacts of funded activities such as the improvement of quality of life of individuals that underwent training) and organisational economies (the generalised economic returns yielded such as the optimisation of the quality of management and professional work practices) (see Chapter 1, Section 1.4.1, Table 1.1). It is argued that state-promoted governance restructuring based on value-for-money driven agendas and performance-oriented funding arrangements have had considerable implications for the *modus operandi* of APCs.

More specifically, it is argued that the proliferation of managerial practices and associated changes in governance led to funding arrangements for APCs which facilitated the design and implementation of cost-efficient, outcome-oriented and innovative local participatory bottom-up approaches aimed at ameliorating social polarisation and spatial fragmentation. The comparative use of three competing theoretical frameworks will provide specific entry points for investigating forces that shape funding arrangements for APCs. In summary, the main rationale of this study is threefold:

- first, it analyses to what extent the in-depth empirical data from the case study can establish links between the funding arrangements of APCs and identified key concepts of public-sector modernisation such as *institutionalisation*¹⁰, *accountability*¹¹ and *value for money*¹² (VFM);
- second, it illustrates power geometries that are influential in determining the role of APCs within Dublin's governance system;
- third, it explores the extent to which the theoretical frameworks provided by concepts such as actor-network theory (ANT), urban regime theory (URT) and the regulation approach (RA) can account for governance-induced changes in the funding arrangements of APCs – i.e. it seeks to identify which theoretical framework is most suitable to explain the empirical findings gathered in the local case study.

¹⁰ Throughout this study, the term *institutionalisation* refers to processes of intensifying formal linkages between Area Partnership Companies and public sector/statutory administration.

¹¹ A variety of definitions for the term *accountability* exist (e.g. Sullivan 2003). Throughout this paper, *accountability* is usually used as a two-pronged concept. *Accountability* consists of: (a) a reciprocal vertical component that refers to the need of APCs and their political sponsors to give account to one another on the one hand, and to be held to account by their constituents, on the other; (b) a horizontal component that refers to the nature of inter-stakeholder arrangements among players who are responsible for locally progressing the work of APCs (see Chapter 6, Section 6.3).

¹² This study uses the definition of value for money provided by Power (1997). The concept of VFM consists of three indicators: economy, efficiency and effectiveness (see Chapter 1, Section 1.4.1, Table 1.1).

These three theories were selected because they have been widely applied by theorists, scholars and political analysts to describe and explain power configurations in governance in OECD countries (Hubbard *et al.* 2002). In brief, ANT argues that what we perceive as established structures – such as institutions – consist of a variety of human and non-human entities each of which can potentially exert influence on one another and, moreover, have the capacity either to enrol other humans and things into ‘their’ network or, alternatively, exclude them from being part of it. It has frequently been deployed to analyse processes concerning institutional (e.g. Law 1997) and social (e.g. Murdoch and Marsden 1995) power structures. URT is a concept developed in the U.S. (Stone 1989). It specifically focuses on how powerful alliances in cities achieve a capacity to govern. URT argues that power necessitates the informal combination of resources and incentives among key stakeholders from the public sphere, the world of business and other sections of civil society. The RA is mainly concerned with (statutory-led) interventionist measures geared at overcoming economic crisis situations which are part and parcel of capitalist production processes. The RA sees urban governance arrangements as a means to stabilising existing power structures tailored to sustain the current societal economic mode of wealth creation and buffer adverse social consequences that could endanger political stability and, hence, economic prospects. The three theories are discussed more comprehensively in Chapter 3.

On the grounds of the literature reviewed, it is assumed that ideas and principles from the regulation school are more likely to provide an appropriate explanatory framework for the characteristic features of funding arrangements of APCs in the context of local-governance restructuring in Dublin than the conceptual approaches provided by ANT and URT. In order to test assumption, a methodological strategy based on the ‘null-hypothesis approach’ is employed here¹³. This sets out to ascertain if the conceptual ideas provided by ANT and URT are better suited, in the first instance, than the RA to explain and account for the design of funding arrangements for APCs in the light of processes that are associated with governance restructuring in Dublin. This involves testing if the theoretical frameworks provided by ANT and URT exceed the explanatory potential of the RA in accounting for the processes shaping funding arrangements for APCs in Dublin. If this is found not to be the case, then the RA, following the proposed null-hypothesis approach is, by default, accepted as the most successful theoretical approach.

The study is divided into eight chapters: Chapter 1 discusses relevant literature as a backdrop for the analysis of the material and data gathered in the empirical research

¹³ A null hypothesis is a statement about a research parameter based on an assumption that evidence can prove something as true. A null hypothesis is put forward with a view to disproving it and, at the same time, validating an alternative hypothesis (H_A). In this case the alternative hypothesis (H_A) reads as follows: the RA is better suited to explain funding arrangements for APCs that are associated with governance restructuring in Dublin than ANT (e.g. University of Glasgow n.d.; Nickerson 2000). This is an approach that follows Karl Popper’s falsification principle (cf. Alemann and Forndran 1990).

on APCs. The literature review suggests the existence of parallel trends between international and Irish developments in governance restructuring, the modernisation of the state apparatus and the role of area-based local development initiatives therein. The chapter is broken into three distinct but thematically interconnected sections. Part 1 underlines a co-dependency between the increasing importance of cities for economic activities and societal cohesion as the latter is considered a backbone for political stability and, hence, economic potency. Part 2 looks at the reasons for the establishment of, and role for, area-based approaches to local development in the context of the institutional framework of the EU. It also discusses the experience of APCs in building relations involving stakeholders from the state and civil society. Furthermore, it illustrates potential systemic power imbalances within the conceptual design of APCs and draws attention to their role in complementing national economic growth and competition policies. Part 3 underscores that the international proliferation of entrepreneurial urban governance and new approaches to welfare re-structuring have been accompanied by policies promoting a better use of fiscal resources within public administration, which have also come to affect local-governance systems, including APCs in Dublin.

Chapter 2 stresses contemporary challenges for APCs in Ireland. It describes their gradual transition from area-based pilot projects that were initially situated at arms-length distance from public administration into permanent structures of the institutional framework of governance. It describes key features of APCs and outlines their role within the broader framework of state-restructuring under social partnership, which was introduced as a remedy in response to social and economic decline in 1987. The chapter also addresses key objectives of APCs, institutional dependencies within the governance framework, the nature of principal funding arrangements and both the organisational structure and working models of APCs. Moreover, it summarises advantages and drawbacks of the area-based approach. Reflecting on the literature reviewed, this chapter points towards a causal relationship between (a) policies promoting a leaner and more efficient statutory apparatus and (b) the use of funding and accountability arrangements for APCs as a means to facilitate the harmonisation between national plans for restructuring governance and the remit of APCs.

Chapter 3 introduces actor-network theory (ANT), urban regime theory (URT) and the regulation approach (RA) as three competing theoretical frameworks within which the empirical findings may be situated. These theories are frequently applied in mapping power relations in urban governance scenarios. As each theory offers a different perspective on the research object, the key concerns and weaknesses of the theoretical approaches are discussed. This chapter points out the strengths and weaknesses of each theoretical framework in regard to their potential to explain influential factors and forces shaping funding arrangements of APCs in Dublin's changing governance landscape. Part 1 of the chapter introduces the three theoretical frameworks. It briefly addresses (a) key principles concerning their views on the

emergence of power configurations, (b) their conceptual weaknesses and (c) their relevance for the analysis of evolving governance structures influencing APCs in Dublin. Part 2 provides a more detailed examination of the capacity of the three theoretical perspectives to facilitate, and give conceptually grounded direction to, empirical case research in the changing institutional environment within which APCs are situated. It highlights the potential of the three analytical frameworks for exploring the nature and evolution of power relationships and their instrumental role in (a) governance restructuring generally and (b) more specifically, their effects on the funding arrangements of APCs. Following examples from the literature, it is argued that the three theoretical frameworks provide distinctly different perspectives on policies and practices designed to promote public-sector modernisation and governance restructuring. Reflecting on the conceptual theoretical shortcomings outlined in the first part of this chapter, the second part highlights how specific notions and undercurrents within each theoretical framework can be utilised to help explain the design of contemporary funding and accountability arrangements for APCs in a changing landscape of urban governance in Dublin.

Chapter 4 details the methodological approach deployed for assessing local-governance restructuring and its repercussions on funding APCs in Dublin. Following the review of processes associated with (urban) governance modernisation and the role of area-based policies as a form of targeted welfare (Chapter 1 and 2), it is argued that the re-alignment of the relationship between the state and government-funded APCs is facilitated through the adoption of business-like New Public Management (NPM)-principles as a template for the SMI-induced public sector reform in Ireland. Three sets of key criteria serve as a surrogate measure to ascertain the extent to which the three broad theoretical perspectives provided by ANT, URT and the RA (Chapter 3) can account for the NPM-inspired evolution of governance and its implications for funding arrangements for APCs. The design of the empirical investigation focuses on:

- processes associated with the gradual institutionalisation of APCs
- characteristic features of the prevailing accountability and monitoring system to control APCs; and
- the growing emphasis on assessing the use of resources of APCs against value-for-money criteria.

This affords the opportunity of a focused in-depth assessment of complex processes that occur at the interface between state-funded APCs and their political paymasters¹⁴ and the impact of these dynamic processes on funding arrangements. The chapter outlines the chosen research approach and explains why, based on both practical reasons and the nature of the research agenda, a single case-study area in Dublin was selected. After briefly situating the work of APCs within contemporary developments in urban governance in Dublin, a short description of the case study

¹⁴ In this study, state-funded local development structures/agencies usually refer to companies that are core-funded under the LDSIP.

area serves to illustrate the fragmentation of Dublin in terms of affluence and deprivation and provide a snapshot of the socio-spatial context within which APCs operate. Subsequently, the approach towards the generation of data and information through interviews and secondary data sources is delineated. The data generation is mainly based on interviews with individuals from APCs, Area Development Management (ADM) and Dublin City Council (DCC) and affiliated parties and, therefore, mainly captures perceptions of professionals and officials involved in promoting, implementing, mediating and/or adapting to state-initiated initiatives of governance restructuring in Dublin under the LDSIP. In addition, the inclusion of views from individuals working in the local community sector and government officials serves to highlight and illustrate commonalities, challenges and discrepancies in viewpoints:

- between locally identified concerns and priorities for the state-funded local-development sector as defined within the sphere of policy-making and public administration; and
- between professionals from APCs and both individuals working in the local-development sector and senior officials placed at central positions within public administration.

Chapter 5 provides a profile of the case-study area. This is to illustrate the nature of disadvantage that prevails in parts of suburban Dublin addressed by APCs. It also serves to highlight the severe nature of local problems associated with social and economic deprivation. Quotations from comments made by local activists and community workers are used to underline the extent and the structural experience of poverty. This adds a qualitative dimension to the quantitative assessment of disadvantage based on census data. The incorporation of qualitative data not only complements the profile obtained by census data but also illustrates the magnitude of the challenges faced by the local APC.

Chapter 6 investigates the practices associated with the institutionalisation and incorporation of APCs into the statutory apparatus, the design and implementation of accountability procedures and guidelines regulating the allocation of funding and the promotion of value for money-driven performance measures. The analysis looks at the material reviewed and the data gathered. The overall objective is to tease out perceptions, attitudes and opinions of a variety of individuals from different institutional and professional backgrounds that are either involved in, or affected by, processes designed to intensify the degree to which APCs work collaborate with public administration. Empirical data is discussed with a view to:

- eliciting tensions and trade-offs occurring at the collaborative interfaces between key actors involved in local decision-making processes;
- shedding light on perceived impacts of state-initiated efforts to modernise governance systems in the context of economic pressures associated with the constraints of economic of globalisation;

- assessing to what extent the two aspects above are mediated through funding arrangements and associated accountability and performance-monitoring systems.

Chapter 7 summarises and highlights conceptual ideas rooted in ANT, URT and the RA vis-à-vis the findings from the analysis of the data. It reflects on the key findings from the case study outlined in Chapter 6 with a view to providing an assessment as to which of the three competing theoretical frameworks employed in this case study can most appropriately account for the changes moulding the relationship between urban governance re-structuring and APC funding.

Chapter 8 summarises the main findings and makes final observations in regard to the implementation of business-like policies promoting public-sector modernisation and governance restructuring, on the one hand, and a vision of an innovative local-development sector that is capable of complementing these policies without sacrificing principles of participatory local decision making, on the other. It draws conclusions concerning the NPM-inspired governance transition experienced by APCs under the LDSIP and how this was facilitated through the creation of resource dependencies via the funding mechanism. This chapter also comments on the employment of the three theoretical frameworks in the Dublin context and discusses the potential of this study to contribute to a more theoretically-based orientation in empirical research.

1. LITERATURE REVIEW

1.1 Introduction

This thesis sets out to analyse the impact of a growing emphasis in policy and practice on good governance and associated financial accountability and performance-oriented monitoring systems on funding arrangements for Area Partnership Companies (APCs) in Dublin under the 2000-2006 Local Development and Social Inclusion Programme (LDSIP). Against the backdrop of a *neo-liberal state modernisation*¹⁵, the main objective of this thesis is to carry out a comparative assessment of the potential applicability of three contemporary theoretical perspectives to explicate the design of the funding framework for APCs in an era of changing governance.

In order to carry out an analysis of evolving funding arrangements for APCs, with a particular focus on urban governance restructuring, this study intends:

- to examine changes in urban governance in OECD countries and draw parallels to the situation in Dublin in regard to the promotion of area-based development initiatives;
- to identify key factors that determine the characteristic features of APCs in Dublin and the role they play in urban governance;
- to introduce three competing theoretical frameworks that can explain the role of APCs in Dublin's changing governance landscape: actor-network theory (ANT), urban regime theory (URT) and the regulation approach (RA).

It is argued that an intensification of performance-oriented contractual relationships between APCs and their political sponsors facilitates the design and implementation of effectiveness-oriented actions (outcome) that contribute to better use of resources and enhance the scope for ameliorating symptoms of urban deprivation through local participatory democracy. Moreover, it is theorised that the RA provides a better explanatory framework for the analysis of the empirical data than either URT or ANT for the purposes of an in-depth analysis of the relationship between governance restructuring in Dublin and its implications for funding arrangements of APCs.

Against this backdrop, the overall objective of the literature review is to highlight the relationship between the emergence of area-based approaches to addressing urban deprivation, on the one hand, and international developments in economic

¹⁵ Larner (2003) criticises the undifferentiated use of the term *neo-liberalism* because it is typically used as a concept that represents Anglo-American processes of economic restructuring (for a definition of the terms neo-liberal/neo-liberalism, see page 1, footnote 5). Larner (2003: 509) also underscores that the neo-liberal discussion generally neglects spatial and scalar diversity in regards to the impacts of neo-liberal policies and, moreover, "the *differences* between processes such as deregulation, privatisation and marketisation were rarely discussed" (emphasis added). In the context of state-modernisation, neo-liberal policies find expression in (a) the deregulation of frameworks that restrict entrepreneurial activities, (b) the contractual outsourcing and privatisation of public services and (c) the introduction of business-like governance as the basis for running public services. Having regard to these issues, this thesis on local governance restructuring in Dublin exemplifies the impact of neo-liberal concepts in the Irish context.

restructuring, urban entrepreneurialism and state modernisation, on the other. The discussion of the literature in this chapter contextualises the ensuing interrogation into the current funding mechanism of APCs and associated processes in Dublin's governance landscape. In anticipation of the wide body of literature that deals with contemporary developments in governance, this chapter aims at briefly describing different perspectives, competing views and debates concerning urban governance and state-restructuring within which APCs are situated. The discussion at the beginning of this chapter also serves to frame local practices of APCs at the neighbourhood level in Dublin against the backdrop of the wider factors and conditions that prompted the development of area-based responses to counteract urban processes of spatial, political, economic and societal disintegration that are associated with economic globalisation.

The review is divided into four main sections covering international and European trends concerning the development of area-based approaches as a targeted response to address urban deprivation and the reflection of these trends in the Irish scenario. Part 1 deals with the increasing importance of the economic competitiveness of cities for national economies and the role of social urban regeneration projects therein. Part 2 provides an overview of international developments leading to the promotion of area-based responses in the European Union in the context of the 'bigger picture' of restructuring state-civil society relationships and spheres of economic production. It sketches out the role of APCs within the institutional framework of the state, outlines key objectives and briefly reviews and discusses the experience of APCs in building relations involving stakeholders from the state and civil society. Part 3 outlines the role of market-led public-sector modernisation in restructuring urban governance systems. The first section of Part 3 deals with the international proliferation of the *New Public Managerialism*¹⁶ (NPM) and its core principles. It also discusses the concept of value for money and touches upon its implications for performance monitoring and stepping up organisational performance of stakeholders involved in contemporary governance networks. It is argued that the Irish counterpart to NPM, the Strategic Management Initiative (SMI), was instrumental in progressing institutional restructuring in Dublin. The second section illustrates the implementation of the SMI as the dominant ideological framework for re-positioning APCs within Dublin's governance landscape.

The literature offers different perspectives on issues concerning urban governance. This study interrogates the relationship between changes in Dublin's governance landscape and resulting implications for funding arrangements of local APCs. In particular, it is intended to identify the merits of public-sector modernisation and its potential effects on the work of APCs. In order to get an informed overview of processes shaping urban governance, the literature consulted for this case study

¹⁶ The term *New Public Managerialism* refers to strategies that (a) make the statutory apparatus more responsive to the needs of the citizen and the economy, (b) optimise the use of fiscal income in statutory service-provision and (c) create flexible structures that can address tasks in a less bureaucratic manner (see Section 1.4.1).

draws on publications from the area of business and management studies, public administration and, finally, social and political sciences. Each strand has a different (ideological) standpoint, focus and approach in regard to both the remit of analysis and interpretation of governance-related issues and processes:

- Literature on financial and business aspects of governance typically highlights the importance of market-led organisation of territory and society. Authors from this thematic current usually argue in favour of the deregulation of markets and call for a curtailing of the regulatory powers of the state that interfere with market forces (e.g. Ohmae 1995; Strange 2000).
- Public administration literature takes a more pragmatic stance. Writers tend to focus on the implications of market forces for the re-scaling of governance under current societal conditions in a way that maintains administrative control of society in a citizen/consumer/client/customer-friendly way (United Way of America 1996; White 2001; Lee 2004). In this field of research the emergence of external structural powers driving governance restructuring is typically being dealt with as a *deus ex machina* – i.e. the nature of the politico-economical and social conditions and characteristic features responsible for the formation, stabilisation or alteration of governance are not part of the epistemological interest but treated as a given – and enabling – framework for governance.
- The perspective provided by literature from social and political science offers a multi-dimensional view on governance. In particular, scholars influenced by geographical thinking tend to favour a political-economy approach, which focuses on the relationship between the current logic of global production of goods and services, their spatio-societal impacts and associated implications for multi-scalar statutory regulatory functions (e.g. Peck and Tickell 1994; Brenner 1999; Tickell and Peck 2003; Jessop 2004). The framework provided by the political economy approach stresses the complexity of contemporary urban governance systems. It offers a viewpoint on governance restructuring that takes into account the functional connectivity between urban places through a wide array of interrelated socio-political and economic activities. The regulation approach often provides the theoretical backdrop for scholars analysing governance from the political economy perspective. The particular analysis of local phenomena and detailed processes concerning urban governance restructuring has also been facilitated by concepts rooted in actor-network theory (e.g. McGuirk 2000) and urban regime theory (e.g. Lauria 1997b).

The literature reviewed stresses different views, key themes, perspectives and aspects in relation to exploring contemporary forms of urban governance. Urban governance restructuring does not happen in a vacuum. It occurs in spaces that have been constituted over time and reflect an array of social, economic, political and cultural processes that have had an impact on its current composition. According to Massey (1991), place-specific characteristic features emerge as interplay of 'cause and effect'. That is, local features are a result of a dialectical and multi-layered relationship over

time between the locale and its exposure to external influences. Within this framework a variety of often diametrically opposed vested interests and factors interact, negotiate and bargain in a plethora of inter-institutional and inter-organisational links, networks, fora, partnerships and round-table structures with a view to influencing policy outcomes at various spatial scales, ranging “from the neighbourhood to the globe” (Hubbard *et al.* 2002: 176; cf. Mayer 1992; Rhodes 1994; Swyngedouw 2000). The proliferation of area-based partnerships in Europe and, more specifically, APCs in Ireland, is an integral part of a new multi-scalar model of governance. Against this backdrop, it is argued that a study on the relationship between local-governance restructuring and funding arrangements for APCs in Dublin is best situated within the conceptual perspective offered by scholars and analysts writing from a political geography perspective in an Anglo-European context.

1.2 Context 1: the role of social cohesion in the competitive city

The following discussion serves to position local practices of APCs at the neighbourhood level in Dublin against the backdrop of wider processes that encouraged the establishment of area-based responses to counteract processes of spatial, political, economic and societal disintegration in cities. These processes are associated with economic globalisation – such as the increasing economic importance of cities and regional networks for national economies, the proliferation of entrepreneurial and business principles in running cities and public administration and the re-configuration of statutory welfare delivery in the aftermath of the Keynesian welfare state.

The literature suggests that the emergence and development of entrepreneurial area- and issue-based urban governance systems in an economy is part and parcel of a strategy aimed at securing the economic competitiveness and fiscal solvency of cities. A body of literature has emerged highlighting the paramount role of cities and entrepreneurial strategies in the development of the global economy and the processes of wealth creation and social cohesion within nation states (Harvey 1989; Dunford and Kafkalas 1992; Healey *et al.* 1995; Castells 1996; Harvey 1997; Jewson and McGregor 1997; Lauria 1997b; Hall and Hubbard 1998; Oatley 1998a; Brenner 1999; Urban Studies 1999; United Nations 2001; Antipode 2002; McGuirk 2003a; Moulaert *et al.* 2003). The success of national economies appears to be mainly determined through the ability of cities and their hinterlands either to maintain or create competitive advantage in specific economic activities in order to strengthen their position within a global hierarchy of cities and “become integrated in international networks that link up their most dynamic sectors” (Castells 1996: 381)¹⁷:

The distinct feature of 'competition states' and 'entrepreneurial cities' is their self-image as being proactive in promoting the competitiveness of their respective

¹⁷ In European OECD countries, examples are provided by Hatz (2002) and Redak *et al.* (2003) for Vienna, Lund Hansen *et al.* (2001) and Andersen (2003) for Copenhagen and Collinge and Hall (1997) and Bryson (2003) for Birmingham.

economic spaces in the face of intensified international (and also, for regions and cities, inter- and intra-regional) competition (Jessop 1997a: 28).

From the early 1980s, the emergence of urban entrepreneurialism and the competitive city discourses became manifest in intensified city/place marketing, efforts directed at re-imagining the city, the spread of a variety of economic-driven urban renewal schemes and the promotion of so-called flagship projects (Harvey 1989; Newman and Thornley 1996; McGuirk 2003b; Moulaert *et al.* 2003) – often at the expense of addressing equality aspects and social issues (Brenner 1999; Jessop and Sum 2000; MacLeod *et al.* 2003; McGuirk 2003a). The literature consulted suggests that ‘otherness’ – as for example captured in systemic political, social, economic and cultural differences among nations, regions, cities or neighbourhoods – requires place-specific responses to economic and societal challenges (Massey 1991). Urban case studies in OECD countries reveal that the emulation of successful approaches to secure foreign direct investment (FDI) and related economic activities is dependent on the capacity for adaptability, creativity and flexibility of actors, coalitions or groups at national, city or neighbourhood level (Jessop and Sum 2000; Lund Hansen *et al.* 2001; Swyngedouw *et al.* 2002; MacLaran 2003).

Even though Swyngedouw *et al.* (2003: 2) maintain that “large-scale Urban Development Projects (UDPs) have, indeed, become one of the most visible and ubiquitous urban revitalization strategies pursued by cities in search of economic growth and competitiveness”, case studies indicate that the promotion of micro-area infrastructure – such as local projects at the district or neighbourhood level to counteract tendencies of societal polarisation associated with policies of disinvestment, suboptimal planning and income inequalities – has complemented entrepreneurial strategising (Bartley and Waddington 2001; Bassett *et al.* 2002; Juchelka 2002; Ward 2003). These views highlight that the competitiveness of cities is not only determined through their economic performance, but is increasingly influenced by a successful policy approach to tackle issues concerning poverty and socio-economic marginalisation:

An important criterion of the success of cities, or whether they work, is the existence of social cohesion [...] The achievement of social cohesion is no longer seen as merely a costly redistributive activity but one which contributes to economic competitiveness through the mobilisation of skills, creativity and active citizenship (Oatley 1998b: 3).

Harvey (1997), for example, illustrates the mutually constitutive and repercussive relationship between the existing form and successive construction, development or transformation of urban space and social processes. Following Harvey (1997: 26), the establishment of area-based partnerships in Dublin can be interpreted as a process of reforming governance through “community mobilisation and the transformation of militant particularism” into more moderate forms of civic engagement with the authorities. Harvey also sketches out a dialectical relationship between society and

(urban) space and highlights the importance of more inclusive and participatory systems of decision-making processes at the grassroots level:

The urban and the city are not simply constituted by social processes but are also constitutive of social processes [...] Social processes, in giving rise to things, create the things which then enhance the nature of those particular social processes (Harvey 1997: 23, original emphasis).

Harvey (1997) argues that the issue of social cohesion has emerged on the political agenda because a widening gap in standards of living in societies and increasing relative poverty, with the inherent danger of unwanted forms of community mobilisation and militant particularism, could jeopardise locational advantages. In an earlier paper, he emphasises that "the city has to appear as an innovative, exciting, creative, and safe place to live or to visit, to play and consume in" (Harvey 1989: 9). Jessop and Sum (2000: 2290) point out that "cities can be entrepreneurial [...] also in regard to economically relevant factors that are not monetised and/or do not enter directly into exchange relations". It is in the context of widening social disparities that new models of social and economic urban regeneration were developed.

According to Harvey (1997) economic activity and income generated through economic activity is the basis for the provision of resources and opportunities required to maintain standards of living and adequate levels of service provision. This is particularly visible in the US-American context where, for example, financing public services through tax revenue is overly dependant on income generated from taxing the local private sector. Hence, as mirrored in the debate on city boosterism and growth machines (Peterson 1981; Logan and Molotch 1996), fiscal and systemic pressure necessitates the subordination of welfare issues and the re-scaling of governance systems to policies tailored to attract business into the limits of a particular administrative catchment area (e.g. Stone 1989).

In contrast to the US scenario, the European design of the economic system tries to achieve relatively equal living and working conditions across the national and EU territory as the foundation stone for prosperity. This ethos is captured in EU structural and social policies (European Union 1992; Government of Ireland 2005) and associated redistribution mechanisms. At the same time, however, an intensification of competition for economic activity and growth between nations, regions and cities with adverse effects for less valued competitors can be observed (Moulaert 2000; Dunford and Kafkalas 1992; Swyngedouw *et al.* 2002). The competition for economic activity through the promotion of locational advantages has also led to an increase in the provision of tax incentives and other concessions and the potential of business interests to influence the sphere of politics (Brenner 1999; Punch 2004). There is some indication that EU social and economic policies have been supplemented by business-friendly US-style approaches to local governance (Bartley and Shine 1999), which are mirrored in contemporary efforts to restructure urban governance and the role of APCs therein.

1.3 Context 2: the role of area-based initiatives in the EU

New forms of stakeholder collaboration in urban governance and their constitutional make up were established as a result of new policies that have been applied as a remedy to processes of international economic restructuring and its adverse effects that successively started unfolding in the mid-1970s in OECD countries (Martin and Sunley 1997; Moulaert 2000). This study revolves around the structural forces in urban governance re-organisation that influence funding and performance-monitoring arrangements of APCs.

Special attention is directed at the role public-sector reform plays in increasing the capacity of APCs to optimise the relationship between resource efficiency and procedural effectiveness, on the one hand, and public and local accountability, on the other. It is intended to ascertain to what extent public-sector modernisation has added value to the work of APCs in regard to increasing the possibility for facilitating participatory approaches and structures targeted at ameliorating urban deprivation in designated disadvantaged areas.

In Europe, the emergence and institutionalisation of area-based initiatives is linked to EU and national policies directed at balancing unequal growth and facilitating a decentralisation process of statutory powers into horizontally-organised networks of decision making that can take account of and develop responses according to place-specific conditions (Geddes 1998; Parkinson 1998; OECD 2001). The rationale that underpins this section is to outline the role of area-based responses as a response to adverse effects of economic restructuring in designated disadvantaged areas throughout the EU and highlight their potential to induce participatory decision making in the political arena. Geddes (2000: 797) argues that the principle of local partnership "is fast becoming a new orthodoxy across the EU in policies to combat social exclusion"¹⁸. This is relevant because APCs in Ireland and comparable area-based partnership-type agencies in EU member countries have similar structures and agendas as they were established as a result of European anti-poverty measures and structural support programmes designed for designated disadvantaged areas. Urban APC-type agencies throughout the EU pursue similar strategies and experience problems in piloting bottom-up models designed to complement statutory governance systems (ENTRUST 2004).

¹⁸ Broadly speaking, social exclusion refers to situations where citizens cannot exercise a variety of rights – for example, economic, social and political – that are considered normal by members of 'their' mainstream society (Moulaert 2000; Atkinson 2002). The development of a variety of competing concepts, policies and languages of social exclusion clearly represents a departure from income poverty as the principle indicator of 'being poor' and from traditional ways of dealing with the manifestations of multiple forms of deprivation (Sibley 1995; Levitas 1998, 2003). The National Development Plan 2000-2006 (Government of Ireland 1999: 187) defines social exclusion as "the 'cumulative marginalisation from production (unemployment), from consumption (poverty), from social networks (community, family and neighbours), from decision making and from an adequate quality of life".

The reorganisation of statutory structures finds expression in a transformation of the traditional, clearly divided, power symmetry attributing certain tasks, policy instruments and responsibilities to the state, the market and the public into an interacting multi-scalar power-field (Jessop 2004). These new multi-tiered bargaining networks operate on the basis of mutual interest and commitment of expertise and resources. Urban governance coalitions involve various stakeholders from civil society¹⁹ such as business interests, trade unions, (quasi) non-governmental organisations, voluntary and community organisations, charities, religious groups, the mass media and supra-national organisations, agreements or programmes (Goodwin and Painter 1996; Kearns and Turok 2000; Devas 2001). These interest groups usually involve some sort of statutory involvement, be it in terms of individuals and/or funding, but operate at arm's-length distance from the state. Even though new governance forms generally provide a platform for participation of (organised) interests from civil society in decision making within selected political areas, representation and power among those who are involved is not necessarily in balance. Local partnership-type arrangements in cities are portrayed as a complex power-field that is prone to foster competitive and often conflict-laden processes of negotiation, lobbying, collaboration and brokerage (Oatley 1998a), first, among those involved and, second, between those involved and outsiders who want to be included (Hambleton 2000).

1.3.1 The emergence of area-based approaches to local development in the EU

Before area-based approaches became a prominent policy tool to tackle local deprivation in Ireland and other OECD countries, the employment of positive territorial discrimination through local development initiatives and programmes had long been applied in the U.S. and the UK. According to Pringle (1999), the failure of universalist welfare policies to cater for the needs of people experiencing poverty led to a more targeted approach to welfare provision. Following developments in the US, in the late 1960s and early 1970s, the UK government addressed local manifestations of poverty through area-based schemes such as the designation of Educational Priority Areas (EPAs), General Improvement Areas (GIAs), Community Development Projects (CDPs), Housing Action Areas (HAAs) and Comprehensive Community Programmes (CCPs) (Pringle 1999: 265; cf. Bound *et al.* 2005; Maguire and Truscott 2006).

The establishment and institutionalisation of local area-based policies in Ireland throughout the late 1980s and early 1990s mirrors efforts in OECD countries to improve the governability of society in an era of economic globalisation that increasingly produces socio-economic and spatial inequalities (Geddes 1998; Parkinson 1998; Moulaert 2000). Area-based development agencies became a prominent tool of welfare intervention in EU member countries to regulate the juxtaposition of market interest and societal well-being through more democratic, citizen-friendly and "softer forms of steering the economy and society" (Knill and

¹⁹ Johnston (2000: 84) defines civil society as "Those segments of a capitalist society which lie outside both the sphere of production and the state".

Lenschow 2003: 1). This often involves an outsourcing and/or spreading of responsibilities from the state to civil society. New agencies effectively function as a regulatory tool and ideally work alongside the authorities to identify new ways collaboratively to address symptoms associated with structural inequalities in society (Newman and Verpraet 1999; COM 2001; Moulaert *et al.* 2003). APCs are tasked to follow an approach of 'trial and error' and develop innovative pilot projects that can stimulate cross-sectoral networking, consensus-building, integration and institutional learning. Thereby it is intended to overcome both local (indigenous) and, in the medium run, wider (external) structural (e.g., bureaucratic, political, economic) obstacles considered responsible for the conditions that led to the establishment of APCs in the first place (OECD 1996).

APC-type organisations in Europe operate in geographically confined areas identified as lagging behind in terms of "factors such as lack of adequate education, deteriorating health conditions, homelessness, loss of family support, non-participation in the regular life of society and lack of job opportunities" (Geddes 2000: 783; cf. Parkinson 1998; OECD 2001; Walsh and Meldon 2004). They have most commonly been commissioned to address issues related to equality of working and living conditions, urban renewal, economic development, unemployment, environmental issues, health, crime, welfare-services, and active citizenship. As the main objectives of the EU are geared towards "economic and social progress which is balanced and sustainable" (European Union 1992: 5), it is understandable that the omnipresence of area-based partnership companies in the landscape of European governance is inextricably intertwined with expressed concerns about social cohesion as a foundation stone for political and economic stability (Geddes 1998; Parkinson 1998; COM 2001; OECD 2001; Knill and Lenschow 2003; Parkinson 2003). Geddes (1998; 2000) summarises findings of an extensive European research project on local partnerships in ten EU member states:

While there is a degree of rhetoric in this, partnership is being introduced not only into the language, but also into the structures, practices and processes of EU policy-making as a key part of the attempt to counterbalance fears of fragmentation with notions of integration, and as a means of mobilizing agencies and actors behind economic and social policy goals. A local partnership approach has become a standard feature of many EU programmes and initiatives, including the LEDA programme to promote local economic development, the URBAN initiative aimed at deprived neighbourhoods in cities, the LEADER I and II programmes for rural development, the Poverty 3 programme, aimed at the integration of the most excluded social groups, and the so-called Territorial Employment Pacts (Geddes 2000: 784).

The wide range of actions addressed by APCs (see Introduction) calls for strong internal and external networks of collaboration among partners and interest groups (Rhodes 1994). According to Fukuyama (1999), these forms of working together are based on reciprocity and are often passed on through tradition or path-dependent networks of trust. The design and promulgation of both formal and (even more so) informal institutional forms of local (internal) and extra-local (external) cross-sectoral

collaboration between key stakeholders differ considerably from former statutory interventionist approaches designed to bridge ideological and operational divides between the state, the market and civil society (e.g. Knill and Lenschow 2003).

These multi-dimensional forms of collaboration often hinge upon a series of reliable networks, functional interfaces and accountability systems that are based on credible commitment from the stakeholders and, in particular, from the political paymasters and local authorities involved (Geddes 2000; Considine 2002)²⁰. The main ingredient for success appears to be the capacity of the local partnership to draw all relevant stakeholders into a meaningful working relationship as to combine institutional, political and economic power. In this environment, communities tend to be overly reliant on their own social capital²¹ and the capacity of professional APCs to engage with a variety of powerful individuals, agencies, organisations and businesses with a view to mobilising resources, know-how and clout that is required for the pursuit of local social and economic development of disadvantaged neighbourhoods (Bartley and Saris 1999; Purdue 2001)²².

1.3.2 Spaces of participation

A principal strategy towards achieving inclusive and collaborative working arrangements is the construction of networks involving relevant stakeholders through brokerage. Brokerage is often associated with, or regarded as a form of lobbying. It is usually an effort to motivate and cajole interest groups and stakeholders for the development of local projects, measures and actions representing those local needs and wants, that are in line with the agenda given to local APCs (Chapter 2, Section 2.3.2). The crux of addressing spatial manifestations of multiple inequalities through area-based approaches, however, seems to be the translation of partnership rhetoric into action. Atkinson (2002: 787) points out that, first, "it takes time and requires considerable resources to empower local partnership coalitions and communities to participate in a manner that gives them a genuine input into the policy process", and, second, that "an increased role for citizens/communities in the policy process poses a challenge to traditional forms of decision making and service delivery by public bureaucracies". Raco and Flint (2001) illustrate the conflict-laden and often competitive relationship between local partnerships and local authorities. The key

²⁰ Even though local partnerships across the EU differ in relation to their remit, composition and integration into representative democratic systems, they usually represent multi-stakeholder interests involving – to a varying degree – local authorities, trade unions, employers, public representatives and community interests (Geddes 2000).

²¹ Social capital is a contested concept: following Grootaert (1998: 2), throughout this thesis social capital is used to refer to "the set of norms, networks, and organisations through which people gain access to power and resources, and through which decision making and policy formulation occur" and their contribution to economic growth. According to Grootaert, this definition is, for example, broader than Putnam's focus on social capital. Putnam (1993) regards social capital as a form of horizontal civic engagement between individuals that is focused on having an effect on the productivity of the community.

²² Moreover, getting commitment from powerful actors and the governing elites appears to be more difficult in economically and politically weaker neighbourhoods where communities are under-resourced to engage in successful negotiation and involvement (cf. Purdue 2001).

issue frequently surfacing in state-civil relations is the question of whether partnership-type agencies, as government-appointed and state-funded bodies, should be allowed to interfere with and challenge local authorities. The answer probably lies in the new challenges to the governability of society. Traditional bureaucratic structures such as local authorities were often considered not flexible enough to develop tailor-made strategies that can respond to place-specific local developments (e.g. COM 2001). Yet resistance from within the establishment led to turf wars and power struggles that limit the scope of local partnerships to stimulate more effective and inclusive governance (e.g. Flynn 2000). This appears to be facilitated by an interplay of various factors such as bureaucratic inertia, resistance to change, a complex self-perpetuating institutional dynamism of the statutory apparatus and long-established forms of behaviouralism and attitudes towards outsiders (i.e. individuals that are not considered 'stable-mates' or do not have a 'public servant pedigree'). As a consequence, co-operation often depends on goodwill and informal one-to-one relationships.

1.3.3 Institutional integration

The launch of *European Governance: A White Paper by the Commission of the European Communities* (COM 2001) addresses a variety of issues associated with the proliferation of multi-level governance structures. The Commission argues for "greater institutional integration of both a vertical and horizontal nature" across the gambit of actors involved in governance issues (Atkinson 2002: 783):

The White Paper proposes opening up the policy-making process to get more people and organisations involved in shaping and delivering EU policy. It promotes greater openness, accountability and responsibility for all those involved (...) by following a less top-down approach and complementing its policy tools more effectively with non-legislative instruments (COM 2001: 3-4).

On the one hand, partnership structures discussed here are designed to respond to local concerns and facilitate the sustainable social and economic re-organising of 'local space' through principles associated with participatory democratisation 'from below' and social inclusion²³. On the other hand, there is some indication that undue heavy-handed enforcement of institutional codes of practice and new public management standards are taking the upper hand over principles of innovation and democratic experimentalism (Geddes 2000; Rouillard and Giroux 2005). For example, the proliferation of business-like audit and performance-monitoring measures, detailed legally-binding contractual arrangements and competitive bidding processes for the allocation of resources to local partnerships are often geared towards the achievement of tangible short-term goals (Flynn 2000; Considine 2002; Elliott 2002). The following question arises: does the pursuit of financial efficiency and the introduction of

²³ The principle of social inclusion as an overriding term is not undisputed. Levitas (27-28/03/2003: no page numbers) for example argues that the concept is meritocratic in nature as:

- a) it stresses "opportunities for people to climb out of poverty, not the abolition of poverty itself. Inclusion does not necessarily imply a redistributive agenda";
- b) it divides society into two camps of insiders and outsiders, the latter of which includes the marginalised, dysfunctional individuals that pose a problem to societal well-being.

business-like professional ethics (Schwartz 2004) discourage or encourage the pursuit of community-based empowerment and institutional learning?

The inclusiveness and accountability of partnerships is particularly relevant in the context of social exclusion. There is, again, a growing body of research which indicates the tendency in many local partnerships for excluded social groups, even when these are the 'targets' of the partnership's activity, to be marginalized within partnership processes (e.g. Chanan, 1992, 1997; McArthur, 1995; Madanipour *et al.*, 1998), raising serious questions as to the effectiveness of participatory mechanisms of partnership, and whether 'partnership governance' reinforces rather than reduces processes of exclusion (Geddes 2000: 787).

Even though the concepts of governance and partnership suggest a more democratic or participative approach to political decision-making processes, some scholars argue that the scope for transforming group-specific interests effectively into policy depends on the ability of actors to shift the power-symmetry towards their own agenda and, moreover, have the capacity to take responsibility for their actions (Stone 1989; Mayer 1992; Kearns and Turok 2000):

This horizontal or pluralist style does not mean, however, that these local negotiation systems are necessarily open to democratic influence. On the contrary, the participants may form an exclusive group, and only selected interests may be represented (Mayer 1992: 260).

The ability to become a member of an 'exclusive circle', in turn, is determined by certain factors that attribute weight to the agenda being pursued. The literature suggests that the agenda-setting process is influenced by:

- "the nature of the relationship among stakeholders at certain political and economic conjunctures" (Devas 2001: 394);
- formal and informal modes of communication; and
- both the social capital (e.g. the quality of networks available) and economic resources (bargaining capacity) that can be brought to the table (Kearns and Turok 2000; cf. Stone 1989; Raco 2000; Purdue 2001).

1.3.4 A brief discussion of area-based initiatives in OECD countries

Case studies from OECD countries reveal that local partnership-type organisations involved in governance restructuring or public-sector modernisation are faced with systemic weaknesses that effectively reduce their capacity to become 'movers and shakers' in stimulating structural changes and influencing established power relationships in a substantial way (Oatley 1998a; Geddes 1997, 1998, 2000; Parkinson 1998; Kearns and Turok 2000; Raco 2000; Devas 2001; Medd 2001; OECD 2001; Purdue 2001; Raco and Flint 2001; Considine 2002; Scott and Thurston 2003; Lerner and Craig 2005). Some of those systemic obstacles that reduce the potential of APC-type organisation are: fiscal pressures that lead to a subordination of social to labour-market policies (which often results in a focus on welfare-related service delivery and labour-market disadvantage); a lack of concerted vertical and horizontal policy co-ordination between different levels of government, public administration and statutory service-delivery agencies; difficulties to devise a mechanism that can bring together, and motivate, a multitude of relevant and committed stakeholders; overly bureaucratic

reporting, monitoring and accounting procedures that result in administrative deadweight; the prioritisation of output-oriented short-term goals and objectives that prevent genuine grassroots participation and the process-oriented actions that are required for local developmental and capacity-building initiatives work within disadvantaged communities.

Taking into consideration the *raison d'être* and the wider institutional environment within which local partnerships are embedded, the question arises as to whether or not these local bodies with limited resources and very limited influence on the political economy can meet the high expectations associated with their role as strategic brokers, namely:

- to counteract spatial fragmentation and socio-economic polarisation;
- to encourage shared commitment and networked (cross-sectoral) collaboration of stakeholders from different institutional and other backgrounds; and
- to promote democratic governance by means of stimulating mainstream institutions support and institutionalising models of best practice that have been developed on the ground through participatory forms of democracy.

In the pursuit of successful governance structures to secure governability of increasingly complex relations between the state, the economy and civil society, critical voices describe area-based multi-stakeholder APC-type agencies as a complementary model, assisting the modernisation of classical top-down regulatory policies (Mayer 1992; Peck and Tickell 1994; Harvey 1997). It is argued that the experimental character of these relatively new structures limits their capacity to instigate meaningful change on the structural environment within which they are embedded (e.g. Swyngedouw 2000), mainly because they are institutionally anchored and ideologically controlled by political paymasters who:

- first, pursue economically-guided imperatives based on entrepreneurial strategies and the promotion and introduction of managerial practices;
- second, still operate and delegate from within relatively inert and inward-looking bureaucratic structures that are slow to react to innovation (e.g. COM 2001) and, furthermore, “notably in the most heavily centralized countries” (Le Galès 1998: 482) are not likely to welcome and be responsive to challenges regarding their authority and procedural behaviour from non-elected or appointed bodies ‘from below’ (Raco and Flint 2001).

This seems to be an anomalous situation because area-based development initiatives have been promoted from within government administration as a means to facilitate the resolution of legitimacy problems of the state in issues concerning fiscal solvency and societal restructuring in an era of increasing global competition for resources (see above and cf. Rhodes 1994). It appears that the prevailing concept of local APC-type development agencies needs to be re-visited as the first step towards the development of a workable and new *modus vivendi*.

Urban case studies on governance scenarios stress that the following factors are profoundly important in determining the institutional capacity of local partnership coalitions to progress towards the implementation of initially agreed (joint) objectives (Stone 1989; Murdoch and Marsden 1995; McGuirk 2004):

- the creation of meaningful incentives for commitment that goes beyond passive membership;
- the removal of systemic policy blockages that prevent inter-agency collaboration and institutional learning;
- the building of effective and transparent relationships that link the complex interfaces between the stakeholders involved.

The material reviewed here shows that the flow and organisation of power in restructuring contemporary state-civil society relationships through APC-type agencies does not seem to be optimally orchestrated. Case studies point out that often, a deficient 'interlocking' systemic compatibility between state-led structures and local APC-type companies is aggravated by an ideological friction among stakeholders involved concerning the envisaged *modus operandi* of area-based development agencies. It is indicated that this prevents concerted support for multi-stakeholder collaboration and, furthermore, limits choices for pursuing participatory involvement at the local level. Contemporary forms of inter-sectoral networking, co-operation, coordination and collaboration appear to be overly dependent on the social capital and professional expertise gathered under the umbrella of local APCs, on the one hand, and the good will of key individuals from within the statutory apparatus, on the other (Himmelman 2002; Pobal 2006a). The literature reviewed stresses that the modernisation of the public sector has been rolled out to APC-type agencies in order to facilitate the effectiveness of collaboration within less hierarchical forms of state-initiated multi-stakeholder governance arrangements. More transparency in decision making, shared responsibility and accountability should increase the potential for participatory planning and policy making. Some authors highlighted that business-inspired institutional codes of practice governing collaborative arrangements do not always seem to take into account the local realities faced by APCs.

Against this background, it is argued that the introduction of new managerial practices has also been instrumental in shaping funding arrangements and institutional practice in Dublin. This study explores funding arrangements for APCs in the context of contemporary institutional re-structuring of Dublin's governance landscape. It seeks to assess to what extent performance and accountability systems associated with public-sector modernisation have facilitated the scope for participatory decision making among stakeholders involved in addressing urban disadvantage, moreover, to make judgements on their contributions to adding value to the work of APCs. Therefore, it is considered crucial firstly to outline the background and characteristic features of public-sector reform, both internationally and in Ireland.

1.4 Context 3: the role of public-sector reform

New forms of entrepreneurial governance and welfare re-structuring have been paralleled by business-like modernisation of bureaucracies based on the ethos of New Public Management (NPM) (Flynn 2000; Considine 2002). NPM promotes a better use of fiscal resources within the statutory apparatus vis-à-vis outcomes achieved. NPM-principles were also rolled out to state-affiliated/-funded local partnership arrangements in urban governance to maximise the use of resources available to promote participatory forms of community mobilisation and local democratisation (e.g. Newman and Verpraet 1999; Atkinson 2002). The following sections sketch out the background and key principles of NPM and their role in public-sector reform.

1.4.1 International developments: the New Public Managerialism

The anticipation of various challenges in managing the newly-emerging complex landscape of state-led governance in a situation of tight budgets, growing economic and fiscal pressures and the associated social and political challenges led to a new order of public-sector organisation and regulatory arrangements in OECD countries throughout the 1990s (Desai and Imrie 1998; Clarke *et al.* 2000a; Flynn 2000; Hambleton 2000; Butler and Collins 2004; Rouillard and Giroux 2005). According to Considine (2002: 22) “the public services of many advanced systems have been reinvented according to a new orthodoxy that requires enlarged management prerogative as a means to induce higher outputs. Input controls, precedent, and due process are consequently viewed as a source of organizational rigidity (Lane; Osborne and Gaebler; Walsh)”. The thinking underlying this new order is widely associated with the concept of New Public Management (NPM), which can be understood as a means “to make the state more entrepreneurial” (Power 1997: 43; cf. Osborne and Gaebler 1992; Clarke *et al.* 2000a; Bislev *et al.* 2002):

The dimension of this ‘new order’ includes the pursuit of efficiency over other objectives, the division and dispersal of functions with the focus on intra-organisational goals, and the propagation of perspectives which regard social and political issues as technical and/or procedural matters, that is, matters to be ‘managed’ (Desai and Imrie 1998: 635-636).

Originating in the USA, the UK and New Zealand, practices borrowed from the private sector functioned as a template for fiscal policy reform and restructuring public service delivery in increasingly dispersed service-related governance systems in OECD and other market economies (Clarke *et al.* 2000a; Flynn 2000; Butler and Collins 2004). Even though Clarke *et al.* (2000) stress that NPM is not a sharply-defined concept, Bislev *et al.* (2002) provide a useful working framework (cf. Hambleton 1998)²⁴:

[NPM] [...] points to three significant new demands that pervade most versions of it: *responsiveness* – making the state systematically responsive to citizens; *efficiency* – measuring and minimising the amount of resources consumed by the public sector in producing its results; and *liberalisation* – changing government structures in the direction of more variation in organisational forms, systematic

²⁴ In the UK context, Hambleton (1998) talks about the emergence of a new managerialism as a contract-based mechanism that tries to straddle a market-led re-institutionalisation of the bureaucratic landscape with democratic empowerment models. In that way public service delivery was expected to cope with and respond to external pressures originating in the economy and in the public domain.

decentralisation, and a measure of privatisation (Bislev *et al.* 2002: 200, Footnote, original emphasis).

The pursuit of managerialism in public administration is guided by the key principles of reducing costs through optimising internal economies – as a predominant feature of managerial reforms – and, concomitantly, shifting decision-making capacity from civil servants into the political arena (Flynn 2000)²⁵. Public-sector modernisation went hand in hand with a controlled move away from ‘rowing’ (i.e. the direct service provision by the state) towards ‘steering’ (i.e. the management of service provision by the state) (Osborne and Gaebler 1992; Considine 2002). The new managerial approach involved the contractual out-sourcing of services that had formerly been centrally provided by the state: private sector interests, public-private partnerships or state-funded special-purpose bodies (‘quangos’) such as APC-type local development initiatives became increasingly involved in the delivery of public services and carrying out planning duties on behalf of the public sector, whilst the managerial powers were retained in the centres of statutory administration.

Power (1997) observes that these trends have been accompanied by an audit explosion²⁶, which was a response to a more institutionally and legally complex governance system that needed monitoring. The focus of the new auditing culture for an extended multi-stakeholder approach to service delivery rests on measuring value for money (VFM) or ‘best value’. Value for money is mainly measured on the basis of what Power (1997) calls the ‘The Three Es’: *economy*, *efficiency* and *effectiveness*. These terms are explained in Table 1.1 below.

Table 1.1: Value for money (the 3 Es)

Indicator	Explanation
Economy:	Accountability for obtaining the best possible terms under which resources are re-acquired.
Efficiency:	Accountability for ensuring that the maximum output is obtained from the resources employed or that a minimum of resources are used to achieve a given level of output/service.
Effectiveness:	Accountability for ensuring that outcomes conform to intentions, as defined in programmes.

Source: Power (1997).

²⁵ Flynn (2000) critically argues that the emulation of business-inspired managerial practices in the public sector is often resisted, and challenged, by powerful alliances within public bodies subject to change. The resistance is based on a culture of beliefs, a specific mindset and/or attitudes among public servants concerning their own perception of how to best conduct their profession. Replacing long-established codes of behavioural practices, organisation of bureaucratic procedures and career paths by performance monitoring based business principles may either not be welcomed or considered not feasible (or both) by individuals placed within public administration under current modes of bureaucratic organisation (cf. Knox 2002; Butler and Collins 2004).

²⁶ The term ‘audit explosion’ refers to an exponential increase in the circulation and implementation of a plethora of centrally developed financial accountability mechanisms and performance-monitoring indicators.

Flynn (2000) notes that efforts to create an output-oriented budget – which is based on value-for-money principles – requires adequate (i.e. market-principled) measurements of success. These are however, particularly difficult to develop for agents of public service delivery:

[...] managerial control through measurement and specification either of outputs (the volume of work done) or outcomes (the results) in the absence of a measure of value, raises arguments about what should be measured and how that becomes part of the debate about who should control the work (Flynn 2000: 42).

The issue at hand is the inadequate design and application of financial and performance auditing tools that cannot represent the totality and value inherent in contemporary process-oriented, client-focused and quality-driven organisations (e.g. Elliott 2002)²⁷. Power (1997: 120) concludes that NPM-related auditing “tends to dominate evaluation and [...] tends to be measured in terms of *auditable outputs*” (emphasis added). Instead of stepping up organisational performance, the pursuit of outcomes can also have rather perverse effects as, for example, auditees may decide to develop strategies effectively contesting monitoring and evaluation mechanisms they consider ill-designed for appropriately capturing their performance:

New motivational structures emerge as auditees develop strategies to cope with being audited; it is important to be seen to comply with performance measurement systems while retaining as much autonomy as possible (Power 1997: 13)

International examples and case studies indicate that the new managerial thinking became influential in restructuring contemporary public service delivery welfare:

The New Public Management has championed a vision of public managers as the entrepreneurs of a new, leaner, and increasingly privatized government, emulating not only the practices but also the values of business (Denhardt and Denhardt 2000: 549).

Furthermore NPM was developed into a prominent policy tool directed at aligning procedural workings of non-statutory multi-stakeholder partnerships to business-like modes of practice exercised in public administration. Different approaches to NPM have been applied, refined and extended to all spatial and political levels across the range of new governance structures that vary according to local conditions (Desai and Imrie 1998; Flynn 2000; Considine 2002; Townsend and Townsend 2004; Rouillard and Giroux 2005; Roberts *et al.* 2005; Page 2006). For example the OECD report *Local Partnerships for Better Governance* refers to the role of APCs as a governance tool that facilitates “greater efficiency in resource allocation and better co-ordination of actions” and that, moreover, “can help complement market outcomes and the redistribution function of the state” (OECD 2001: 107).

The introduction of new managerial practices in Ireland is mirrored in the Strategic Management Initiative (SMI), which brought about a new orientation towards a business-like provision of public services across government bodies and the gamut of

²⁷ “It is one thing to assess performance against certain standardised outputs to which it should conform [...] and quite another thing to assess the impact or outcomes (unintended as well as intended) of performances, including those which comply to the given standards” (Elliott 2002: 501)

grant-receiving or contract-based actors occupying the space of local governance in collaboration with – or on behalf of – the state.

1.4.2 The Irish case: the Strategic Management Initiative

International developments described in the previous section show that public-sector modernisation is inextricably connected with the political objective of securing fiscal solvency and not endangering economic opportunities and competitiveness through social consumption. Economic interest groups in Ireland have been lobbying for stronger pro-growth economic policies and an even more 'enabling' statutory regulatory framework²⁸. Some examples that illustrate the move towards a "New era in corporate governance" (Harney 27/11/2001: no page numbers) include the increasing role of public-private partnership arrangements in both planning and service provision, the transferral of significant powers from government departments to industry or sector-specific regulators²⁹, and the development of key indicators and Regulatory Impact Assessments (RIAs) as a guidance for government interventions concerning the private sector, the third sector (i.e. the Community and Voluntary Sector) and public services (Forfás n.d.; DoT 2004)

It is argued that contemporary urban governance changes in Dublin reflect international trends in public-sector reform. Under the current local development programme, APCs have increasingly become the subject of auditing and performance-monitoring procedures and institutional changes that are directly linked with the Strategic Management Initiative (SMI). As it is argued that public-sector reform has had positive knock-on effects on the operational and procedural effectiveness of APCs, it is considered crucial to highlight the origins and key objectives of the SMI, which is the Irish response to international trends of economic restructuring and associated societal and political repercussions on the competitiveness of the national economy.

The SMI was initiated by the Department of the Taoiseach (DoT 1996; Ahern 07/11/1997; Bartley *et al.* 1999; DoELG 2000) with a view to creating a business-friendly, cost-effective and more professional public sector (McCarthy 2006). The SMI "was largely born of the social partnership experience" (McCarthy 1999: 18). It complements a wider trend of the deregulation and privatisation of statutory companies and services that had been on the political agenda in Ireland since the mid-1980s. It was launched in February 1994 by the then Taoiseach, John Bruton, T.D. (FG) (Teahon 1997).

²⁸ For example, a press release announcing the launch of the Business Regulation Forum Report on 25/04/2007 had the following headline: '*Reducing administrative pressures could save business in Ireland €500 million annually*'. The report states that "the administrative and regulatory burden on Irish business is perceived to be too high and affecting Ireland's competitiveness in the international economy" (DoETE 25/04/2007: no page numbers) and calls for a further reduction of red tape for Irish businesses.

²⁹ Such as the establishment of the Competition Authority (1991), the Office of the Director for Corporate Enforcement (2001), the Financial Regulator (2003), and the Irish Auditing and Accounting Supervisory Authority (2003).

In summary, the key objectives of the SMI are as follows:

- to deliver an “excellent service to the customer” (Teahon 1997: 55);
- to maximise the potential of the public service to contribute to national (economic) development; and
- to guarantee an efficient and effective use of resources.

Once the strategic thrust and the core areas of the SMI had been developed by a group of senior civil servants³⁰, representation from the social partners was selectively invited to become involved in working groups preparing detailed programmes for implementation (Teahon 1997; OECD 1997). The philosophy of the SMI is captured in two influential reports. *Delivering Better Government* (DoT 1996) and *Better Local Government* (DoELG 1996) outline the agenda towards a leaner public sector and functioned as a template for decision makers. In the foreword of the former report, the then Taoiseach John Bruton, T.D. (FG), relates the necessity for public-sector rationalisation to economic pressures:

In an increasingly competitive environment, a flexible, efficient and effective Civil Service is essential. It is vital that we have an Irish Civil Service geared to meet the challenges this country faces. [...] A more results and performance oriented Civil Service is essential. Rigorous systems of setting objectives and managing performance need to be put in place to support this. Civil Servants must be clearly rewarded for good performance and take responsibility for poor performance, within a structure that emphasises teamwork within and between Departments (DoT 1996: Foreword).

Better Local Government was drafted by the co-ordinating group of secretaries³¹. It sketches out a general vision for modernising the public service that has been inspired by public-sector management in New Zealand and Australia (DoT 1996; cf. MacSharry and White 2000: 90). Bartley *et al.* (1999) suggests a variety of influences on governance restructuring in Dublin from the UK, the Netherlands, and the US – with a particular influence of linkages with twin cities. However, public-sector modernisation in New Zealand, which “was heavily influenced by North American management theories from the mid-1980s” (Bartley and Shine 2003: 160), has probably left the biggest mark on Irish governance reform:

The move towards new public management styles [...] has drawn heavily upon the Strategic Management Initiative disseminated by the Co-ordinating Group of Secretaries in the Department of the Taoiseach. Their report, *Delivering Better Government: A Programme for Change for the Irish Civil Service* (May 1996), was drawn from their experiences of (and subsequent report on) the New Zealand system of government. The material of their report was collected in connection with a joint project prepared as a part of a dedicated MSc Class for Assistant Secretaries³² in Trinity College Dublin in 1993/94 (Bartley *et al.* 1999: 19).

³⁰ Political analysts suggest that this highly influential role of public servants in the sphere of policy making seems to be an integral part of Irish policy (Murphy 2002; Adshead 2003; Bartley and Shine 2003) – a phenomenon, however, that is not confined to the Irish experience. Flynn (2000: 36) states that “it is not always politicians who launch managerial changes. In some countries (for example, the Netherlands, Finland and Sweden) public management reform has been shaped and fuelled largely by mandarins rather than by ministers”.

³¹ The group was formed by, and consisted of, senior civil servants from various departments and offices (see Appendix 1, Table A-1.2).

³² See Appendix 1, Table A-1.3.

Taoiseach Bertie Ahern, T.D. (FF), in his opening address to the 1997 National Conference of the Institute of Public Administration (IPA), commented on the structural changes in the public service as a proactive way to create favourable economic development conditions 'from the inside out':

We are experiencing a time of significant change in the way government does its business [...] It is interesting to note that the impetus for change comes not only from external sources. I believe that within the civil and public service there is a strong commitment to, and indeed a thirst for, real and lasting change (Ahern 07/11/1997: no page numbers).

Outlining the merits of the SMI, former Taoiseach John Bruton, T.D. (FG), illustrated the link between public sector and national competitiveness in his opening address to the to the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) Conference on the 10th of September 1998:

The cost of the civil and public service, the extent and cost of Government programmes, and the combined effects of these on the economy, and its competitiveness in particular, require that financial management systems be comprehensive, be effective, and ensure that value for money is achieved (DoT 1998: no page numbers).

In June 1998, as part of the SMI-related programme for the renewal of local government (DoELG 1996), central government established the interdepartmental *Task Force on the Integration of Local Government and Local Development Services* (hereafter Interdepartmental Task Force; see Appendix 1, Table A-1.4). The members of the Interdepartmental Task Force wrote reports that propagated the merits of vertically and horizontally integrating local government with the existing multi-agency system operating in various local development initiatives. The Interdepartmental Task Force was chaired by Noel Dempsey, T.D. (FF), the then Minister for the Environment and Local Government. In December 1998, the Interdepartmental Task Force produced its first report *Task Force on the Integration of Local Government and Local Development Services* (DoELG 1998), the so called *Dempsey Report* (Bartley *et al.* 1999). Minister Dempsey outlined the objectives of the report as follows:

The [Dempsey] report sets out a framework under which local government and the local development agencies, including area partnerships, county enterprise boards and LEADER groups, will by a series of steps operate in an integrated fashion. The framework will set the local development agencies continuing to report to their relevant Government Departments; in the case of area partnerships, the Department of Tourism, Sport and Recreation; county enterprise boards, the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, and Leader groups, the Department of Agriculture and Food. Implementation of the report's recommendations will be overseen by the task force. The task force will shortly be consulting with the four pillars under Partnership 2000, with local government and local development interests, as regards implementation (Dáil Éireann 21/10/1998: no page numbers).

The report develops concrete recommendations on how to successfully put local-authority reform into practice and sets out the core principles of local government reform:

The ultimate vision guiding this exercise is that of an integrated local government / local development system which builds on the experiences and strengths of both systems (DoELG 1998: no page numbers).

More specifically, the objectives for local government reform outlined in the report are as follows:

- to increase the scope for local participation;
- to move from a clientelist to a customer-driven service orientation³³;
- to focus on efficiency in terms of value for money and improved vertical and horizontal co-ordination with other stakeholders in local development; and
- to develop new funding arrangements in order to create an enabling budget for local authorities.

In essence, the Interdepartmental Task Force emphasised that the highly fragmented area of local development needed two basic ingredients that were considered imperative in order to make local development compatible with the value-for-money-driven agenda of the new public managerialism as the ideological core of public-sector reform. First, a co-ordination “of Government business at local level” (DoELG 1998: 31) and, second, efficient channels to facilitate mediation between national policy and the local level. One of the principal objectives for the SMI was to introduce a new governance system that is able “to minimise functional and territorial overlaps” between organisations and to “greatly increase effectiveness of State Agencies and local and community activities at local level” (DoELG 1998: 29).

The efforts of the Interdepartmental Task Force culminated in the Local Government Act 2001 (Government of Ireland 2001), which sets the framework for governance restructuring. It gave way to, and backed up, the institutional restructuring of Dublin's governance landscape that had profound implications for APCs. The White Paper *Regulating Better* (DoT 2004) outlines the government's vision for public-sector modernisation. It names six core principles that should foster the creation of a business-friendly and competition-oriented governance framework that plays an enabling role for job creation and economic growth (cf. Government of Ireland 2005).

The objectives of local government modernisation, restructuring governance and promoting better regulation – as outlined in the reports by the Coordinating Group of Secretaries, the Interdepartmental Task Force and the White Paper *Regulation Better* – are targeted at improving the relationship between inputs, understood as resources dedicated to the implementation of government programmes, and the benefits for participants or strategic partners in maintaining economic competitiveness (i.e. outcomes). The reports of the Interdepartmental Task Force focus on geographically and structurally aligning the state-funded local-development sector with local

³³ In the context of public service provision, the term *client* is associated with a paternalistic dependence of the individual on the public servant whereas the term *customer* suggests that public service is tailored to meet the needs of the individual (Hambleton 1998).

government to achieve better synergies between the statutory apparatus and the state-funded local-development sector and, effectively, better cost-effectiveness³⁴.

For example, the NESC report *Achieving Quality Outcomes: The Management of Public Expenditure* (NESC 2002a) emphasises the key role of the Department of Finance, and even more so of the Comptroller and Auditor General (C & AG), in ensuring the implementation and monitoring of key principles of the SMI³⁵. The Comptroller and Auditor General (C & AG) started issuing *Value for Money Reports* in 1994. The 1999 report on APC-type structures funded under the 1994-1999 Operational Programme for Local Urban and Rural Development (OPLURD) highlights the necessity for the introduction of cost-effective measures and outcome-orientation of activities of local development agencies funded by the state. The modernisation of the statutory administrative apparatus in Ireland is well-documented in the publications by the IPA³⁶.

1.4.3 Summary

Contemporary developments in regard to streamlining local-governance structures can be interpreted as a strategic goal of central government that responds to economic pressures anticipated by policy makers. The re-shuffling of responsibilities and a re-organisation of the local development arena is targeted at an 'optimisation' of the interaction and interfaces between the state and civil society (i.e. between the state and both business interests and civil society) and the internal organisation of government. The emphasis on value-for-money principles added a new dimension to traditional performance-monitoring practices.

The ethos of the SMI is clearly captured in the documents drafted by the Interdepartmental Task Force (NESC 2002a; Ó Broin 2003). These documents set the framework for launching an economically-driven re-structuring of governance that equally affects local authorities, government departments and state-funded local development organisations such as APCs. The SMI promotes the infusion of business-inspired managing and performance-auditing systems into the public sector as a measure underpinning national (economic) competitiveness.

Table 1.2 from the *United Way of America* website illustrates the chain of translation from financial resources invested (input) into a societal dividend in form of less social

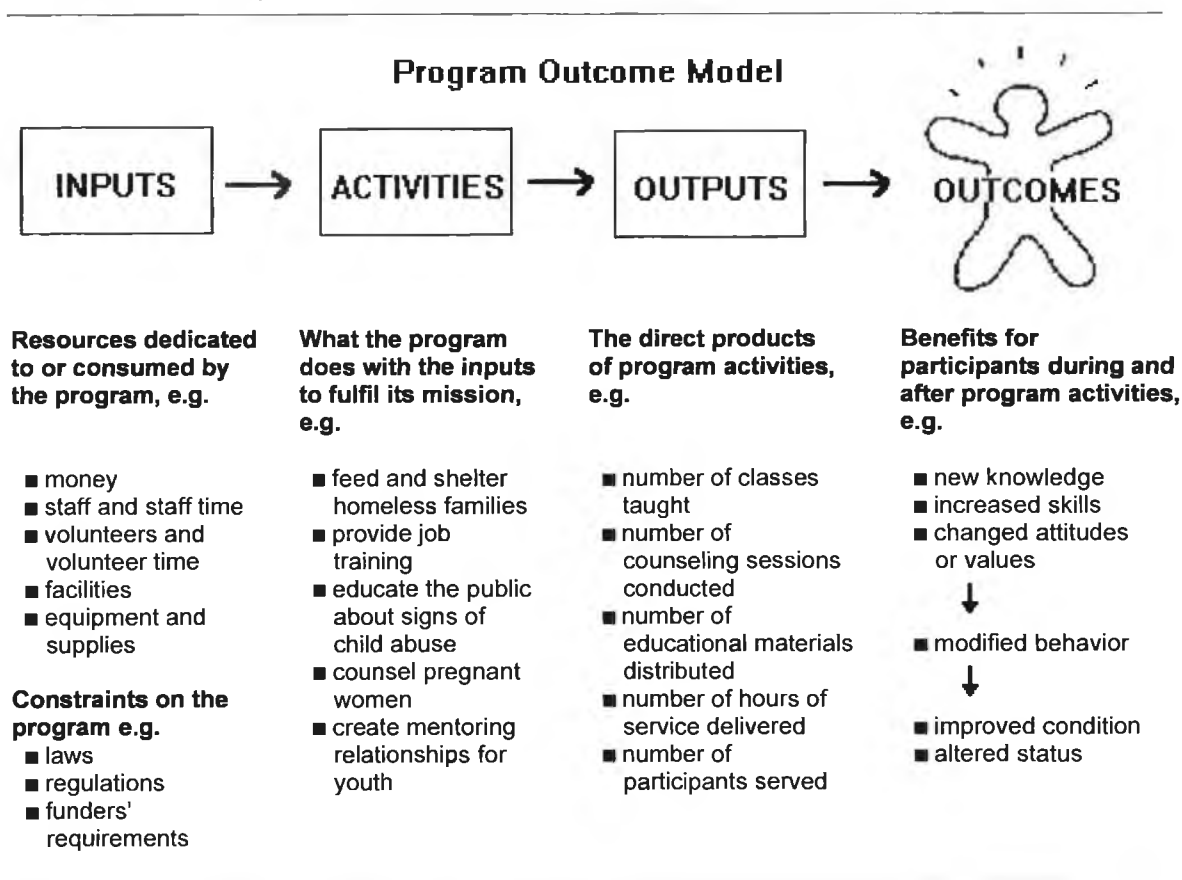
³⁴ The Interdepartmental Task Force was critical of APCs' contributions to influencing mainstream programmes and policy-making at national level (DoELG 1998; Turok 2000).

³⁵ The Comptroller and Auditor General has to make sure the finances are used in "accordance with the approval of the Oireachtas" (NESC 2002a: 78) and "to conduct, on a discretionary basis, examinations of the economy and efficiency of operation of the organisations that are audited as well as examinations of the adequacy of management systems that are in place to enable public agencies to appraise the effectiveness of their own organisations" (ibid.).

³⁶ Particularly working papers by Richard Boyle on the impacts of public-sector reform on the community and voluntary sector (Boyle 2002c, 2002b, 2002a) and reports led by Boyle, which look at the review on local government reform (e.g. Boyle *et al.* 2003), the role of government and key stakeholders (Boyle 2004) and the development of performance indicators in the civil service (Boyle 2005).

deprivation or higher potential of economic competitiveness (outcomes). Efforts to put these principles into practice can be illustrated by institutional changes in the field of local development in Dublin, in general, and the APCs, in particular (Chapter 6, Section 6.2). It is imperative, however, to understand the reasons and processes that led to the conceptualisation and institutionalisation of APCs. This will be dealt with in the following chapter.

Table 1.2: From inputs to outcomes



Source: United Way of America (1996).

2. AREA PARTNERSHIP COMPANIES IN IRELAND

2.1 Introduction

Throughout the EU, area-based approaches were set up to address shortfalls in governance relating to societal challenges such as economic decline, unemployment and social polarisation through a collaborative approach between government and interests groups from civil society (see Chapter 1, Section 1.3.1). The processes that contributed to the establishment of Area Partnership Companies (APCs) in Ireland and that had a bearing on their further development are well-documented in national (NESC 1990; CPA 1994; Walsh 1996; CPA 1997; Walsh 1998; Walsh *et al.* 1998; Kirby and Jacobson 1998; Bartley *et al.* 1999; Bartley and Saris 1999; Pringle *et al.* 1999; Turok 2000, 2001; Bartley and Borscheid 2003; Haase and McKeown 2003) and international publications (OECD 1996; Geddes 1997, 1998, 2000; Parkinson 1998; ENTRUST 2004; OECD 2005a, 2006, 2007).

This chapter contextualises the role of APCs within the wider institutional framework of the national governance model of social partnership and sheds light on the local partnership model as a local complementary measure for addressing policy challenges related to statutory employment policies and welfare services. Furthermore, it describes key functions, institutional dependencies, funding arrangements, the organisational structure and working models of APCs and, finally, discusses contemporary challenges concerning their role in governance. It is hoped to clarify how APCs are envisaged to address institutional and administrative weaknesses within the Irish governance system "while taking into account local needs" (OECD 2001: 107).

2.2 Area Partnership Companies within the national governance framework

National economic restructuring processes in the aftermath of the oil crisis and an accelerating international division of labour in the 1970s caused a decline of industrial activities, particularly in the traditional manufacturing sector³⁷. As a result, structural unemployment, social consumption and related expenditures increased dramatically, which soon threatened the state with bankruptcy (Walsh *et al.* 1998; Clarke *et al.* 2000b; MacSharry and White 2000; Ó Riain and O'Connell 2000; Kirby 2002). By the early 1980s, massive public overspending, heavy borrowing, high-peak emigration levels, mass unemployment and, in terms of EU standards, high levels of social consumption combined with persistent poverty led to comparisons of Ireland with so-called third-world countries or the 'Poorest of the Rich' (The Economist 1988). The NESC³⁸ report *A Strategy for Development 1986-1990* (NESC 1986) outlined possible scenarios for improving public finances and keeping inflation in check. The report laid

³⁷ This had detrimental effects on traditional working class areas throughout the country and is well documented for the inner city of Dublin (e.g. MacLaran 1999; Punch *et al.* 2004).

³⁸ The National Economic and Social Council was established in 1973. NESC's role is "to advise the Government on the development of the national economy and the achievement of social justice" (NESC 2004: no page numbers). Moreover, NESC is an organ for people from various backgrounds with an interest in the national economy and social justice to exchange their views (*ibid.*).

the foundation stone for the first national partnership agreement, the 1987-1990 Programme for National Recovery (cf. NESC 1990; McCarthy 1999; MacSharry and White 2000; Cradden and Roche 2003; Jacobson *et al.* 2006).

The NESC suggested focusing on the creation of a socially-acceptable business-friendly environment for the Irish economy that is also beneficial for the majority of employees (Ó Riain and O'Connell 2000). The NESC recommendations became manifest in a series of consecutive multi-annual national partnership agreements between government and the social partners (employers, trade unions and farming organisations)³⁹. Apart from other commitments concerning a variety of policy areas (Callanan 2003), the most prominent measures of the agreements were directed at stipulating competitive labour costs for the employers (moderate corporate taxes and wage increases for the work force) and increasing the take-home pay for the majority of pay-as-you-earn (PAYE) employees.

Social partnership became the paradigmatic governance model underpinning the unprecedented Irish economic development process of the 'Celtic Tiger' throughout the 1990s (The Economist 1997; Allen 1999; Sweeney 1999; MacSharry and White 2000; Nolan *et al.* 2000; Kirby 2002, 2004; Murphy 2002; Cradden and Roche 2003; Jacobson *et al.* 2006)⁴⁰. By the early 1990s, however, despite high levels of out-migration functioning as a pressure relief valve to increasing levels of unemployment⁴¹, staggering unemployment remained prevalent (Wood 2000)⁴². The persistence of social exclusion in so-called 'poverty black spots' with long-term unemployment rates of up to 50 per cent and more led to the establishment of APCs (NESC 1990; Kirby and Jacobson 1998; Walsh *et al.* 1998; Pringle *et al.* 1999) as a local version of social partnership (McCarthy 1998; Teague and Murphy 2004).

³⁹ 1987-1990: Programme for National Recovery (PNR)
1991-1993: Programme for Economic and Social Progress (PESP)
1994-1996: Programme for Competitiveness and Work (PCW)
1997-2000: Partnership 2000 for Inclusion, Employment and Competitiveness (P2K)
2000-2003: Programme for Prosperity and Fairness (PPF)
2004-2005: Sustaining Progress (SP)
2006-2016: Towards 2016 (T16)

⁴⁰ Often heralded as foundation stone for the success of the Celtic Tiger economy (The Economist 1997; Sweeney 1999; MacSharry and White 2000), a number of analysts do not agree on the achievements attributed to the introduction of national partnership model. The model received both sympathetic and more extensive criticism for being overly dependent on foreign direct investments and, moreover, for neglecting aspects of social equality (Breathnach 1998; Kirby and Jacobson 1998; Allen 1999; Glebe 2000; Haughton 2000; Ó Riain and O'Connell 2000; Wood 2000; NESC 2002b; IDA Ireland 2004; Kirby 2004).

⁴¹ In economic terms, out-migration is an externalisation of costs from the state (i.e. costs involved in either providing a job, training or welfare transfers) to the emigrant (social and financial costs of moving abroad). In Ireland, emigration has long been an efficient regulative force to labour-market fluctuations. However, even though migration patterns probably slightly ameliorated effects of crises, it could not compensate for the scope of structural inadequacies in national job-supply in Ireland.

⁴² Unemployment rates in Ireland for selected years: 1988: 16.3 per cent; 1990: 13.1 per cent; 1992: 15.3 per cent (Wood 2000)

2.2.1 The introduction of APCs as a pilot project

In 1990 the National Economic and Social Council (NESC) proposed to employ multi-sectoral area-based programmes in those 'black spots' that actively encourage involvement from local communities (Central Review Committee 1991; Walsh 1999; Bartley *et al.* 1999)⁴³:

The Council recommends that the other policies in this report need to be complemented by a radical approach to the problem of long-term unemployment using targeted special employment measures. [...] Evidence suggests that concerted, intensive, programmes in small areas, containing elements of housing and environmental improvement, as well as retraining and employment schemes and 'outreach' health and educational projects, can have an impact over and above the separate effects of individual programmes. Furthermore the more closely involved are communities in the planning and delivery of area-based projects, the more they will reflect local needs and priorities. [...] In the Council's view, the very high priority which it attaches to tackling the problems of long-term unemployment must be operationalised by devoting resources to it (NESC 1990: 17-18).

But central government action did not respond to such calls for greater participatory democracy and joined-up measures as a way to combat issues related to long-term unemployment until "in 1991 the EU took action by 'going in the backdoor' behind central government" (Bartley *et al.* 1999: 25). The establishment of APCs was facilitated by "criticisms from the EU and other quarters about the narrow (economic growth) focus of the first national partnership programme" (Bartley and Borscheid 2003: 234).

Also, the availability of funding based on EU social and regional policy cannot be underestimated and is strongly associated with the establishment and continuation of APCs as a player in local governance (McCarthy 1998)⁴⁴. Apparently, at last, the EU was effectively 'twisting arms' by means of providing funding incentives and thereby overcame central government's inertia to change. In the end, an alliance of progressive Irish forces (i.e. individuals with the power to induce change in decision-making fora) and pressure from the EU – coupled with the central state's determination to maximise the withdrawal from EU structural funds – gave way to the launch of APCs in Ireland (Bartley and Saris 1999)⁴⁵.

⁴³ Before the establishment of area-based responses, poverty had long been recognised as a structural phenomenon in Ireland. Between the 1960s and 1980s, in a supplementary effort to counterbalance perceived deficits in government social and economic policy, a diversity of mostly fragmented and under-resourced community development initiatives and models were called into being. The availability of statutory funding in the 1970s and 1980s to community development initiatives was very much subordinated to labour-market policies (Ó Cinnéide and Walsh 1990), which continued to be the key focus of state-funded anti-poverty measures.

⁴⁴ Under the 1991-1993 PESP and the 1994-1999 OPLURD, the EU provided 75 per cent of the core funding for Area Partnership Companies.

⁴⁵ The pilot of APCs under the PESP and their institutionalisation under the OPLURD did not happen based on consensus. APCs were established "partly to supplement local authorities because of their narrow range of functions, inward-looking culture and bureaucratic style of operation (Walsh, 1998)" (Turok 2000: 5). However, local authorities saw partnerships as competitors, as quangos without democratic legitimacy, not as partners. The local authorities did not come to terms with the fact that relatively autonomous state-funded agencies were operating within the territory of local government. The need for a closer coordination of activities between partnerships, state agencies and the local authorities was highlighted in the Interdepartmental Task Force Report (DoELG 1998),

According to Parkinson (1998: 15) the key role of EU funding in establishing APCs “only reinforces the view that the partnerships are something of an alien import”. Pdraig O hUiginn, then Chairman of the Central Review Committee⁴⁶ (CRC) (Appendix 1, Table A-1.1) that monitored the early stages of the partnership approach, gave the following reasons for establishing APCs:

For some time now it has been clear that we have not as a community succeeded in transferring progress made on some fronts into effective measures to reduce the extent of, and hardship caused by long-term unemployment. This area partnership initiative will range from developing skills and self-confidence to devising more relevant training and education and will focus on increasing access to existing job opportunities and on creating new sustainable jobs (Central Review Committee 1991: 1).

Following the initial recommendations of the NESC (1990) 12 APCs were established in designated disadvantaged areas (8 in urban and 4 in rural areas) as a pilot project under the 1991-1993 Programme for Economic and Social Progress (PESP), the second national partnership agreement:

The proposed strategy will be area based, will have local communities as the primary [sic] movers, will integrate the various existing initiatives, will involve a progression, in particular to ensuring second-chance education leading to qualifications and therefore, with a great real possibility of a job (Government of Ireland 1991: 75).

From its outset, the main remit of APCs was “to reproduce at the local level the partnership approach that has worked so well at the national level in the Programme for National Recovery and in the agreement of the Programme for Economic and Social Progress” (Central Review Committee 1991: 3). In other words, APCs were set up to locally supplement national welfare and labour-market intervention through “a problem-solving approach, to mobilise the resources of those who had a potential contribution to make and to be flexible in devising remedies, including a willingness to experiment” (McCarthy 1998: 42; cf. NESC 2005) with a focus on increasing labour-market participation (Fine Gael *et al.* 1994). The involvement of local stakeholders from civil society in decision-making processes⁴⁷ was expected to contribute to developing a better understanding of local issues related to long-term unemployment, inequality and societal fragmentation:

Local partnerships were seen by some as a way of renewing the culture of governance by making public organisations more dynamic and responsive to the needs of civil society (Turok 2000: 3).

Furthermore, tripartite collaboration was hoped to improve governance through ‘vertical learning’ (OECD 1996); i.e. to inform practise at central government level through locally-developed pilot projects so as to facilitate the alleviation of high levels of poverty and social exclusion.

which paved the way for the 2001 Local Government Act and the establishment of City/County Development Boards (see Chapter 6, Section 6.2).

⁴⁶ The Central Review Committee was established under the 1987-1990 Programme for National Recovery to monitor the implementation of the social partnership agreements. Until 2000 it provided a “platform for dialogue between the government and social partners on emerging issues of mutual concern” (McCarthy 1999: 6).

⁴⁷ This principle is frequently associated with the term *bottom-up* (Pringle 1999; Walsh 1999).

2.2.2 Operational matters

In finally setting up APCs as a local version of the social partnership model (Central Review Committee 1991; McCarthy 1998) – which was mirrored in the composition of the APC board (Figure 1) – the Irish Government performed a ‘tightrope walk’. On the one hand, there was an overall reluctance to devolve power to local organisations operating outside statutory administration. On the other hand, compliance with EU priorities was required to secure structural funds for local development programmes tackling social exclusion⁴⁸. Initially, APCs were supported and monitored by the Central Review Committee, which consisted of representatives of the social partners, government departments and, at a later stage, relevant state agencies (Central Review Committee 1991). The Central Review Committee was situated under the umbrella of the Department of the Taoiseach (see Appendix 1, Table A-1.1).

Since 1992, the local development programmes in designated disadvantaged areas have been administered by Area Development Management Ltd. (ADM)⁴⁹. The organisation was established in 1992 by agreement between the European Union and Irish Government (ADM 1995). ADM was set up as an independent partnership company with comparable organisational structures to those of APCs. The creation of a special-purpose body outside established government structures was considered necessary because, first, local government neither had an interest nor the capacity to facilitate local multi-stakeholder bottom-up initiatives (Department of the Environment and Local Government 1998) and, second, it was not deemed appropriate to run the programme from within government buildings (McCarthy 1998). The government contracted ADM to appraise the strategy and action plans of APCs, to allocate core funding, to provide technical assistance and to monitor the implementation of their action plan⁵⁰.

The tasks that have been given to APCs can be briefly summarised as follows (Central Review Committee 1991; CPA 1994; Fine Gael *et al.* 1994; Government of Ireland 1995; ADM 1995, 2000; OECD 1996; Parkinson 1998):

- to pro-actively develop measures targeted at increasing labour-market participation of the most disadvantaged groups. This is often based on direct provision of

⁴⁸ According to Saris *et al.* (2002), the concept of ‘social exclusion’, i.e. the declared political will to address symptoms of spatially concentrated structural disadvantage in EU member countries, has been equally embraced by the EU and the Republic of Ireland, “partly because its relative lack in content and its lack of historical and ideological overtones (Bartley, 2000)” (Saris *et al.* 2002: 174). Hence social exclusion, with its general objective to address local symptoms of multiple disadvantages, is a concept that facilitated the development of a partnership approach linking a variety of different interest groups from different sectors: the state, the private sector, trade unions, politicians and citizens.

⁴⁹ On 11/08/2005, Area Development Management Ltd. was renamed into *Pobal*. However, as most of the empirical research took place before 2005 and in order to prevent confusion with *Pobail* (Department for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs), the name ADM is used throughout this study.

⁵⁰ Under the LDSIP, ADM has been responsible for Area Partnership Companies, Community Groups and Employment Pacts (ADM 2000). Furthermore, ADM manages the RAPID initiative, the Equal Opportunities Childcare Programme, the Rural Transport Initiative, the Special Support Programme for Peace and Reconciliation, the Millennium Fund for Access to Third Level Education and the Integrated Service Process.

information and running retraining or job placement programmes to those that are not considered employable or job-ready. In parallel, employers are encouraged to adopt a more positive attitude towards the recruitment of individuals who are long-term unemployed. In addition, APCs also support the development of local enterprises and give assistance to individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds that wanted to become self-employed;

- to build the capacity of communities for in terms of their ability to improve local social cohesion and more efficiently respond to, and collaborate with, mainstream policies targeting local issues of concern. These measures, for example, resulted in more confidence among communities to engage in planning and decision-making processes, which led to the creation of local infrastructural projects such as community housing projects, transport initiatives (especially in rural areas) and other communal facilities and services (e.g. affordable childcare provision for lone parents);
- to pilot and engage in local measures targeted at preventing educational underachievement and related risks such as substance abuse and socially disruptive behaviour that, subsequently, can be 'picked up' (mainstreamed) by statutory institutions, such as the provision of meals in schools or the provision of home work support and special literacy programmes.

All these measures are not necessarily directly delivered by local APCs. APCs do not have the in-house expertise and financial capacity to research or deliver certain services that have been identified in their designated area. Therefore, they also outsource contracts to third parties, provide seed-funding to small-scale local projects and seek additional resources from private and public bodies to run larger schemes and projects such as the FÁS-sponsored Community Employment Scheme (CE) and Back-to-Work-Allowance-Scheme or government-supported Social Economy Projects. Another example is the utilisation of secured EU funding to run programmes for disadvantaged target groups such as URBAN (funding for disadvantaged urban neighbourhoods), LEADER (funding for disadvantaged rural areas) or INTERREG IIC and III (funding for trans-national co-operation).

Strategies and projects of APCs are outlined in multi-annual area action plans that:

- are innovative in nature and work through pilots with a view to identifying models of good practice through trial and error;
- stay within contractually agreed parameters and eligibility criteria;
- are consensus-based and facilitate meaningful participation from the community and input from stakeholders represented at board level;
- are responsive to the concerns, needs and issues of local residents and interest groups;
- are based on a comprehensive socio-economic profile of the area taking into account local strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT-Analysis);
- identify and temporarily bridge gaps in statutory service delivery; and

- need to demonstrate the capacity to measure comprehensively progress in plan implementation and produce tangible outcomes.

The allocation of funding to APCs follows the approval of their action plan by ADM. Monitoring and funding arrangements for APCs reflect key principles of public-sector reform outlined in the previous chapter. Table 2.1 below illustrates that the core funding for APCs under three succeeding local development programmes has been quite modest (Honohan 1997); particularly in relation to their increasing remit since their establishment (Central Review Committee 1991; ADM 1995, 2000).

Table 2.1: Core funding for Area Partnership Companies [million € / IRP]

Funding period	Programme		Core funding	EU****	State	Per APC***	Per Annum
1991-1993*	PESP	€	10.049	3.95	6.099	0.84	0.42 (2 ys)
		IRP	8.039	3.16	4.879	0.67	0.34
1994-1999**	OPLURD	€	135.227	101.420	33.807	3.56	0.59 (6 ys)
		IRP	106.500	79.875	26.625	2.80	0.47
2000-2006**	LDSIP	€	181.200	0	181.200	4.77	0.68 (7 ys)
		IRP	142.707	0	142.707	3.76	0.54

Source: * Combat Poverty Agency (1994: 37) – 1 ECU = 0.8 IRP.

** Government of Ireland (1995) and information from Area Development Management.

*** Average as funding dependent on degree of deprivation, population size and performance of individual APC (see Chapter 6, Section 6.3.2).

**** As a result of the n+2 rule, EU funding was available until 31.12.2001

Guidelines published by ADM accentuate APCs' task to use funding primarily to focus on local economic development and employment generation through encouraging better co-ordination of local policies and collaboration between existing services. The *Integrated Local Development Handbook* (ADM 1995: 45) highlights the role of the then proposed County Strategy Group⁵¹ in securing "cohesion between the various local development initiatives" so as to maximise the local development potential and "ensure that scarce resources are used in the most effective manner for the benefit of the whole population of their area".

The capacity of an APC to promote such an integrated approach based on lobbying and brokerage is measured against the quality of its administrative performance and financial control system (see Chapter 6, Section 6.3.1, Table 6.7). Proof for achieving value for money is captured by analysing tangible outputs, collaboration and linkages with state organisations, local employers and local organisations (representing the

⁵¹ The County Strategy Groups were established in 1995. The County Strategy Group included representatives from County/City Councils, LEADER companies, partnership companies, the Tourism Committees and the County/City Enterprise Board. They were replaced by County/City Development Boards in 2000 (see Chapter 6, Section 6.2.2).

interests of disadvantaged individuals) and, moreover, assessing both leverage and use of additional resources (see Chapter 6, Section 6.3). It is a priority for APCs to maximise the resource allocation to 'their' area. In short, the success of APCs is determined by their capacity to induce institutional changes that, in the wider context, assist in reducing costs for social consumption and strengthening the competitiveness of the Irish economy.

2.3 Organisational structures of Area Partnership Companies

2.3.1 Introduction

The description of characteristic organisational elements serves to enhance the understanding of the *modus operandi* of Area Partnership Companies (APCs) in Dublin. This section outlines the composition of APCs, describes their key working mechanisms and points out the nature of their interaction with other players from statutory agencies and civil society that carry responsibility and/or are involved in local governance. It also highlights the complexity of relationships and accountability links involved in decision-making processes concerning the development and implementation of strategic action plans.

APCs have to pursue an integrated approach that facilitates joined-up thinking and collaboration between statutory services and local development initiatives "through both formal structural arrangements, and informal links and good working relationships" (ADM 1995: 45) as a basis for added value and demonstrating effectiveness of their activities. It is acknowledged that this can "only happen with the active support and co-operation of state agencies" (ADM 1995: 41). Therefore, APCs need to be highly aware of their external environment as they are reliant on support from all kinds of interest groups involved. They also have to maintain reasonably good relationships with local government and other statutory bodies that are represented on their boards or that have been identified as strategic partners. Overall, they operate in a highly sensitive political environment networking with stakeholders from different institutional and professional backgrounds.

Evidence suggests that the complex nature of the issues related to the work of APCs and the variety of institutional and personal backgrounds of individuals involved in the process poses a challenge to fostering collaboration. Often, however, participation from, for example, statutory key agencies does not go beyond informal support and patronage (Bartley and Saris 1999; Turok 2001).

2.3.2 Working models

The approaches of APCs in the implementation of area action plans and the achievement of targets differ considerably. Following the analysis of the first generation of APCs under the 1991-1993 PESP, three major working models were identified that characterise the approaches adopted (ADM 1995, 2000; Pobal 2006a):

- A characteristic feature of *the delivery approach* is the piloting of projects by the APC with a view to addressing locally-identified gaps in service provision.
- In *the agency approach*, the pilot-based service provision is out-sourced under the aegis of the APC to the responsibility of a local group. However, the APC remains in a monitoring position.
- In contrast to the previous models, *the brokerage approach* highlights the networking capacity of APCs. Here, the key function is to assess locally and adjust existing mismatches and deficiencies concerning service provision and bring local and national delivery agencies and local communities together to jointly develop models of service delivery that are better tailored to meet the local needs.

The pursuit of the latter model is regarded as exemplary because “this approach is usually indicative of a partnership operating at a level of optimum impact” (Pobal 2006a: 12). The brokerage model is an onerous approach because network building is considered a time-consuming process that, moreover, is largely unrecognised by the monitoring and performance system (Turok 2000). Acknowledging the limited capacity of existing models to capture efforts and resources invested into relationship building and forging alliances, ADM proposed a new framework for measuring “the extent to which partners collaborate with one another” (Pobal 2006a: 12; cf. Himmelman 2002). This new framework will be discussed in Chapter 6 (Section 6.4.1).

2.3.3 Company structure

2.3.3.1 Introduction

APCs are companies limited by guarantee; they do not have share capital. They usually operate on three distinct, though inextricably intertwined, functional levels: a board of directors, professional staff and a sub-group or working group system. The principal approach towards a local development strategy is based on the bottom-up principle, which allows for direct participation from groups from civil society in decision-making processes. This is, first, reflected in the composition of the board as the key decision-making unit of APCs and, second, in the issue-oriented working groups or sub-committees (Central Review Committee 1991; ADM 1995; Turok 2001).

2.3.3.2 Staff

The implementation of the area action plan is facilitated by professional staff that coordinates measures and activities. The staff of an APC usually comprises of a manager or chief executive officer (CEO), a company secretary, clerical staff (e.g., administrators, accountant and receptionist) and specialist co-ordinating staff. The CEO occupies a key position. They are responsible for developing linkages, being an advocate for the area (promoting the work of the APC), the implementation of the area action plan, the coordination of the staff and for reporting back to the board of directors on policy, operational and programme issues and – maybe most importantly – scope out the terrain for sourcing additional resources:

A manager's job is 80-90 per cent of the time spent accessing money elsewhere, bringing people together, negotiating agreements between local people and getting projects up and going. Then it's up to the project team to go and deliver that project with the community. That's what they do. It's a nightmare of a job going around all the time leveraging money in, leveraging money in, leveraging money in. That's what they do (Borscheid 2001, interview with Planet Co-ordinator on 29/05/2000).

The co-ordinating staff (or project teams) are involved in outreach activities of the APC in so far as they pro-actively engage in the local community to network and collaborate with local activists, community groups, statutory agencies, schools and the private sector. They work in teams or sections, each of which progresses the implementation of certain parts of the APC's action plan. These professionals are specialists on core topics that correspond with the key thrust of the multi-annual action plan, which revolves around the following areas: community development; education and youth; the environment; enterprise, employment and training; and corresponding research activities (ADM 1995, 1999, 2000). The co-ordinating staff also mediate between local stakeholders from within the community, the sub-committees of the board and the chief executive. In the main, their task is to ensure the optimal operation of the processes concerning the flow of communication among stakeholders and the coordination of activities towards the implementation of projects and measures of the area action plan. The company secretary manages the day-to-day issues concerning the internal functioning of the organisation, manages the secretarial and administrative work, provides support to the CEO and the Board on corporate governance issues and often functions as the personal assistant to the CEO. The role of the clerical staff typically revolves around operational technicalities such as administrative support of programmes, data base maintenance, external correspondence and financial controlling and accountancy.

2.3.3.3 Board

The board has responsibility for decisions-making, policy formulation and the strategic approach of the APC. It is the board's responsibility to ensure that the resources available to the APC are used to the maximum benefit for the area and to sign off and oversee the implementation of the area action plan. APCs are meant to develop and implement their work plans in close collaboration with all interest groups involved at the board and its sub structures. This includes representatives at board level, members in issue-based sub committees and local stakeholders and residents in the community. The board of directors mirrors the stakeholders involved in national partnership agreements. Until 1999, boards typically consisted of a minimum of 18 members from the social partners, the statutory agencies and representatives from the local community. In 1999, following recommendations made by the Interdepartmental Task Force (DoELG 1998), public representatives were invited to the boards as a fourth party to make up for a perceived democratic deficit⁵².

⁵² A forgone debate centred on a perceived democratic deficit of APC-type structures; it was argued that local politicians should be included as they have a democratic mandate from the local community

Even though the role of stakeholders from different sectors represented at board level is to complement one another's resources and expertise to the benefit of the area, Turok (2001: 139) indicates that "agencies cannot be compelled to do anything they do not want to do since the partnerships lack formal authority" (cf. Haase and McKeown 2003). Moreover, there have also been criticisms of contemporary APC structures for limiting the participatory potential for local people (CWC 2000; Bartley and Borscheid 2003).

2.3.3.4 Sub Groups

The board is often supported by sub-committee structures that – assisted by APC staff – discuss and develop projects in accordance with the area action plan. Typically, sub committees are creatures of the board. That means that they usually have a delegated authority to address specific tasks that facilitate the day-to-day operation of the APC and increase overall efficiency at board level through, for example, the preparation of discussion papers or briefings as the basis for decision-making processes at board level⁵³. These sub-committees are of pivotal importance to the process because they involve a variety of individuals from different institutional and professional backgrounds.

2.3.3.5 A simplified organisational model: a focus on bottom-up

Figure 1 below, illustrates a typical hierarchical organisational model of APCs in Ireland. It portrays the key structures of the organisation and how they are situated to each other. The arrows illustrate the flow of power or decision-making capacity between the different groupings involved in the generation and implementation of the action plans of APCs. The board, informed by the CEO and its work groups, is the ultimate decision-making body responsible for the policy, staff and operations of the company. The CEO and other professionals inform and support the work of the work groups. Whereas the work groups have a role in planning and overseeing the implementation of APC activities, the APC professionals (displayed as *Staff*) who fulfil an executive function and work with local groups towards the delivery of the local action plan.

The local people (displayed as *Community*), may or may not participate in local consultation and planning processes, local organisations or other forms of local civic engagement that are targeted at addressing issues of mutual concern or benefit. Among those who are organised in the local community and voluntary sector – consisting of a variety of groups such as residents associations, sport clubs, bingo clubs, pigeon clubs, community development projects, drug prevention initiatives and so forth – a variety of groups and individuals are interested *and* have the capacity to

⁵³ to represent them in decision-making structures affecting the community.
For example, the APC subject to this case study operates an executive sub-committee, which had been established under the 2000-2006 area action plan with a view to supporting the staff by carrying out executive and administrative tasks, to oversee the implementation of projects and monitor poverty and equality proofing targets and to promote mainstreaming of programme actions.

participate in processes initiated by the local APC. There are other groups, however, that either have the capacity but are not interested in participating in APC-type local development initiatives, or have an interest in joining forces but do not have – or feel that they do not have – the skills necessary to make a contribution to local development initiatives.

The circular movements of arrows linking the board's work group structure with the organised civic sphere (displayed as *Local Groups*) indicates the potential for involvement of all groupings (either '*weak*' or '*strong*') – and even to represent community interests on the board of the APC⁵⁴. The barriers represented by the dotted line in Figure 1 indicate the potential existence of blockages – lack of resources, capacity or incentives – that might prevent bottom-up participation within APC-type local development approaches. Depending on the nature of the barrier, a local APC can engage in activities that have the potential to increase local involvement in decision-making processes.

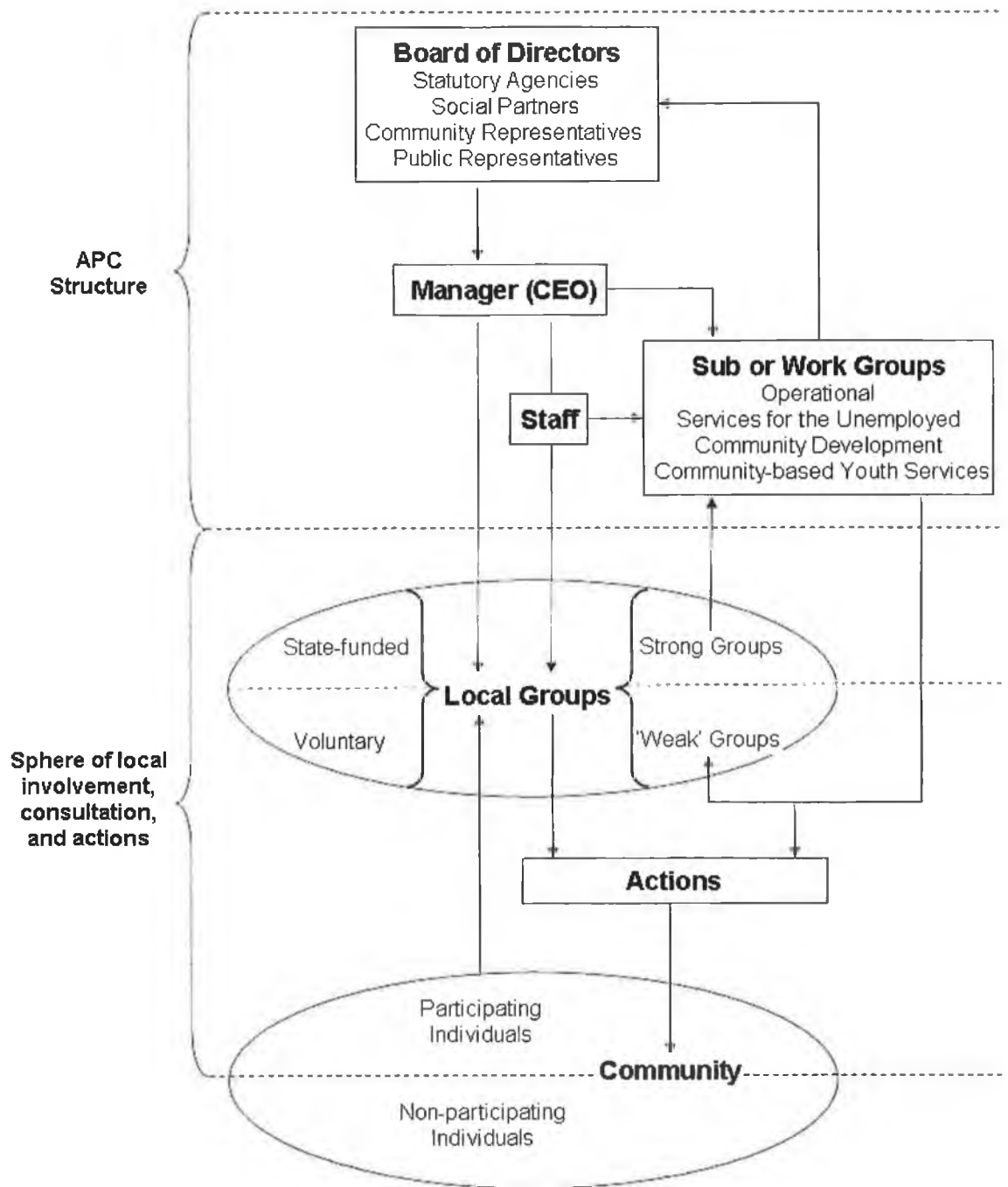
2.3.3.5 Collaboration in practice: an outlook

Juggling expectations from political sponsors and local communities, it is vital for APCs to find a balance between the requirement to guarantee opportunities for grassroots participation on the one hand and the contractual obligations within which they operate, on the other. The organisational structure of the APC suggests a democratic multi-stakeholder approach to addressing social exclusion in designated disadvantaged areas in a collaborative manner. Turok (2001: 137) points out, "there should be strong two-way relationships with the individual partner organisations, mediated through empowered representatives" in regard to the flow of information and the development of influence between the APC and its partners. There is evidence, however, that involvement from the community is not necessarily representative of the area (Bartley and Saris 1999; Saris *et al.* 2002) and that efficient decision making "can only occur when agencies are represented at senior management level, or where representatives are equipped with a clear mandate from their agency to support and resource the partnership process" (Pobal 2006a: 24).

In the absence of effective representation from either those with a capacity to devolve power or those to be empowered or both, partnership agenda comes to a stand still; under these circumstances there is evidence that decisions are left to local stakeholders with both a vested interest and the professional capacity in progressing individual agendas or by APC professionals who act (presumably in good faith) based on their interaction with those who became involved in partnership-initiated consultation processes, programmes and actions (Borscheid 2001).

⁵⁴ Membership of the company and regulations for the election of community representatives are usually outlined in the constitution of the APC (i.e. in the Articles of association and the memorandum of the Partnership Company).

Figure 1: Simplified organisational model of APCs



----- Barrier to participation, e.g. lack of concern / interest / capacity / information.

—————> Dominant lines of involvement

Source: Adapted from Borscheid (2001).

These issues also emerged in the interviews and are further investigated in the analysis of the empirical data with a view to assessing the effectiveness of partnership structures in facilitating the optimal use of resources according to their commissioned role (see Chapter 6):

- to operate a model that can mediate between participatory and representative democracy⁵⁵;
- to be accountable to both funders and the community;
- to assist in local-governance re-structuring in accordance with political priorities under the LDSIP.

2.4 Proliferation and institutionalisation of APCs

Since their establishment, APCs have been addressing a wide range of issues related to structural deficits that manifest in social, economic, cultural and physical marginalisation of Irish society (OECD 1996; Walsh *et al.* 1998; Turok 2001; Haase and McKeown 2003). APCs are firmly embedded in the landscape of local development and have developed into prime movers in local development in Ireland (Walsh 1998). The following paragraphs illustrate the gradual institutionalisation of APCs under the 1995-1999 and 2000-2006 local development programmes.

The evaluation of the 1991-1993 PESP came to the conclusion that “the partnerships have succeeded in starting a process of change” (CPA 1994: 124; cf. OECD 1996). The 1994-1999 Community Support Framework (CSF) stated that “Support from the global grant will continue for partnerships and communities which are satisfactorily implementing plans approved under the global grant which was funded under the CSF 1989-93” (Government of Ireland 1994). As a result, the pilot was extended in the mid-1990s and, thereby, became effectively institutionalised under the Operational Programme for Local Urban and Rural Development (OPLURD) of the 1994-1999 National Development Plan (hereafter NDP) (Government of Ireland 1995; ESF Evaluation Unit 1999; Curley 2001). By the mid-1990s, 38 Area Partnership Companies, 31 Community Groups and 2 Employment Pacts were in operation. The 26 new or ‘second generation’ APCs were selected on the basis of a competitive bidding process: eligible areas had to demonstrate both their need and their capacity to collaboratively implement the organisational structures and programmatic guidelines required by the political sponsors (Bartley and Borscheid 2003). Even though the remit of programmatic actions became wider than tackling unemployment and poverty, fostering endogenous entrepreneurial potential and increasing labour-market participation remained high on the agenda:

The Programme [the OPLURD] aims to accelerate local economic development and thereby increase employment and to tackle exclusion and marginalisation resulting from long-term unemployment, poor educational attainment, poverty and welfare dependency (ADM 1999: 1).

⁵⁵ For an overview and discussion see Brackertz *et al.* (2005) and Wakeford and Hale (2003).

Again, EU policy and incentives provided by their structural funding played a crucial role in “encouraging the Irish Government to include local APCs as a feature of the 1994-99 National Plan” (McCarthy 1998: 48)⁵⁶:

Local development initiatives were seen as providing a means of integrating enterprise with welfare and economic growth with redistribution. [...] This new welfare/enterprise nexus is given strongest expression in the Local Development Programme [the OPLURD], part of the Community Support Framework (Walsh 1999: 286).

The following excerpt from a speech by the then Taoiseach John Bruton, T.D. (FG), at the opening of the EU Poverty 3 Programme 25 April 1995, serves to illustrate the rationale for establishing and, subsequently, institutionalising APCs:

In the way we administer programmes, we tend to think that people are like things. They're objects and you can move them around, when in fact they are people who are in poverty or people who have as many ideas and many more perhaps than we have ourselves. We need to approach a solution to their problems in such a way that it engages their creativity. That very simply is what the partnership approach is all about. [...] You've got to, to some degree at least, remove the control features in your thinking and apply a different approach [that allows] people to master their own destiny, to make their own mistakes and learn from them. [...] Administrators have to be willing to give up some power so that those who are poor or who are in poverty and who need and want to develop can exercise some power (OECD 1996: 105).

According to this statement, the APC-type approach could also be interpreted as an effort to shift responsibility for place-specific problems from wider society to those inhabiting ‘poor places’, to those considered most distant from mainstream society. In the context of measuring the impact of APCs, some analysts considered the achievements of APCs under the OPLURD a success (e.g. Honohan 1997; Goodbody Economic Consultants 1999) whereas the ESF Evaluation Report on the OPLURD (1999) pointed towards imminent structural weaknesses that prevented strategic progress such as the apparent lack of willingness among administrators to play an enabling role and facilitate the delegation of power ‘downwards’:

There are no systematic routes through which these agencies [i.e. APCs] can influence policy and practice, no consensual statements available in relation to best practice that are broadly and objectively tested and no objectively verifiable data supporting a critical mass of activity across a number of sites through which broadly similar interventions have been tried and tested (ESF Evaluation Unit 1999: viii)

Much of the strategic focus of the OPLURD had not been realised through the activity of APCs because of, first, “the negative attitudes of people and organisations to change coupled with a lack of flexibility on the part of the statutory agencies” and, second, “a lack of understanding of local development planning and short-terminism of the planning process coupled with uncertainty about the future” (*ibid.*; see also Chapter 6, Section 6.3.3.2). Critical voices feared an alignment of APC-type structures alongside a local-governance system with local authorities at its centre (CWC 2000) or

⁵⁶ Under the OPLURD individual APCs received between 1 and 4 million IRP over a 5-year period, 75 per cent of which was sponsored by the EU structural funds (i.e. the European Regional Development Fund and the European Social Fund) (see Table 2.1).

reduced to service delivery-based functions (Turok 2000), or both. Already towards the end of the OPLURD, the looming withdrawal of EU funding fuelled speculation that APCs would lose influence vis-à-vis local government. An analysis of APC funding in the transitional period between the 1994-1999 OPLURD and 2000-2006 LDSIP suggested that "APCs are liable to be subsumed by local government" (Borscheid 2001) (see Chapter 6, Section 6.2, Figure 5 and Table 6.1). The overall objective of the LDSIP reads as follows:

To counter disadvantage and to promote equality and social and economic inclusion through the provision of funding to support Partnerships, Community Groups and Employment Pacts that adopt a partnership approach to tackling local issues on the basis of comprehensive, integrated local development plans designed to counter social exclusion and to equally target the opportunities and benefits of development to the most disadvantaged individuals and groups within their areas (ADM 2000: 8).

The objectives of the local development programme remained centred around labour-market inclusion measures, fostering a culture of local self-help and adding value to statutory service delivery into disadvantaged areas (ADM 2000; Turok 2001). Reflecting on developments in European and Irish welfare, Bartley and Saris (1999: 82) observe that "high cost universalist policies of the welfare state are being supplanted by selective intervention measures which require fewer resources". There is some evidence from a preliminary analysis of the data gathered for this study that funding dependencies after the discontinuation of EU funding for APCs in 2002 have been used as a mechanism to advance both the rationalisation and re-structuring of the local-development sector in Dublin and to bring APCs alongside the local government system (Borscheid 2005).

Towards the end of the LDSIP the focus moved away from the concept of targeting places towards the objective of transforming APCs into a nation-wide public service delivery instrument as "services will need to be designed around individuals and their requirements, rather than based on different administrative boundaries" (Ó Cuív 07/09/2006: no page numbers) (see Chapter 6, Sections 6.2.2 and 6.2.6). In other words, APCs are envisaged to be extending their sphere of activities beyond current designated disadvantaged areas and to be targeting individuals whose personal situations provides justification for receiving special supports through services provided by APCs.

2.5 Area-based targeting: advantages and drawbacks

Ó Riain and O'Connell (2000) conclude that under social partnership, welfare policies shifted "from passive income support to active labour-market policies with temporary employment and training programmes, and in reducing unemployment/poverty traps" (334), which "created some institutional spaces for experimentation" (338). This culminated in a plurality of co-existing networks and special-purpose bodies that supplement government decision making in social and economic matters such as APCs (see also Bartley and Borscheid 2003; Ó Broin 2003). APCs were developed as

a new form of state interventionism that reflected “a shift from universalistic to spatially targeted and place-focused approaches” (Bartley and Saris 1999: 82). Walsh (1998: 331) recognises APC-type initiatives as an inclusive public policy “embracing a new geographic focus around the twin themes of local coordination of services and local socio-economic development” (cf. CPA 1994; Walsh 1996; Walsh *et al.* 1998; ADM 2000).

There appears to be a negative correlation between the quality of the physical environment, public service provision and poverty (Pringle *et al.* 1999). In other words, the poorer the people are, the poorer is the quality of the physical and social infrastructure. The eligibility criteria that outline fundable capacity-building and developmental measures underscore limitations of APCs to contribute to a more sustainable betterment of poor places. Under the current local development programme, they can only meaningfully counter local disadvantage and promote anti-poverty initiatives if (a) they are financially (and therefore ideologically) supported by statutory bodies and (b) they can exert influence on *local* structural processes that are causal to socio-spatial inequalities in the first place (cf. Pringle 1999: 275). The sheer scope of local disadvantage requires public investments into economic activities, quality infrastructure such as housing, transport, retail or education (Watson *et al.* 2005).

The key potential of APCs has long been seen in the facilitation and development of local responses to ameliorate adverse effects of wider structural processes. The achievements of APCs in local development and, more specifically, increasing labour-market participation have been acknowledged in a number of publications and reports (e.g. Parkinson 1998; Turok 2000). The evaluation of the *1994-1999 Operational Programme for Local and Urban Development* concluded that “within Ireland as a whole, areas that have partnerships recorded a larger decline in unemployment between 1991 and 1996 than areas without partnerships” (Goodbody Economic Consultants 1999: 88). McCarthy, however, is more careful in his assessment of APCs:

[...] it is hard to distinguish between what the Partnership companies are doing and what is happening in the wider economy. There is no doubt that had the Irish economy been in a recession for the last three years, it would have been more difficult for the Partnerships to achieve what they have achieved. This is not to say that I believe it is particularly easy just because the economy is doing well. There is a lot of pressure to generate material on and awareness of the value of what is being achieved (McCarthy 1998: 46-47).

Looking back at the OPLURD, the work of APCs has resulted in a wide range of local activities targeted at capacity building, providing educational opportunities, community development and reducing unemployment (Walsh *et al.* 1998; Goodbody Economic Consultants 1999). Despite the perceived success of APCs in implementing area-based development initiatives in Ireland, some structural weaknesses and institutional barriers seem to prevail (ESF Evaluation Unit 1999). Peck and Tickell (1994: 323)

argue that APC-type initiatives “are just a handful of genuinely innovative local experiments and a raft of pale imitations” that, to a certain degree, only received recognition because of their “straightforward rarity” (*ibid.*).

Table 2.2 sums up advantages and drawbacks of area-based development initiatives such as APCs. The comparison of merits and drawbacks of positive territorial discrimination indicates that the biggest advantages of APC-type initiatives lie in the utilisation of local know-how and social capital to develop services for disadvantaged members of society that live in areas that show symptoms of severe economic and social disadvantage. The potential development of innovative concepts through participatory approaches bears the potential of mainstreaming local models of best practice into the statutory service delivery – such as the Local Employment Service (OECD 1996). However, it could equally result in the duplication of projects, which would run counter to the research and development brief of area-based approaches or run into systemic blockages within the statutory apparatus – such as a lack of capacity of the state to pick up successful models and integrate them into the arsenal of statutory support/service delivery.

Perhaps the most relevant aspects for a discussion on the capacity of APC-type spatial interventions are those that are summarised under the heading *Counteracting Spatial Processes*. Whereas local initiatives have proven to ameliorate symptoms of disadvantage in areas with a high share of population that lives in poverty (e.g. Goodbody Economic Consultants 1999; cf. Haase and McKeown 2003), (state-funded) area-based approaches to local development, if at all, only have a limited capacity to challenge wider structural forces impacting on the wider social and economic well-being of the state – especially when such approaches are not high on the agenda of the state and, moreover, entirely depend on statutory funding.

2.6 The role of APCs in the Developmental Welfare State (DWS)

The *Irish Times* (The Irish Times 11/07/2006) reports that “Ireland is now the second wealthiest nation in the world with more than 30,000 millionaires living here” and that “Personal disposable income in the Republic has doubled over the past ten years, and is forecast to double again over the next decade”. At the same time Ireland experiences increasing social polarisation as, for example indicated in the United Nations *2005 Human Development Report* (UNDP 2005) and publications of the Combat Poverty Agency (e.g. Watson *et al.* 2005). *The Irish Independent* (22/09/2005) highlights that “Ireland is among the Top 10 most developed nations in the world but has created one of the largest poverty gaps”⁵⁷.

⁵⁷ This refers to relative levels of poverty that have gone up from 19.8 per cent in 1999 to 22.7 per cent in 2003 (The Irish Independent 22/09/2005).

Table 2.2: Advantages and drawbacks of APC-type spatial interventions

APCs	Advantages	Drawbacks
Area-based Targeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of additional resources to the most disadvantaged • Utilisation of local know-how • Addressing particular structural issues that can be linked to local processes • Diversity of actions among APCs reflects the potential for locally developed interventions to address local manifestations of disadvantage • Prevalence of cumulative disadvantage and neighbourhood effects⁵⁸ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selection of disadvantaged areas follows an inverse-care law • Considerable share of poor people also live outside designated disadvantaged areas • Watering down of scarce resources as the majority of the total population lives in designated disadvantaged areas
Statutory Service Delivery	<p>Identification of models of good practice:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • that can be mainstreamed • that enhance efficiency in and increase potential for national service delivery • that complement national welfare policies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited potential to transfer good practice into national context as statutory bodies are too inflexible to respond to lessons learnt on the ground • Turf wars and safe-guarding of territory prevent inter-departmental collaboration • Duplication of successful projects among local areas • Informality of links between local development initiatives and national policy development • No local influence in negotiating priorities of approach
Participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate understanding of processes leading to spatial manifestations of marginalisation and socio-economic disadvantage through working with local groups • Multi-stakeholder approach that can procure additional resources and create synergies in addressing local issues • Participatory democracy enacted through legislation based on democratic decisions taken by the state 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • APCs as gatekeepers as they operate as intermediate tier or local top-down mechanism that is run by professionals. So APCs act as buffer between the state and the locale • Structures are not open to bottom-up because the ability to participate is dependent on the 'professional capacity' of individuals • Not democratic as APCs work outside the system of representative democracy
Counteracting Spatial Processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop initiatives with strategic partners (e.g. employers and statutory partners) in areas affected by poverty • Potential to act as catalyst for sustainable change at local level • Opportunities based on people-centred approach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited to addressing local symptoms caused by wider structural causes • Cosmetic planning and 'gilding the ghetto' • Ignorance of relationship between planning and people as concentrations of poverty are usually associated with physically less desirable areas

Source: Parkinson (1998); OECD (1996); Nolan *et al.* (1998); ESF Evaluation Unit (1999); Bartley and Saris (1999); Haase (1999); Walsh (1999); Pringle (1999); Turok (2000); Haase and McKeown (2003); Watson *et al.* (2005).

⁵⁸ According to Haase and McKeon, neighbourhood effects "refer to those factors which affect the life chances of individuals over and above what could be predicted from their individual socio-economic circumstances" (Haase and McKeown 2003: 3).

According to the *Human Development Report 2005*, among the twenty nations with the highest standard of living (as measured by the Human Development Index), Ireland's inequality in income or consumption (as indicated by a Gini index⁵⁹ of 35.9) is only topped by the USA (Gini index of 40.8), the UK and Italy (both have a Gini index of 36.0) (UNDP 2005).

In the light of a decade of glowing economic figures, with income and growth rates dwarfing other European countries (ESRI n.d.; OECD 2005b, 2005c), it seems surprising that the Irish social partnership model has become a dominant strategy as it had not managed to cater for a more balanced distribution of the fruits of growth across the country's population. This leads critical commentators to conclude that, over the last 15-20 years, successive national social partnership agreements reflect a neo-corporate *Zeitgeist* as they appear to be prioritising international economic competition and, simultaneously, enhancing a residual and targeted social partnership approach to welfare that increasingly supplements welfare policy in Ireland (Bartley and Saris 1999; Ó Riain and O'Connell 2000). Kirby (2002), for example, maintains that the nature of the Irish welfare system is still charity-based (cf. Gaetz 1997), and, despite social partnership, "proved ineffective in modifying in any significant way the inequalities generated by market forces and, indeed, may even have exacerbated them".

Against the backdrop of Ireland's economic transformation into one of Europe's richest nations, it is noteworthy to look at research undertaken by Haase, which compares relative deprivation scores between 1991 and 2002. In a presentation given at a Combat Poverty Seminar on 11 May 2005, Haase demonstrates that within a time span of 11 years, "virtually no differences in the distribution of relative deprivation" could be observed (Haase 2005). Bartley and Shine (2003) draw parallels with neo-liberal welfare regimes. They argue, "the 'success strategy' deployed in Ireland is a hybrid approach to policy and practice based on a mix of American Economics and EU principles of social democracy" (Bartley and Shine 2003: 145).

In anticipation of the interdependency between social cohesion and economic competitiveness, the NESC strongly argues for the Developmental Welfare State (hereafter referred to as DWS) that is capable of successfully marrying a pro-growth agenda with a welfare system that "enables people to embrace more change and take more risks than they would otherwise do" (2005: xiv). The foundation of the NESC's vision of the DWS is based on three interconnected spheres of statutory support: the optimisation of access to basic services, the provision of income supports tailored to the lifecycle and circumstances of individuals and, finally, activist measures delivered

⁵⁹ The Gini Coefficient is a measure of inequality. It is frequently used to indicate uneven distribution. It is a number between 0 and 1. Whilst a value of 0 represents the most equal distribution, a value of 1 is the most unequal distribution possible. The Gini Index is arrived at by multiplying the Gini Coefficient by the factor 100.

by APC-type special-purpose bodies⁶⁰. The latter serve to “respond to unmet social needs, initially in a particular and once-off manner but with implications for mainstream service provision that are systematically identified” (NESC 2005: xx).

The principal features of activist measures within a new welfare regime indicates a focus for APCs on encouraging indigenous entrepreneurial development, supporting labour-market intervention policies, and providing services that are complementary to and integrated within statutory welfare provision that increasingly focuses on reducing the burden of social consumption vis-à-vis investments fostering economic competitiveness.

For example, despite relatively low overall welfare-related expenditures, absolute welfare spending between 1994 and 2004 increased by 120 per cent (The Irish Examiner 30/08/2004). Against this background, the *Business and Finance Magazine* (15/12/2004) criticises increases in welfare spending without significantly rationalising the administration of the benefits. The commentary in the magazine states that, between 1997 and 2004, income per capita rose by 44 per cent, unemployment benefits by 90 per cent and unemployment fell from 10.3 to 4.4 per cent. Highlighting the healthy demographic and economic conditions in Ireland, the article claims that the fruits of growth should have yielded higher quality services coupled with less costs and concludes:

The lesson to be learned from our fiscal activism is: any pro-cyclical increase in *government expenditure, without exhaustive value-for-money assessment, will result in a proportional decline in service quality*. Call it the law of diminishing returns to spending, or the law of increasing government waste. In the US, every dollar of Government expenditure results in a \$ 1.30 contraction in the private economy. [...] Yet, Ireland has lower efficiency of fiscal spending than the US (Business and Finance Magazine 15/12/2004: no page numbers, emphasis added).

The *Developmental Welfare State* highlights that increasing expenditures in social consumption must be “a means to an end” (NESC, 2005: xvii) and also stresses the responsibility of the family and the community and voluntary sector in welfare provision. When comparing welfare expenditures with social outcomes achieved, the NESC report also advocates taking into consideration “established behavioural patterns” (xvii). As this comment is not further qualified in the report it is open to potentially varying interpretations. One reading of it could be, for example, that there is a complacent attitude among the citizenship towards welfare that needs tackling. It also could be regarded as a wake-up call for political decision-makers to stop ignoring so-called disincentives, poverty traps and policy blockages that prevent welfare recipients from taking up work, and taking action that facilitates their transition from welfare to work. It may relate – especially in a period of full employment – to a demand

⁶⁰ The link between the church model of welfare and Catholic legacy of Irish welfare and alterations influenced by economic policy can not only be found in the foundations of the APC-type model but also in more recent state-led initiatives promoting volunteerism, building social capital and active citizenship (Government of Ireland 2000; National Committee on Volunteering 2002; NESF 2003; The Irish Times 03/09/2005; DoT 18/04/2006; Taskforce on Active Citizenship 2007).

for the intensification of the search for new ways to integrate those individuals who are not considered employable and, hence, most distant from the labour-market through what the NESC describes as 'tailored universalism'. Besides outsourcing responsibility for welfare from the state to the family and the community and voluntary sector, a key thrust of the NESC's argument for the DWS is a focus on the development of measures that can be 'wrapped around' individuals and target groups and replace costly means-tested measures to secure social protection (i.e. tailored universalism). The literature reviewed suggests that the demand for a 'new' outcome-oriented ethos will be influential in determining future Irish welfare policy and associated local development efforts such as APCs.

2.7 Conclusion

Under social partnership, in a period that has largely been characterised by continuing economic growth and low levels of unemployment as well as increasing social polarisation, it appears that APCs still have an important role to play in the welfare restructuring of a booming economy. Thus "Ireland's welfare state relies to a high degree – by international standards – on the involvement of non-profit bodies" (NESC 2005: xiv), such as APCs. APCs have been in existence for over 15 years. First, the persistence in spatially concentrated long-term unemployment, second, the prevalence of neighbourhood effects and, third, a widening gap between rich and poor seem to justify a two-pronged strategy that consists of (a) ongoing support of area-based intervention measures and (b) deeper structural interventions that cannot be tackled by means of relatively isolated special-purpose bodies. However, the NESC (2005), for example, sees APCs merely as part of welfare restructuring based on outsourcing statutory responsibility for welfare to third parties, which seems to be less costly than having state provision of such services. Accordingly, it is not surprising that new plans for APCs foresee a move away from selective area-based targeting under the LDSIP. The *cohesion process*⁶¹ (Chapter 6, Section 6.2.6) signals profound policy changes for APCs. Largely, the philosophy behind governance restructuring and the changing role of APCs mirrors:

- the new aims and objectives of Irish welfare policy (NESC 2005; Murphy 2006) and both Irish (Bissett 13/12/2005) and international trends (Peck 2001) towards increasingly contracting out to and utilising third parties and players from wider civil society in providing public and welfare-related functions traditionally delivered by the state;
- the application of outcome-oriented principles and performance-monitoring systems that make sure that outsourced responsibilities and sub-contracted tasks concerning public service delivery lead to an 'integrated' and streamlined ('cohesed'⁶²) local-governance system that complements and adds value to Ireland's knowledge-based economy (cf. NESC 2005: xix-xxi);

⁶¹ Launched in 2003, the objective of the cohesion process is to promote the rationalisation and democratisation of state-funded local development initiatives (cf. DoCRGA 18/02/2003, 18/06/2003).

⁶² This 'verb' has frequently been used to refer to the integration of APCs into a new governance framework through the cohesion process (see Chapter 6, Section 6.2.6).

- plans to integrate local development structures into local government systems (DoELG 1998, 1999a, 1999b, 2000).

Taking into consideration wider institutional changes and practices associated with welfare restructuring, economic competitiveness and public-sector modernisation – such as the introduction of a *Management Information Framework (MIF)*, the *Public Service Management Act 1997*, the *Local Government Act 2001*, *Value for Money* reports/audits (Comptroller and Auditor General 2000, 2007; Fitzpatrick Associates 2007; DoCRGA 2007), expenditure reviews (cf. NESC 2002a: 77-78) – this case study sets out to assess to what extent contemporary funding arrangements for APCs facilitate the local pursuit of the independent (cf. White 07/09/2006: 6-7), collaborative and inclusive development of robust participatory (pluralist) activist measures that:

- are innovative in nature;
- are responsive to local realities on the ground and allow local people to be the driving force;
- promote decision-making structures that strengthen democratic accountability of *all* stakeholders around the partnership table;
- enhance transparency, co-ordination, effectiveness and improved control over funding; and
- can change the mindset of both service providers and welfare recipients and, therefore, facilitate vertical institutional learning.

It is argued that the move towards the Developmental Welfare State can be facilitated through a mix of new managerial practices – such as the introduction of a management information framework (MIF), multi-annual budgeting and expenditure reviews (NESC 2002a) – in the tradition of the New Public Managerialism (NPM) (Chapter 1, Section 1.4.1). It could be shown that the Strategic Management Initiative (SMI) promotes (a) the introduction of an increase in value-for-money for public spending through increasing professionalisation of practices across the public and not-for-profit welfare sectors and (b) a change in the mindset of both public and other service providers and welfare recipients (e.g. NESC 2002b, 2002a) (see Chapter 1, Section 1.4.2).

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 Introduction

This study focuses on the characteristic features of funding arrangements for Area Partnership Companies (APCs) in the context of public-sector modernisation and related changes concerning power relationships within Dublin's institutional framework of governance. This chapter establishes the theoretical framework within which the empirical research is situated. It introduces three contemporary theories of urban governance that are widely applied by theorists, scholars and political analysts to describe and explain power configurations in governance in OECD countries: actor-network theory (ANT), urban regime theory (URT) and the regulation approach (RA). Theory-building results in normative assumptions "about the nature and meaning of power, and each [theory] claims to be correct in its conceptualisation and measurement of power" (Judge *et al.* 1995: 4). The application of theories to back up empirical case research and subsequent conclusions drawn are controversially discussed in the academic world. Contestation and refutation of theoretical claims through empirical case research have led to alterations and adjustments of theories. This resulted in a plethora of competing theories and standpoints – even within a particular school of thought – as, for example,

- outlined in Bob Jessop's (1990), Adam Tickell's and Jamie Peck's (1992), and Michel Aglietta's (2000) account of the regulation approach,
- exemplified in the debate on urban regime theory between Clarence Stone (1998; 2004a; 2004b), David Imbroscio (1998b; 1998a; 2004) and Jonathan Davies (2004) in *The Journal of Urban Affairs* (Volume 20(3) and 26(1) respectively), or
- mirrored in the differing standpoints concerning actor-network theory between Bruno Latour (1991), Andrew Pickering (1993) and Jonathan Murdoch (1995; 1997).

Counter-responses from different theoretical currents have contributed to a fragmentation and modification of theories. Mickey Lauria's *Reconstructing Urban Regime Theory* (1997b) illustrates efforts to make up for theoretical inconsistencies and/or weaknesses of a prominent theory or the explanation of power in cities: scholars try to marry URT's meso-level analysis of the political economy with the broader conceptual framework of neo-Marxist regulation approaches (RAs). Whereas the former ascribe the nature of power structures to the machinations of (local) individual stakeholders, the latter explains local power relations within a superimposed framework of (global) external structural forces. Murdoch (1995: 731) argues for the merits of actor-network theory, which allows for pursuing processes shaping the construction of organisational networks from within "to the 'bitter end'". ANT opposes notions of any preconceived or historically produced structural framework as a point of departure or platform for the analysis of governance. Instead ANT focuses entirely on different forms of materiality (human and nonhuman) at the micro-level as they are woven into, or acting within, the governance network.

Table 3.1: Views on power – key principles of three competing theories

ANT:	Key question: HOW is power created?
View on power:	Power is not captured in structures or led by a human-centred worldview. It emerges, is reproduced, negotiated and captured within networked interaction between humans and nonhumans (i.e. heterogeneous materials).
Principle of general symmetry:	Refutation of distinct structural frameworks – such as human/nonhuman, local/global, present/past – as pre-given explanatory variables of power relations. Distinct categories and discernible structures are only a specific outcome of network processes rather than an explanatory mechanism.
Translation:	Processes through which humans and things are aligned into a network.
Blackboxing:	Translation of humans and things by network builders merely on the grounds of their performative (functional) qualities. In other words, the inner workings and complexity that equips networked humans and things with the ability to do things that are considered crucial for their integration come second place. Only input and output count.
Relevance for study:	ANT's microscopic focus is suitable to blind out perceived structural forces. It concentrates on mapping the interplay between a variety of local and extra-local networked human and non-human entities within Dublin's governance framework and the degree to which they influence or shape funding arrangements for APCs.
URT:	Key question: WHO creates power?
View on power:	Power is diffuse as its point of origin is the individuals' or stakeholders' position in the local political economy. Fragmentation of interests among stakeholders leads to the necessity to engage in accumulating the capacity to govern through both formal and informal coalition-building with likeminded individuals or groups.
Social production model:	Power is based on the ability to acquire the capacity to govern in a fragmented institutional environment that lacks an "overarching command structure or a unifying system of thought" (Stone, 1989: 227).
Selective incentives:	Stimuli that glue together a wide range of stakeholders with different and at times opposing agendas.
Systemic power (to):	The capacity to act and exert influence on others that is based on a favourable position in the governance network. Awareness of systemic power is a pre-requisite to intentionally exert actions that are strategically geared towards achieving aims and objectives.
Relevance for study:	URT sheds light on the strategic mobilisation of resources among key players in Dublin that have a vested interest in governance restructuring and that are considered instrumental in influencing associated consequences for APC funding. The particular focus of URT on forming strategic alliances based on small incentives and informal relationships is considered crucial in assessing relevant power flows between identified key stakeholders and the scope of APCs to participate in decision-making circles.
The RA:	Key question: WHAT determines power?
View on power:	Power structures are negotiated between the state and capitalist interest. Whereas the state is mainly concerned about balancing crisis-prone capitalism, maintaining acceptable standards of societal cohesion and economic well-being (national space), the chief interest of capital interest is to make profit (international space).
Accumulation: system:	Predominant modes of production and consumption of goods and services as the basis of societal well-being based on the principle of economic growth.
Mode of social regulation:	Political and social relations, institutions and processes directed at maintaining the accumulation system.
Regime of Accumulation:	Macroeconomic principle resulting from the interplay between modes of production and consumption (i.e. the accumulation system) and ensuing regulatory interventions directed at maintaining it (i.e. the mode of social regulation).
Relevance for study:	RA looks at processes of governance restructuring and the role of APCs therein. APCs are a manifestation of statutory regulatory intervention targeted at sustaining the current mode of accumulation. Focusing on APCs in Dublin allows identifying the potential of the locale in influencing funding arrangements and criteria vis-à-vis the course of national policies such as the Strategic Management Initiative or plans to promote the Developmental Welfare State.
Commonality:	All theories try to explain durability of power; i.e. they are all concerned with the issue of maintaining the power to act from a strategic position.

Source: ANT – Latour (1987, 2002), Law (1992) and Murdoch (1997); URT – Stone (1989); the RA – Jessop (1990), Lipietz (1992) and Tickell and Peck (1992).

The analytical frameworks provided by these three theories offer different insights that assist possible explanations for place-specific manifestations of governance and, in particular, the logic driving the funding arrangements and associated processes of APCs in Dublin. Table 3.1 above summarises key concerns and core principles of actor-network theory, urban regime theory and the regulation approach.

Part 1 of this chapter briefly discusses the origin and the main criticism of each theory (see Table 3.2 below). It also makes reference to the relevance of theoretical concepts in regard to their conceptual potential for explaining governance restructuring in Dublin and the role of APCs therein.

Table 3.2: Introducing the theoretical frameworks – key aspects

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Background Origins and chief concerns
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key principles Main themes and criticism
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevance Contribution to the analysis of new forms of (urban) governance in Dublin
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perspective on funding arrangements of APCs Explanation of power relations concerning funding arrangements for APCs?

Source: Informed by approach chosen by McGuirk (2004), Hubbard, Kitchin *et al.* (2002) and Lauria (1997a).

Part 2 provides a more practical view on the theoretical perspectives provided by ANT, URT and the RA. It first elaborates on the discussion of the core strengths and weaknesses of each theory. Then, it highlights how these different theoretical concepts can facilitate the empirical analysis of power relations and practices that impact on governance restructuring in Dublin and that, subsequently, manifest in funding arrangements for APCs.

3.2 Context 1: introducing the three theoretical frameworks

The following three sections briefly introduce ANT, URT and RA. Each section is organised under the following headings:

- Origins and concerns;
- Criticism; and
- Relevance for the case study.

3.2.1 Actor-Network Theory (ANT): the deconstruction of networks

3.2.1.1 Origins and concerns of ANT

ANT is anchored in post-structuralism and emerged from the sociology of science and technology. Conceptually formed by the work of Michael Serres and Bruno Latour

(Bingham and Thrift 2000; Graham and Marvin 2001; Hubbard *et al.* 2002), the development of ANT is also associated with the writings of Michel Callon, and John Law (Pickering 1993; Murdoch 1997, 1998; Smith 2003). ANT rejects the idea of any pre-structured *a-priori* explanatory mechanism or “some pre-existing account of epoch-like change” (Murdoch 1995: 732). Latour (1987: 65) argues that scientific knowledge is “the *end result* of a long process in the laboratory that we are now starting to observe” (cf. Bingham 1996). ANT is concerned with “heterogeneous engineering” (Thrift 2000a: 4) as it defines the world as a plethora of networked (engineered) relationships consisting of all kinds of materiality (heterogeneous): inanimate and animate matter, humans and ‘things’. Thereby, ANT challenges traditional epistemological, ontological and ethical constraints (Law 1992; Mol 1999; Davies 2000; Latour 2002; Castree 2002). Law favours it because:

[...] it is a good idea not to take it for granted that there is a macrosocial system on the one hand, and bits and pieces of derivative microsocial detail on the other. If we do this we close off most of the interesting questions about the origins of power and organisation. Instead we should start with a clean slate (Law 1992: 2).

ANT applies a micro-sociological perspective and looks at power flows at the interfaces between all sorts of things, human and non-human (hereafter entities or intermediaries⁶³) (Law 1992). It explores and describes how power is utilised to strategically situate individuals and inanimate matter into stable relationships (or exclude them, as the case may be, from those) that ensure the functioning of complex governance systems. In short, ANT tries to give answers as “it attempts to elide the ‘why’ question with ‘how questions’” (Murdoch 1995: 747).

3.2.1.2 Criticism of ANT

What most distinctively differentiates ANT from traditional and post-modern sociological and geographical understandings of networks (e.g. Castells 1996; Thrift 1996) is the principle of *general symmetry* (Pickering 1993; Murdoch 1997) which – according to Latour (2004) – attributes the ability to modify intentional (i.e. human) decision making to both humans and nonhumans. Against this backdrop, the question arises whether intentionality, motivational behaviour or vested interest can function as surgical instruments dividing the allegedly artificially produced ‘Siamese twins’ named human and non-human (or material) agency. The core weakness of ANT seems to be the issue of intentionality understood as a problem of cause: “If nonhumans are *actants*⁶⁴, then we need a way of determining their power” (Murdoch 1997: 745)⁶⁵. In any case, ANT is struggling to resolve convincingly the issue as to whether or not intentionality is a pre-condition for action (cf. Pickering 1993). On the one hand, entities can be understood as embodiments of previous (i.e. historic) human-material interaction such as legislation, funding guidelines or evaluation procedures, all of

⁶³ See Chapter 7, Section 7.2.1, Table 7.1.

⁶⁴ Latour refers to things that act or speak on behalf of people or things as actants (see Latour 1987: 83-84); in contrast, humans are referred to as actors.

⁶⁵ Quoting from Collins and Yearley (1992: 322).

which potentially animate human agency in existing networks⁶⁶ in an unpredictable way. But how can the process of inscription, alignment, or being reeled in resisted by targeted entities, on the other hand?

It could be argued that, even though not endowed with conscious decision-making capacity, at least some form of action ability can be attributed to inanimate matter because it can 'do things' and, furthermore, 'make a difference' (cf. Pickering 1993; Latour 2004). For example, in *Technology is Society Made Durable* (Latour 1991), Latour discards any action that is solely based on a rationale on the grounds that a preferably full description of network space is sufficient to avoid searching for intra-motivational or extra-causal influences. In fact, in abandoning pre-conceived categorical boxes and normative goals, Latour's cognitive interest seems to be satisfied with 'thick', i.e. detailed in-depth, descriptions of interactions in network space by means of empirical field work (i.e. 'stepping in' without interfering with the network⁶⁷) observing where *his* actors and actants are leading him. This is a consequent application of the principle of symmetry, which does not privilege one entity over the other and, hence, must insist "that *everything* deserves explanation and, more particularly, that everything that you seek to explain or describe should be approached in the same way" (Law 1994: 9-10, original emphasis).

3.2.1.3 Relevance of ANT for the study

ANT promises a 'fresh perspective' for the analysis of the embeddedness of APCs in a changing and negotiable institutional framework because it sets out to describe and de-construct the existence of complex 'black-boxes' such as governance networks. The urban governance system in Dublin consists of an amalgamation of both things – such as the built environment⁶⁸, guidelines, funding mechanisms or institutions – and humans – such as politicians, civil servants, APC staff, community activists or entrepreneurs. ANT can trace movements of entities between centres of relative power and establish their role in, and influence on, shaping funding arrangements for APCs. In denying spatiality and time as being divided into discrete levels, networked entities in Dublin's governance landscape can be pursued beyond the surface of relations and aspects that are immediately visible; the application of ANT allows us to seamlessly follow networked entities through space and time and 'jump' between the present and the past, the local and the global (Law 1986; Thrift 2000a).

⁶⁶ Pickering (1993: 579) speaks of "a temporal and posthumanist interplay [...] between the emergence of material agency and the construction of human goals targeted at network progression".

⁶⁷ Observation may alter the behaviour of the research object and thereby lead to artificially constructed networks that result in a description of something that differs from what was originally intended to be observed. Heisenberg's Uncertainty Principle may illustrate this element: according to quantum mechanics, the more precisely the position of a given particle is given, the less precisely one can say what its momentum is. This is clearly an analogy mirroring what Law and Hetherington (1999) define as relational materiality and performativity of networked entities. Going beyond description, i.e. becoming a part of the network, would alter the network behaviour through mutual interaction (see, for example, Star's (1991) participatory observation in a fast food restaurant).

⁶⁸ Most APCs in Dublin are situated in neighbourhoods with poor standards of social infrastructure, high share of social housing and low quality of the urban fabric (Pringle *et al.* 1999).

3.2.2 Urban Regime Theory (URT): the business-policy nexus

3.2.2.1 Origins and concerns of URT

Urban regime theory (URT) is anchored in urban political studies in the USA. It emerged as a response to the concept of economic determinism inherent in elitist theories such as community power structures (Domhoff 2005) or growth coalition theory (Logan and Molotch 1996). In principle, these theories try to explain the domination of urban politics through either closed incestuous circles of power (Hunter 1953; Mills 1956) or popular consensus (cf. Dahl 1961: 325). Emanating from Stephen L. Elkin's (1987) *City and Regime in the American Republic* and Clarence N. Stone's (1989) *Regime Politics*, urban regime theory became a prominent concept for the analysis of the sphere of local politics (Lauria 1997a; Imbroscio 1998b; Davies 1996, 2002)⁶⁹. Both, Elkin's and Stone's work, build upon the normative assumption that the market society in liberal democracies is "the best possible social form" (Davies 2002: 4) and that the orientation of city politics towards business interests is "a consequence of institutionally mediated structures" (Davies 1996: 694) that is likely to perpetuate social inequalities in U.S. society.

3.2.2.2 Criticism of URT

Stone (1989: 6) defines urban regimes as "the informal arrangements by which public bodies and private interests function together in order to be able to make and carry out governing decisions". The framework within which the composition of urban regimes is positioned is being determined by "two basic institutional principles of the American economy: (1) popular control of the formal machinery of government and (2) private ownership of business enterprise" (*ibid.*). Stone's case study on Atlanta illustrates that the nature of the political economy in Atlanta is conducive to making the business interest indispensable in any meaningful coalition:

Public officials can govern *with* the grain of business cooperation, but cannot govern effectively against that grain. Incorporation into the business system of civic cooperation is thus empowering, and that makes alliance with the down-town elite strongly attractive to public officials and others in the community as well (Stone 1989: 196, original emphasis).

Despite notions of an overall increasing involvement of business interest in public-private partnership-type projects in Europe, critics of URT claim that the influence of business elites is "part of a national state project designed to restructure local government along neo-liberal lines" (Wood 2004: 2108). Peck (1995: 26) argues that the power of business interests in European governance stems "in part from the attribution by the state of 'political status', having less to do with the 'energy and cunning' of its individual members and more to do with effective '*sponsorship*' by the state" (original emphasis). Once profitable *informal* relationships⁷⁰ between local decision-makers and the business elite have been facilitated, the interesting question

⁶⁹ Some authors (Lauria 1997a; Imbroscio 1998b) also highlight Susan and Norman Fainstein's *Restructuring the City* (1983).

⁷⁰ Throughout this study informal relationships refer to dealings between parties that are not based on protocol.

to be asked is why and through what kind of *formal* state-initiated mechanism coalition partners from either of the parties involved could be encouraged or forced to opt out. State-initiated opportunities for public-private cooperation and strategising may have opened up unprecedented opportunities for the forging of powerful links that may not be controllable any more from the top – even if threatened with withdrawal of resources (cf. Davies 2004: 31). In short, interest-driven informal networks between individuals on either side of the private-public spectrum may develop their own complex and maybe independent dynamics that are beyond the control of those interest groups that were instrumental in forging a coalition in the first place:

If it can be demonstrated that independence in overall political strategy is compromised in specific policy initiatives by dependence on business groups, then the central proposition in URT may theoretically be valid (Davies 1996: 696-697).

Some scholars that are sympathetic to URT acknowledge the potential of such empirical work as “a treasure trove of knowledge regarding contextual differences” (Mossberger and Stoker 2001: 816), “a useful tool in demonstrating how far the balance of power between local government and the private sector has changed in urban policy and providing a benchmark for comparison between cases” (Davies 1996: 702), or “a model of local political success and failure outside of the regime concept itself” (Dowding 2001: 17). Goodwin and Painter (1997), for example, argue that the symbiotic relationship between politics and business is not necessarily confined to the US as they observe an increasing involvement of the state in economic issues⁷¹. Whereas some authors stress that problems derive from poor translation, others highlight “the need for a more ‘careful’, ‘rigorous’ and ‘innovative’ deployment of US concepts” (Wood 2004: 2104) or maintain that fundamental differences in the political economy between the United States and Western European countries militate against carrying out meaningful comparative case studies using URT as an explanatory framework (Lawless 1994; Harding 1995; Peck and Tickell 1995; Davies 2003)⁷².

Apart from issues concerning systemic compatibility, it appears that URT is oversimplifying the problem of scale. Lauria (1997a) maintains that URT deals with localities as if they were somehow disconnected from wider structural processes. In a fixed setting consisting of the political economy of the city, the point of departure is the configuration of power at local level, which is ignoring developments beyond city boundaries that may have been the source for any local economic or political behaviour in the first place. Driven by epistemological priorities, the focus on ‘movers and shakers’ that operate within a particular urban regime bears the danger of neglecting relevant societal and economic forces situated outside the observed urban

⁷¹ Scharpf (2000: 370) underlines the necessity for democratically accountable office holders and unions in capitalist countries to legitimise their position through providing opportunities for footloose capital to allocate profit-making economic activities that provide “income opportunities of citizens [and union members] and voters, and which generates the tax revenues to finance public services and welfare spending”.

⁷² The arguments advanced against the application of URT outside the US highlight differences concerning (a) the state form as mirrored in the institutional framework, (b) the income generation of local authorities, (c) the overall ideology driving the (re-)distribution of taxes or (d) the incentives for forming durable coalitions.

framework of regime formation (e.g. Davies 2002). Ward (1996: 432) suggests that "regimes may *appear* 'bottom-up' because this is the way they have been studied". He notes that a variety of pressures originating in the wider political economy that have led to changes in the public sector and its relationship towards business interests "may actually *be driving* regime formation (or at least institutional coalitions)" (Ward 1996: 430, original emphasis).

Answering the criticism directed at the locally confined space within which URT seeks explanations, Stone (1998) acknowledges the impact on wider economic developments on cities and the actors therein⁷³. Nevertheless, he maintains that caution is needed when theorising the relationship between the big picture and the locale: "It is one thing to see it [the global economy] as a source of policy changes. It is another to see it as dictating the local response" (Stone 1998: 254). Stone (1998; 2004a; 2004b) argues that the locale is mediating any external stimulus through existing regime arrangements and feeding back a response with a potential to alter extra-local forces.

3.2.2.3 Relevance of URT for the study

Drawing on the work of Stone, one could argue that formal funding arrangements and related processes concerning APCs in Dublin are likely to be complemented by informal arrangements negotiated by key stakeholders positioned at the interface between statutory administration and the government-funded APC network. According to Stone (1989: 4), this coupling is a social production of power that is essential to form efficient regimes or coalitions because "informal understandings and arrangements provide needed flexibility to cope with nonroutine matters, they facilitate cooperation to a degree that formally defined relations do not." In the light of URT, informal elements of inter-institutional relationships between APCs and their political sponsors would represent a form of civic cooperation that is empowering on the grounds that "it enables community actors to achieve cooperation beyond what could be formally commanded" (Stone 1989: 5). The forging of such a hypothetical form of cooperation in Dublin, however, would not necessarily have to be dependent on will but on resourcefulness. Stone argues that the ability intentionally to bring together both resources and institutional connections enables stakeholders either to maintain or alter existing power structures. This ability, in turn, is dependent on the existing arrangements and procedures in place that attribute power to stakeholders within the urban political economy through which selective incentives for cooperation can be created. As the formation of strategic alliances is typically based on small incentives and informal relationships, it is considered crucial to shed light on relevant power flows between identified key stakeholders and the scope of APCs to participate in decision-making circles.

⁷³ See discussion between Stone and Imbroscio and the exchange between Stone, Imbroscio and Davies in the *Journal of Urban Affairs* Vol. 20 (3) and Vol. 26 (1) respectively.

3.2.3 The Regulation Approach (RA): an agency-structure dilemma

3.2.3.1 Origins and concerns of the RA

The regulation approach has evolved from the work of a small group of French economists consisting of Michel Aglietta, Alain Lipietz, and Robert Boyer (the *Parisienne School* of thought) and consists of a variety of competing regulation schools (Jessop 1990; Collinge 1999; Röttger 2004)⁷⁴. Regulation can be understood as an “umbrella term for an ongoing research programme within contemporary Marxist political economy” (Tickell and Peck 1992)⁷⁵. Its principal ideas are based on the Marxist hypothesis that any form of capitalist accumulation triggers class struggle that requires stabilisation through intervention mechanisms. This is so because the capitalist production of goods and services “is characterised by certain fundamental contradictions (such as the collective tendency for capitalists to economize on workers’ wages, thus ultimately reducing the effective demand for manufactured goods)” (Gertler 2000: 681; cf. Jessop 1990: 188-189; Jessop 2001a: 9; Judge *et al.* 1995: 11; Lauria 1997a: 6-7; Painter 1997b: 124). If the ratio of capital-revenues to capital invested falls below the marginal revenue required to produce commodities or services in a profitable way, accumulation is not possible under *ceteris paribus* conditions and, consequently, the production process needs adjusting retrospectively (Aglietta 1979, 2000; Lipietz 1992; Tickell and Peck 1992; Painter 1995). Accumulation is therefore dependent on a functional relationship between production and consumption, i.e. on a sustainable yield on investment (Harvey 2001; Smith 2003).

The principal objective of the regulation school of thought is to answer how and why capitalist relations succeeded in overcoming such crisis situation over time and space (Tickell and Peck 1992; Goodwin and Painter 1997). Regulationists argue that the harmonisation of this crisis-prone relationship between consumption and production over a prolonged period of time depends on the *Mode of Social Regulation* (MSR)⁷⁶:

Perhaps the principal contribution of the regulation approach lies in the integration of the role of political and social relations (state action and legislature, social institutions, behavioural norms and habits, political practices) – the so-called ‘mode of social regulation’ (MSR) – into the conception of capitalist reproduction and crisis (Tickell and Peck 1992: 192)

⁷⁴ The focal point for the formation of what became known as the Parisian regulation school was the dissertation of Michel Aglietta, *Régulation et crises du capitalisme* (1976), that had a groundbreaking effect concerning the analysis of economic phenomena (Aglietta 2000). According to Jessop (2001a) Aglietta’s and Lipietz’s work evolved from an Althusserian concept of structural causality. Louis Althusser (1918-1990) proclaimed that the configuration and interplay of practices that revolve around the production process constitute society.

⁷⁵ Outlining the most prominent regulationist currents Jessop (1990) draws particular attention to the importance of competing theories that emerged over time and identifies seven different currents within the regulation approach.

⁷⁶ Jessop (1994) prefers the term *social mode of economic regulation* because it “highlights both the manner of regulation and its object” (36, notes, point 2). However, throughout this thesis the term *mode of social regulation* (MSR) is used as defined by Tickell and Peck (1992) because – by definition – it already implies the economic issue embedded in the concept of the regulation approach.

The different pace of change in different countries and regions has certainly demonstrated that the MSR “as a social creation” (Aglietta 1979: 19) can become an effective local instrument to buffer market forces with potentially radical territorial changes at various scales (Goodwin and Painter 1996, 1997; Powell and Barrientos 2004)⁷⁷. According to Jessop (1990: 194), the MSR is “neither a fateful necessity nor a wilful contingency”. It emerges as a result of interplay between (place-specific) societal values, norms and institutions⁷⁸, on the one hand, and characteristics of the predominant accumulation system, on the other (cf. Painter 1995). The macroeconomic framework described by the twin pillars of an accumulation system and the mode of social regulation is defined as the regime of accumulation (Lipietz 1992; Tickell and Peck 1992; Murdoch 1995).

3.2.3.2 Criticism of the RA

The regulation approach (RA) has received both sympathetic interrogation and criticism (e.g. Murdoch 1995; Painter 1995; Lauria 1997b; MacLeod and Goodwin 1999) and more direct criticism (Brenner and Glick 1991; Bonefeld 1993) for its inadequacy in relation to explanatory loopholes and theoretical weaknesses. The principal criticism is largely directed at the shaky position of the mode of social regulation (MSR) as a central explanatory concept as it is based on circular reasoning (Goodwin and Painter 1997; MacLeod and Goodwin 1999) and notions of essentialism (Painter 1997a). Painter summarises the dilemma as follows:

Objects of regulation do not precede regulation, existing in some preregulatory limbo awaiting the emergence of a mode of regulation. Rather, processes and objects of regulation emerge together and are produced by one another [...]. Because modes of regulation are understood to be the product of the interaction of contingent phenomena, the concept of mode of regulation cannot explain the emergence of those phenomena in the first place (Painter 1997b: 127).

Some scholars argue that the regulation approach does not sufficiently take into account that there “are sites of resistance and disruption, as well as sites of regulation” (Goodwin and Painter 1997: 22; cf. Brenner and Glick 1991: 105; Murdoch 1995: 290-292; Painter 1995, 1997a). In relation to the RA’s potential to account for urban governance structures, Lauria (1997a: 8) points out that “regulation theory underestimates the importance of local actors and organizations and thus cannot explain the concrete construction of regulatory mechanisms” (cf. Brenner and Glick 1991: 105; Bonefeld 1993; Murdoch 1995; Painter 1995, 1997a; MacLeod and Goodwin 1999). Despite epistemological, ontological and methodological peculiarities (MacLeod and Goodwin 1999; Röttger 2004; Davies 2002) efforts have been made to amalgamate the merits of URT and RA. Lauria (1997a) proposes a marriage between

⁷⁷ Jessop (1990) points out that the key thrust of the RA is by no means limited to an analysis of crisis within Fordism or any other model of capitalist production through the lens of class struggle but that attention of the RA has shifted to address “questions of structural cohesion and neglected social agency”. As a result RA is not only adjusting to increasingly complex organisation of the interface between ‘the economic’ and ‘the social’ but also capable of challenging the logic that governs neo-liberal economic theory (cf. Aglietta 1979).

⁷⁸ For example laws, trade unions, chambers of commerce, government departments, banks, the media, trade associations, the family, the administrative statutory apparatus, the education system, NGOs and citizen’s groups, clubs.

the RA with URT to make up for 'explanatory loopholes' concerning questions of scale. Others look at combining versions of the RA with ANT (Castree 2002; Murdoch 1995) or suggest viewing regulatory systems through the lens of neo-Gramscian state theory (Jessop 1997b; Hirsch 2002).

3.2.3.3 Relevance of the RA for the study

In the light of the regulation approach, the establishment and institutionalisation of locally operating unelected special-purpose bodies is an indicator for a new form of state-restructuring in the context of economic challenges. In the Irish scenario, the report *The Developmental Welfare State* (NESO 2005: ix) captures the importance of policy and institutional adaptation as a way to cope with "Ireland's long-run economic and social development vulnerabilities". The report argues that one of the key challenges is to devise a welfare system that, first, is tailored around the individual and, second, "not only addresses social risks, needs and inequalities more adequately, but also connects more fully with the dynamic of the economy" (*ibid.*).

Having identified APCs as key organisations to deliver local performance-based anti-poverty programmes on a contractual basis, the envisaged alignment and integration of APCs into the landscape of urban governance can be interpreted as a state-driven response to the latent risk of the fragmentation of politico-economic spaces under the current neo-liberal capitalist system. In this context, the RA links funding arrangements of APCs to state-led restructuring processes, which are targeted at mediating between societal frictions and economic imperatives.

3.3 Context 2: practical implications for empirical research

3.3.1 Introduction

The analysis of empirical research often aims at mapping out power relations between interest groups and stakeholders involved in urban governance. The power flows within multi-stakeholder relationships have been described and analysed from different competing theoretical viewpoints such as actor-network theory (ANT) (e.g. Murdoch and Marsden 1995; McGuirk 2000), urban regime theory (URT) (e.g. Brown 1999; Stone 2001; Austin and McCaffrey 2002; Bassett *et al.* 2002; McGuirk 2003b), neo-Foulcauldian views (MacKinnon 2000), organisational theories (Raco 2002), perspectives of complexity (Medd 2001), the regulation approach (RA) (Peck and Tickell 1994; Le Galès 1998) and, related to the latter, neo-Gramscian state theory (e.g. MacLeod and Goodwin 1999; McGuirk 2004). These case studies typically map and explain power configurations within the urban governance system and illustrate how the application of competing theories can facilitate the analysis of empirical material.

Little empirical research could be found, however, that explains the position and of APCs in Ireland from a theoretical perspective: work led by Bartley and Saris focuses on exploring the relationship between the role of urban governance in addressing the

systematic exclusion of marginalised communities from actively participating in urban development processes (Bartley and Saris 1999; Saris *et al.* 2000; Saris *et al.* 2002; Bartley and Borscheid 2003; Bartley and Shine 2003). Their key concerns are underlying political relationships and institutional processes that determine the characteristic feature of governance coalitions involving participation from civil society and their potential to increase the scope for local democracy. Other case studies explicitly focus on the analysis of community-based partnership-type structures or other special-purpose bodies in Ireland – such as public-private partnerships (PPPs) – from the theoretical viewpoints associated with actor-network theory (McGuirk 2000), urban regime theory (Hogan 2006) or the regulation approach (Punch 2005)⁷⁹.

This study takes into account the complexity of the relationships between actors and institutions involved in the decision-making processes around planning, executing, monitoring and evaluating APCs. It investigates into the capacity of three contemporary theories of governance to explain changing funding arrangements for APCs within the current system of local governance in Dublin. ANT, URT and the RA are competing theories that were selected for this case study based on the following criteria:

- they are dominant theories in a series of studies analysing power relations in urban governance;
- they can account for interactions between economic and social processes and their socio-spatial impacts on the locale;
- they are capable of explaining the emergence and maintenance of power relations in the socio-institutional framework of urban governance and related economic developments;
- they emphasise different spatial dimensions and thereby provide distinct perspectives on the construction of power.

Even though the theoretical approaches generally revolve around the mechanisms in place that maintain or re-shape existing power relationships, each of them provides specific conceptual lenses through which the contemporary restructuring funding arrangements for APCs and associated procedures can be analysed. Against this backdrop, this empirical study sets out to describe and analyse the institutional embeddedness, functional reconfiguration and underlying funding arrangements of APCs in Dublin in regard to the three interrelated key indicators identified in the previous section: institutionalisation, accountability and value for money.

It is argued that the introduction and rolling out of new managerial practices facilitated APCs to be more efficient, effective and economic – and hence contributed to greater value for money (VFM) (cf. Power 1997) from public investments into areas of

⁷⁹ McGuirk (2000) applied actor-network theory (a Latourian concept of power) in analysing the exclusion of local authority planners from newly formed governance networks in Dublin. Punch (2004) takes a political economy perspective on the degree of involvement of communities in local urban regeneration plans.

disadvantage and that these changes are reflected in the funding arrangements for APCs. The chief objective is to assess which theoretical framework provides the most powerful explanation for those processes that affect the funding arrangements for APCs:

- within the changing administrative framework under the LDSIP;
- against the backdrop of rolling out practices emanating from the Strategic Management Initiative (SMI) that put much emphasis on performance monitoring and fiscal accountability based on the principle of value-for-money.

It is intended to ascertain which theory is best situated to explain governance restructuring, the role of new managerial concepts in promoting both greater accountability and VFM and how these processes impact on the funding framework – and ultimately – on the *modus operandi* of APCs. What is crucial for the analysis of APC-type structures under the current model of governance is that no dominant top-down or bottom-up flow of power is taken as given. Looking at contemporary models of multi-scalar governance it can be assumed that the spheres of influence between local, meso and macro level are inextricably intertwined and boundaries between the three spheres only refer to spatial scales (see Chapter 4.1, Figure 3); they do not suggest limitations to spheres of influence as the flux of power in-between is considered to happen more or less seamlessly.

The multiplicity of links connecting stakeholders both within and between various administrative, political and spatial scales reflects the composite nature of governance. As a result, there possibly exist options for a complex flow of input “from activities in many places rather than from a single centre” (Jessop 2003: 2) to take place. This assumption avoids the chicken-and-egg dilemma that finds expression in the discussion of whether power is generated top-down or bottom-up (Lauria, 1997).

The following sections elaborate on the theoretical discussion and ascertain the explanatory potential of each theory in regard to the explanations of power reconfigurations that affect funding arrangements of APCs in Dublin. Each section takes account of the theoretical weaknesses discussed further above (Section 3.2). It is attempted to suggest a practicable approach towards the utilisation of actor-network theory, urban regime theory and the regulation approach as an explanatory framework for the analysis of new approaches to governance and their impact on the promotion of local development initiatives in marginal and excluded spaces in Dublin.

3.3.2 ANT's perspective on funding arrangements

3.3.2.1 Introduction

If ANT is strictly sticking to the principle of general symmetry (see above, Section 3.1, Table 3.1), Murdoch (1997: 750) asks whether ANT can “ever do anything more than *describe*, in a prosaic fashion, the dangerous imbroglios that enmesh us?” (original emphasis). Latour (1991) clearly indicates that in order to arrive at a conclusion, one

has to have a description of networks that is saturated. If thick description is a means to an end, however, then the following questions arise: Where is the starting point of the observation? How is it defined? And at what stage and on what grounds does the observer decide to stop following how entities proceed within network space? Observation, if guided by a vested or epistemological interest, needs to end at some stage or, at least, needs to arrive at a point of evaluation in order to recapitulate as networks can only be reconstructed in hindsight because “it is impossible to follow actors everywhere (Murdoch, 1994, 22)” (Davies 2000: 542). But how can dead-ends and meaningless connections be identified and irrelevant entities be let go if the observation is not guided by a more specific cognitive interest other than following network-builders? If Latour sticks to his point of view that – no matter what happens – only changes induced by networked entities count (i.e. effects caused by their input), then how does one define at what stage it is time to leave the observatory position? Furthermore, taking a step back, one could ask what would be a legitimate driving force or reason for engaging in describing entities in the first place.

3.3.2.2 A case of first-order proximations and remote control?

Following Murdoch’s (1998) approach of ‘first-order proximations’, ANT can help to answer questions concerning the modernisation of the public sector and the ensuing utilisation of value for money-driven principles as a means to methodologically position and incorporate APCs into the dominant frame of governance; this means that a decision needs to be made on the scale and dimension of processes having a bearing on funding APCs. ANT is concerned with the question of how and by what means governance changes affecting APCs were implemented. It provides a contrasting view to urban regime theory (URT) and the regulation approach (RA) (see Section 3.1, Table 3.1). Case studies analysing urban governance from the perspective of URT and the RA tend to approach their research object ‘from the outside in’ (Lauria 1997b). These approaches are criticised for their pre-occupation with structural processes at work (the capitalist system of societal wealth production) that determine, first, the nature of social discourses and, second, the scope for influencing the logic of governance ‘from below’.

ANT analysts argue that, as a result, URT and the RA can only observe “end products of networks” (Murdoch 1995: 751) that restrict insights into the micro-processes responsible for the establishment of any structural framework in the first place and, therefore, are not able to meaningfully investigate the conservation and transformation of power therein. In contrast, ANT approaches the circulation of power from a micro-sociological point of view; it strives to explain through saturated description how and to what extent network builders manage to align other agents or entities – i.e. things, organisations and individuals – into a durable power configuration⁸⁰. A key role is attributed to so-called intermediaries. These can be thought of as entities or agents

⁸⁰ Durability is also at the heart of URT’s concept of selective incentives that is directed at consolidating urban coalitions over time (cf. Stone 1989: 186-189). Likewise, it is central to RA’s mode of accumulation (cf. Lipietz 1992).

that have been utilised by network-builders with a view to influencing the behaviour or status of other entities within the network:

In order for an actor to successfully enrol entities (human and non-human) within a network, their [sic] behaviour must be stabilized and channelled in the directions desired by the enrolling actor. This will entail redefining the roles of the actors and entities as they come into alignment, such that they come to gain new identities or attributes within the network. It is the intermediaries [...], which act to bind actors together, 'cementing' the links [...] (Murdoch 1995: 747; cf. Callon 1991).

The literature review highlighted that wider socio-political and economic processes influence the local manifestation of funding arrangements for APCs. Ignoring the scalar division of spaces, ANT can be utilised to describe relationships that seamlessly connect people, things and ideas across space and time (Latour 1993). The concept of translation (Latour 1987; Law 1996; Murdoch 1997), notions of post-humanist decentering (Pickering 1993), the achievement of remote control through the circulation *immutable mobiles*⁸¹ as intermediaries (Law 1986) and the phenomenon of black-boxing (Latour 1987, 2002) provide a unique angle for the analysis of funding arrangements concerning APCs in Dublin (Section 3.1 Table 3.1).

Taking, first, Dublin's governance landscape as the institutional framework and, second, the City of Dublin as the 'spatial container', 'first-order proximation' (Murdoch 1998) or 'envelope' (Law 1986) within which APCs are embedded, then ANT offers an approach allowing one to pick up and seamlessly follow certain threads within geographically confined action spaces that link all kinds of agents that are considered relevant for changes in the funding framework. For example, from the perspective of ANT, power can be defined as the ability of an actor to modify and stabilise funding arrangements of APCs in Dublin by means of enrolling agents on their own terms and conditions over a meaningful period of time.

Law's concept of remote control provides an explanation for the creation of a central-peripheral or top-down flow of power within Dublin's governance landscape and the role of accountability and performance-monitoring systems therein (Law 1986). In this case study, ANT serves to cast light on 'things' or activities that make up what is discernible as the funding mechanism for APCs and, thereby, offers an approach to make assumptions on the construction of governance and the re-enforcement of power imbalances therein. What is regarded as the funding framework is a result of the (historically) negotiated or prescribed positioning of APCs as *per se* complex entities within the 'meta-network' of governance. From the viewpoint of ANT, accountability and performance monitoring are technologies that aim at maintaining or improving the delegation of power throughout the governance network. This is

⁸¹ Immutable mobiles can be understood as the embodiment of power in entities that can make others perform. Taking a lead from the Latourian concept of power as "a function of the capacity to muster a large number of allies at one spot" (*ibid.*), Law's (1986) story on Portuguese efforts to maintain imperial long-distance relations with India. In Law's example, the superiority of technology in form of means of transport (a vessel) and a monopoly on associated know-how is a guarantor for networked stability that can be maintained at a distance. Superior technology, combined with social control that is based on reliable automation of humans, represents a reliable form of power (see Law 1986: 13).

achieved through the circulation of immutable mobiles as a material *and* social manifestation of power that holds local APCs in their attributed role within a prescribed social, economic and geographical envelope that is remote-controlled from a distance (e.g. Law 1986).

The literature provides stories of dominant network-builders successfully enrolling weaker agents (Law 1991, 1986; Latour 2002) and their failure thereof (Callon 1986; Murdoch and Marsden 1995). Failure can occur when the former do not manage to enrol weaker or peripheral agents as originally intended. It is conceivable that the latter have the capacity simply to resist incorporation, to re-negotiate the terms and conditions of the network space in their favour and exert power on, or even manage to dominate, the former. Murdoch and Marsden (1995) illustrate how 'enrolees-to-be' can resist integration into a network space through reeling in support from powerful agents that are in opposition to the objectives of self-proclaimed would-be enroller and de-mask what network-builders consider immutable mobiles as double agents (Law 1986). Tensions within the rank of network-builders that weaken their dominant position can be another cause of network disintegration or collapse (Callon 1986).

The key challenge to resist unwelcome efforts of alignment is to transform what from the outset seems to be a space of prescription into a space of contestation (Murdoch 1998). From an ANT perspective, the analysis of the interview material facilitates the mapping out of the relationship between neighbourhood-based APCs and their political masters in the context of governance restructuring and to draw conclusions on their capacity to construct and circulate power.

3.3.3 URT's perspective on funding arrangements

3.3.3.1 Introduction

In the course of the literature review some reservations surfaced concerning the application of URT in the European and, in this case, the Irish context. When trying to apply URT in the context of integrated area-based approaches to development within Ireland one faces the challenge to work with a theoretical approach that has been formed in the American context. This makes it difficult to allow for an unmodified application of URT in a non-US American environment without concept stretching (Ward 1996; Davies 2002, 2003). In the light of URT's development in the US context, this study has to ascertain whether URT can provide a satisfactory framework for an analysis of the processes leading to a re-structuring of the institutional framework of local governance in Dublin and a related shift of funding priorities for the APC-type approach to local development.

3.3.3.2 A case of translation?

Taking a lead from Cox, Ward (1996: 434) argues that light needs to be shed on urban regime theory's ability to challenge and react to changes in economic space and thereby become "a site *from which* change can be affected (cf. Cox, 1993b)" (original emphasis). Ward suggests removing urban regime theory out of its US-specific context, placing it into a broader theoretical context and trying "to obtain a clear idea of what the concept is and what it actually says about studying local elites" (Ward 1996: 435). Based on the core assumption or the 'iron law' of urban regime theory that mutual dependency on either monetary or political resources is the driving force for regime formation, the import of URT into the Irish context must be based on the assumption that there are similarities between the US and Ireland in the local political economy and the driving forces that enable regimes to form.

Despite a variety of crucial differences in relation to the nature of local government and the potential for business involvement in the political decision-making process, the manifestation of a state-led entrepreneurialism is reflected in new public management initiatives, deregulation, privatisation of services and local pro-growth coalitions that have narrowed the gap between Irish and the US social and economic policy (Bartley and Shine 1999). Moreover, national partnership agreements in tandem with business-friendly policies indicate that a mutually beneficial relationship between political decision-makers and business interests prevails in Ireland. This link between the world of politics and business could be regarded as a valid foundation for the application of URT in the context of governance changes in Dublin⁸².

On the one hand, changes in Dublin's urban governance towards corporate structures involving representatives from the business sector and civil society are believed to be linked to a top-down policy that originated in an increasing neo-liberalisation of national government policy rather than being locally initiated (see below). On the other hand, it could be argued that these top-down policies may also be the reaction of demands from the private sector for a relaxation of statutory regulatory intervention (MacLaran and Williams 2003; Hogan 2006).

Against the increasing entrepreneurial nature of the Irish model of governance, with special-purpose bodies and local authorities competing for urban regeneration contracts in Dublin City, it is particularly interesting to test Stone's concept of URT in the Irish situation⁸³. Irish analysts observe that government and related institutions

⁸² Several tribunals that were set up to investigate deals between developers and politicians illustrate the existence of close ties between the spheres of business and policy-making. In the context of the growth-induced urban sprawl of Dublin, the Mahon and Flood Tribunals are examples for the creation of an artificial scarcity of land for residential and retail function through the manipulation of land rezoning.

⁸³ Research from the UK suggests that – even though the role of business involvement in area-based partnership approaches and public private partnerships is far less dominant than in the US (cf. Davies 2003; Austin and McCaffrey 2002) – the basic principle of motivation for participating in such structures may still hold true. Namely, the interest collectively to access resources, no single interest group could have accessed individually.

have become more and more entrepreneurial and allow local authorities more flexibility and room to manoeuvre towards co-operation with other interest groups (Bartley and Shine 2003; Punch *et al.* 2004; Hogan 2005). Local authorities in Dublin adopted the public-private partnership model as a key vehicle to provide selective incentives for project-based collaboration in urban regeneration with businesses and other stakeholders. Besides engaging in relationships involving the business sector, Dublin City Council (DCC) (a) started liaising with interest groups from local communities in areas zoned for urban regeneration and (b) became involved in APCs. The relationships between DCC and the community sector, however, are less pronounced and often more conflict-laden than those between DCC and the private sector (cf. Bartley and Shine 2003; Hogan 2005).

Local partnership-type arrangements such as APCs represent multi-sectoral interest groups formed around an agreed agenda focussing on economic and social urban regeneration of severely disadvantaged areas in the country. In the context of this study, it is crucial to make an effort to discuss and elicit to what extent key concepts of urban regime theory can be used as an *explanandum* for observed power-relationships in Dublin's governance landscape that have a bearing on repositioning APCs therein. Can URT be applied as a tool to explain underlying incentives, components and practices concerning funding arrangements for APCs or is there a danger of overstretching the concept of URT and attempting to 'fit a square peg into a round hole'?

3.3.4 The RA's perspective on funding arrangements

3.3.4.1 Introduction

The RA highlights the role of the state in regulating the interests of capital and dealing with questions of redistribution. Against the backdrop of the increasing importance of cities as the key economic site of wealth production, the recognition of urban space as a scale of regulation highlights the importance of interactions between (a) local social and political actors, on the one hand, and (b) wider – and more complex – socio-political and economic processes affecting the locale, on the other. Acknowledging the shortcomings of the RA in the field of explaining emerging forms of urban governance, Jessop (1995: 1623) concludes that "it needs to be supplanted through concepts and causal mechanisms associated with other theoretical perspectives". Additions and refinements have been developed to explain the relationship between the emergence of urban governance structures and changes in accumulation across time and space. Perhaps the most promising approach that anticipates the multiple and complex relation between the sphere of the economic and the social and, at the same time, has the potential to avoid an essentialist logic of argumentation (cf. Painter 1997a: 102) is sketched out by Jessop (1997b) who outlines a neo-Gramscian reading of the regulation approach⁸⁴. Aglietta (1979: 29) sees the Gramscian perspective as a way to

⁸⁴ Whereas Gramsci had in mind the classical power struggle at the national level between workers and the bourgeoisie, Jessop (1997b) imports Gramscian ideas into the context of contemporary western

“overcome the various traps of a structuralism of instances, a sovereign state manipulating macro-economic variables, or an instrumental state in the hands of the monopolies” (cf. Althusser and Balibar 1970; Hirsch 2002). The neo-Gramscian perspective can be utilised to explore the role of key individuals or *organic intellectuals* in mediating between different spatio-sectoral interest groups and influencing the development of local modes of social regulation (Brenner and Glick 1991; Collinge and Hall 1997; MacLeod and Goodwin 1999; Aglietta 2000; Röttger 2004).

3.3.4.2 A case of resolving the agency-structure dilemma?

Gramsci “explored how political, intellectual and moral leadership was mediated through a complex ensemble of institutions, organizations, and forces operating within, oriented toward, or located at a distance from the juridico-political state apparatus” (Jessop 1997b: 52). Gramscian state theory supplements the regulation approach’s emphasis on “the social embeddedness and social regulation of accumulation” (Jessop 1997b: 71) as it focuses on dynamic relations within the wider state system, including civil society, and the formation of hegemonic political regimes therein. Gramsci introduces the term *hegemonic bloc* as a concept that refers to the formation of durable power relations among societal interest groups. He attributes a key role in the socio-political production of power to organic intellectuals who are strategically placed deputies, entrepreneurs and bureaucrats (professionals) within the socio-institutional regulatory system that represent a particular vested interest on behalf of a particular class or entrepreneurial elite. They pursue strategies that can both maintain the existing power structures within a relatively united hegemonic bloc and hold in check countervailing forces that could undermine their dominant position and, thereby, exert control over “the *ensemble* of social relationships of production” (Gramsci 1971: 366, original emphasis).

Contemporary analysts also highlight the function of organic intellectuals in designing various novel forms of sub-national governance mechanisms that emerged throughout the 1980s and 1990s as a result of ‘trial-and-error’ search processes for new forms of a regulatory fix for addressing adverse effects of capitalist accumulation on society (Peck and Tickell 1994; Jessop 1997b; Harvey 2001; Jayasuriya 2004). If necessary, short-term concessions concerning the economic and other priorities will be made (for example, through the search for the smallest common denominator) so that potentially counter-hegemonic parties can be co-opted or convinced to ‘buy in’ and, thereby, ensure longevity of the hegemonic project (cf. Collinge and Hall 1997: 131; Jessop 1997b: 62)⁸⁵. This interpretation of the Gramscian view is clearly related to Stone’s concept of pre-emptive power (‘power to’) and also reflects both URT’s and ANT’s concerns about forming durable coalitions and networks respectively.

urban governance models (cf. McGuirk 2004).

⁸⁵ Painter (1997b: 101), drawing on Harvey, mentions the potential of the existence of urban politics as a *relatively autonomous* sphere that “can involve alliances and coalitions between groups whose interests appear to be fundamentally opposed when the abstract features of the accumulation process are considered in isolation and without reference to their necessary spatial manifestation”.

Acknowledging a certain degree of freedom of political decision making within a hegemonic coalition that can even temporarily ignore or inadvertently work against the logic of accumulation for the pursuit of aspects or 'popular convictions' that are perceived more important, Gramsci equally notes that hegemonic projects must be somehow rooted within the dominant societal mode of wealth creation:

It is worth recalling the frequent affirmation made by Marx on the "solidity of popular beliefs" as a necessary element of a specific situation. What he says more or less is "when this way of conceiving things has the force of popular beliefs", etc. Another proposition of Marx is that a popular conviction often has the same energy as a material force or something of the kind, which is extremely significant. The analysis of these propositions tends, I think, to reinforce the conception of *historical bloc* in which precisely material forces are the content and ideologies are the form, though this distinction between form and content has purely didactic value, since the material forces would be inconceivable historically without form and the ideologies would be individual fancies without the material forces (Gramsci 1971: 377).

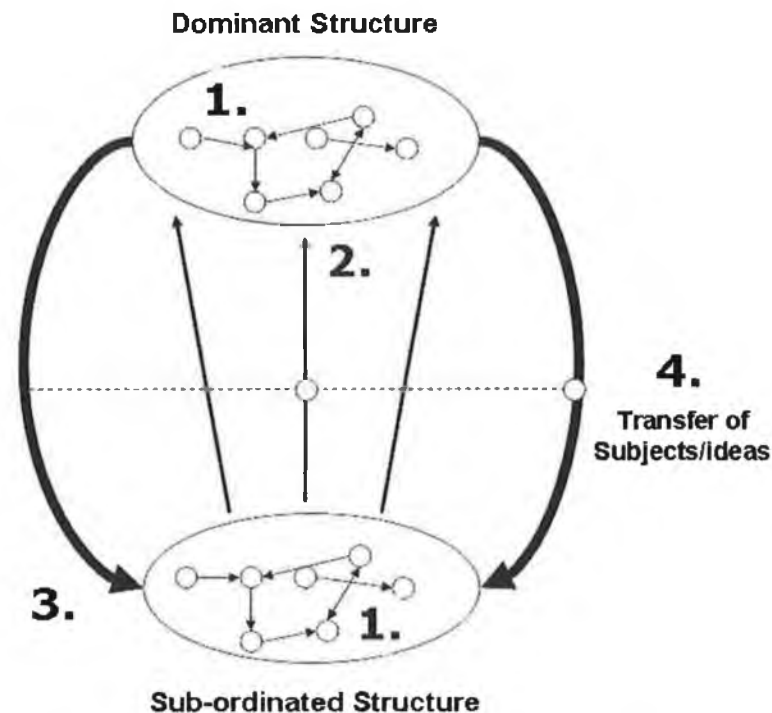
In a similar vein, Althusser and Balibar (1970) argue that the complexity of societal aspects cannot be simply explained by economic practice. They refute a simple one-way causal relationship between accumulation and statutory regulatory mechanisms because a variety of individual social practices intercommunicate with one another and, as a result, have a bearing on one another that creates interdependencies with unpredictable outcomes; i.e. a regulatory mechanism that cannot be controlled by the economy alone. The key concern driving Althusser and Balibar's (1970: 186) analysis of base-superstructure relations is to ascertain "by means of what concept or what set of concepts is it possible to think the determination of a subordinate structure by a dominant structure? In other words, how is it possible to define the concept of a structural causality?"

Althusser introduces the concept of *overdetermination*: he argues that there is no pre-existing structure (Figure 2 below). Structure is a result of social negotiation and struggle among actors with different agendas; hence it is an embodiment of social agency that, in turn, exerts influence on the behaviour of its constituent parts (cf. Althusser 1970 for views on the role of the ideological state apparatus in shaping thought processes within social formations). This has repercussions on other actors who have knock-on effects on the characteristics of what is perceived as the overriding structure and so forth (cf. Glassman 2003).

Taking a philosophical stance on the characteristic features and dominance of a certain structure, Althusser and Balibar (1970: 189) posit "that *the whole existence of the structure consists of its effects*, in short that the structure, which is merely a specific combination of its peculiar elements, is nothing outside its effects" (original emphasis). On the contrary, resembling Gramsci's concept of the social production of hegemonic blocs as a result of successful mediation of class struggles (Gramsci 1971), interferences between particular structures and their effects constitute what could be *perceived as the dominant structure that seemingly determines 'economic objects'*.

Althusser and Balibar's (1970) and Gramsci's (1971) views on the relations within the state and between "men on the one hand and the world of the economy or of production on the other" (Gramsci 1971: 263) is reminiscent of processes happening within the sphere of contemporary urban governance formations and the establishment of dominant regimes therein.

Figure 2: Illustration of Althusser's problem of structural causality



Interactions:

1. Interactions in each of the competing structures
2. Influence of subordinated structure on dominant structure
3. Influence of dominant structure on subordinated structure
4. Transfer of subjects and penetration of ideas

Source: Adapted from Lewin (1999: 13)

It is argued, from the Gramscian perspective, that the establishment and successive implementation of seven national partnership agreements in Ireland since 1987 represent an *inclusive hegemonic regulatory model* connecting various spheres of 'the juridico-political state apparatus' (Jessop 1997b). In the context of this study, local APCs – understood as local imprint of social partnership (McCarthy 1998) – have been identified as state-led measures that complement national policies targeted at redistributing the social product more efficiently through addressing issues related to increasing societal polarisation and poverty (e.g. Turok 2001), public-sector modernisation (DoT 1996, 2004; DoELG 1996) and the reformation of welfare delivery (e.g. NESC 2005).

The report *The Developmental Welfare State* articulates a new hegemonic project. It highlights the importance of policy and institutional adaptation to cope with “Ireland’s long-run economic and social development vulnerabilities” and argues that one of the key challenges is to devise a welfare system which, first, is tailored around the individual and, second, “not only addresses social risks, needs and inequalities more adequately, but also connects more fully with the dynamic of the economy” (NESC 2005: ix).

The case study on funding arrangements for APCs in the context of institutional reconfiguration of power in Dublin deploys the Gramscian concept of hegemony to unveil the construction of hegemonic projects through following links between multiple scales of governance. Moreover, it allows identifying whether and – if so – the extent to which organic intellectuals play a role in influencing the re-organisation of Dublin’s governance landscape. Dublin’s governance framework is currently in the process of restructuring, with open-ended outcomes. Against this backdrop, it is argued that an empirical case research provides the opportunity to investigate compromises that occur *within* the governance framework ‘as they happen’ – as opposed to an analysis of static institutional landscapes, social norms and established habits that are the results of long-gone (previous) systemic battles and struggles between different societal groupings (e.g. Röttger 2004). Also, in the case of analysing the forces driving the repositioning of APCs within the governance apparatus, the empirical analysis of the institutional restructuring (by means of carrying out interviews) goes below the surface of what – at first sight and, moreover, viewed ‘from the outside’ – appears to be merely driven by concerns about economic competitiveness and fiscal solvency.

3.3.5 Summary

The above sections make a case for utilising competing theoretical frameworks as a useful way to inform the generation and analysis of data produced by means of an empirical case-study research. The literature review suggests that international trends for modernising urban governance are driven by economic pressures which lead to increasing competition for economic activity among cities. This has been paralleled by modernisation of public administration, in the course of which traditional bureaucratic lines of authority and accountability have been challenged by entrepreneurial strategies and business-oriented accountability and performance-monitoring procedures. This, in turn, gave more power to city managers and bureaucrats at the expense of the decision-making capacity of politicians. The main objective of this section was to introduce three competing theories of governance by providing a glance at their ontological and epistemological assumptions, introducing their key concepts, outlining their main weaknesses and possible pitfalls and, finally, briefly pointing out their potential for contextualising funding arrangements of APCs in Dublin within the wider context of governance restructuring.

Each theory has its particular merits in shedding light on processes associated with funding APCs. Also, each theory offers a distinctly different approach towards the methodological objectification of the research subject:

- ⁴ Actor-network theory looks at the construction of power 'from the inside out'. It focuses on interactions between things and humans at the micro-level that are instrumental for holding spatio-temporally seamless networks together and analyses how these processes build up durable configurations of command and control. Viewed through the conceptual lens provided by actor-network theory, this allows for a thorough analysis of the functional interdependencies of its individual parts (Table 1.4). ANT is able to analyse the inner workings of governance, which, at first sight, resemble a 'black-box'⁸⁶ (i.e. something can only be fully understood through deconstruction). The key question for ANT is '*How (does it work)?*'
- Urban regime theory can be situated between the macro-level or 'big picture' view provided by the regulation approach, on the one hand, and the microscopic focus on power relationships of actor-network theory, on the other. URT analyses the role of informal interpersonal relationships among 'powerbrokers' in the construction of power in cities. In principle, URT posits that political and economic power of actors and the intentional use of such a quality both determine the potential to achieve the power to govern; i.e. to form durable alliances with *relevant* stakeholders (a) who are dependent on the resources and/or (b) like-minded stakeholders that bring resources to the table that secure governability. The main question for URT is '*Who (can secure governability)?*'
- In contrast to the socio-technological perspective provided by ANT, the regulation approach works 'top-down'. It emphasises that systemic failure – understood as endemic challenges within the ensemble of processes making up regimes of (capitalist) accumulation – requires intentional responses directed at making adjustments to structural imbalances (re-regulation) from within the sphere of political power. Re-regulation aims at achieving the harmonisation of "the interaction of a number of separate elements of the system" (Hubbard *et al.* 2002: 187). The central question for the RA is '*What (keeps accumulation in balance)?*'

Each theory provides a suitable platform for the analysis of funding arrangements of APCs against the backdrop of governance restructuring in Dublin. According to the review of the theoretical frameworks, the conceptual approaches provided by ANT and URT seem to be tailored to explore the inner workings of local relationships and interactions between local stakeholders respectively, whereas the RA seems to be more suitable for the analysis of wider structural forces that have a bearing on (the creation of) national regulatory responses to major economic questions.

⁸⁶ According to Latour (1987: 2-3), "The word **black box** is used by cyberneticians whenever a piece of machinery or a set of commands is too complex. In its place they draw a little box about which they need to know nothing but its input and output" (original emphasis).

This study focuses on the empirical research of processes shaping the interface between state-funded agencies operating at neighbourhood level in Dublin and the local public administrative system within which they are embedded. Based on previous research and the literature reviewed for this study, it is hypothesised that the forces driving the restructuring of governance at the local level can better be explained by the regulation approach (RA) rather than by principles provided by actor-network theory (ANT) or urban regime theory (URT).

4. METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

This research looks at the funding arrangements of Area Partnership Companies (APCs) and associated processes against the background of power-reconfigurations in Dublin's governance landscape. Previous research identified funding as a control mechanism for enabling and guiding activities of APC-type agencies within the framework of centrally-devised local development programmes (Bartley and Borscheid 2003). It is argued that funding arrangements for APCs have been influenced by value-for-money principles that are associated with modernisation policies that were initiated by the SMI.

Against this backdrop, the aim of this study is to identify, illustrate and theorise the driving forces behind the restructuring of Dublin's governance framework. that have a bearing on shaping the funding framework within which APCs are embedded. In addition, this study examines the arguments about the merits of business-like accountability and performance-monitoring criteria for improving the effectiveness, efficiency and economics of APCs in regard to their utilisation of core funding in tackling urban disadvantage through the development of local participatory approaches.

A variety of publications and policy documents were reviewed that contextualise and facilitate an understanding of, public sector modernisation in Ireland (Chapter 1). A number of these sources specifically address the envisaged re-alignment of plans and activities of APCs with the state's new agenda for state-funded local development (Chapter 2). However, in order to further investigate to what extent the impact of funding arrangements on the plans and activities APCs is linked to a new ethos of governance concerning disadvantaged neighbourhoods in Dublin, the views and perceptions of key players involved at various levels of the APC-type approach to local development need to be elicited and compared.

In order to demonstrate the effects of governance restructuring and associated funding arrangements on the *modus operandi* of APCs, the empirical case research for this study is based on a three-pronged set of objectives:

- first, to examine the nature of governance modernisation and its impacts on APCs through a thorough analysis of published material;
- second, to establish views of individuals from different institutional, organisational and professional backgrounds that have been, or are, involved at different levels of the area-based approach to local development. The perspectives obtained from these individuals are hoped to contextualise and contribute to an informed understanding of (a) the political agenda underlying governance restructuring and the strategies driving the implementation of the restructuring, (b) key challenges in the pursuit of better governance and (c) the impact of a new governance concept

- on funding arrangements for APCs;
- third, to assess which of the three competing theoretical approaches can best explain the observed relationship between governance restructuring in Dublin and the funding mechanism designed for APCs.

Case studies can remain overly descriptive in nature if they do not delve deeply into the nature and origins of power relations that can help explaining observed manifestations of power in governance. Existing research on APCs has mainly focused on institutional relationships between key stakeholders involved in local development, questions of participatory democracy and partnership principles, their ability to bring about meaningful change, and their relationship with local government in a changing landscape of governance. This research has typically been carried out without explicitly seeking to relate research findings to theories that could reveal underlying causes for observed phenomena (e.g. Bartley and Borscheid 2003). This thesis addresses this lacuna by examining three theories, actor-network theory (ANT), urban regime theory (URT) and the regulation approach (RA), which purport to provide suitable theoretical frameworks for the explanation of governance restructuring in Dublin and its impact on funding arrangements of APCs (see Chapter 3).

The ultimate key objective of the research is to establish which of the three theories best explains the ensemble of forces and influences that shape funding arrangements of APCs in the context of governance restructuring in Dublin. As already outlined in the introduction of this study, it is hypothesised that the RA is the most promising theoretical framework. Following a null-hypothesis approach, this study thus explores the available evidence to ascertain if ANT and URT are better suited than the RA to explain funding arrangements for APCs in the context of local-governance restructuring. If the evidence does not confirm this null-hypothesis assertion, then the alternative situation is upheld. Namely, the original hypothesis – that the RA is best – is acceptable as the default alternative.

The following sections outline how the methodological approach towards addressing the research objectives:

- allows for an in-depth exploration of processes and operational mechanisms that contribute to understanding the experience of APCs vis-à-vis forces propelling the ongoing restructuring of the local-development sector;
- informs the analysis of restructuring local governance and its implications for funding APCs in Dublin; and
- helps in assessing the relevance of the selected theories in terms of explaining observed changes in the logic of the funding mechanism and its associated processes.

Figure 3: Putting the theoretical frameworks to the test

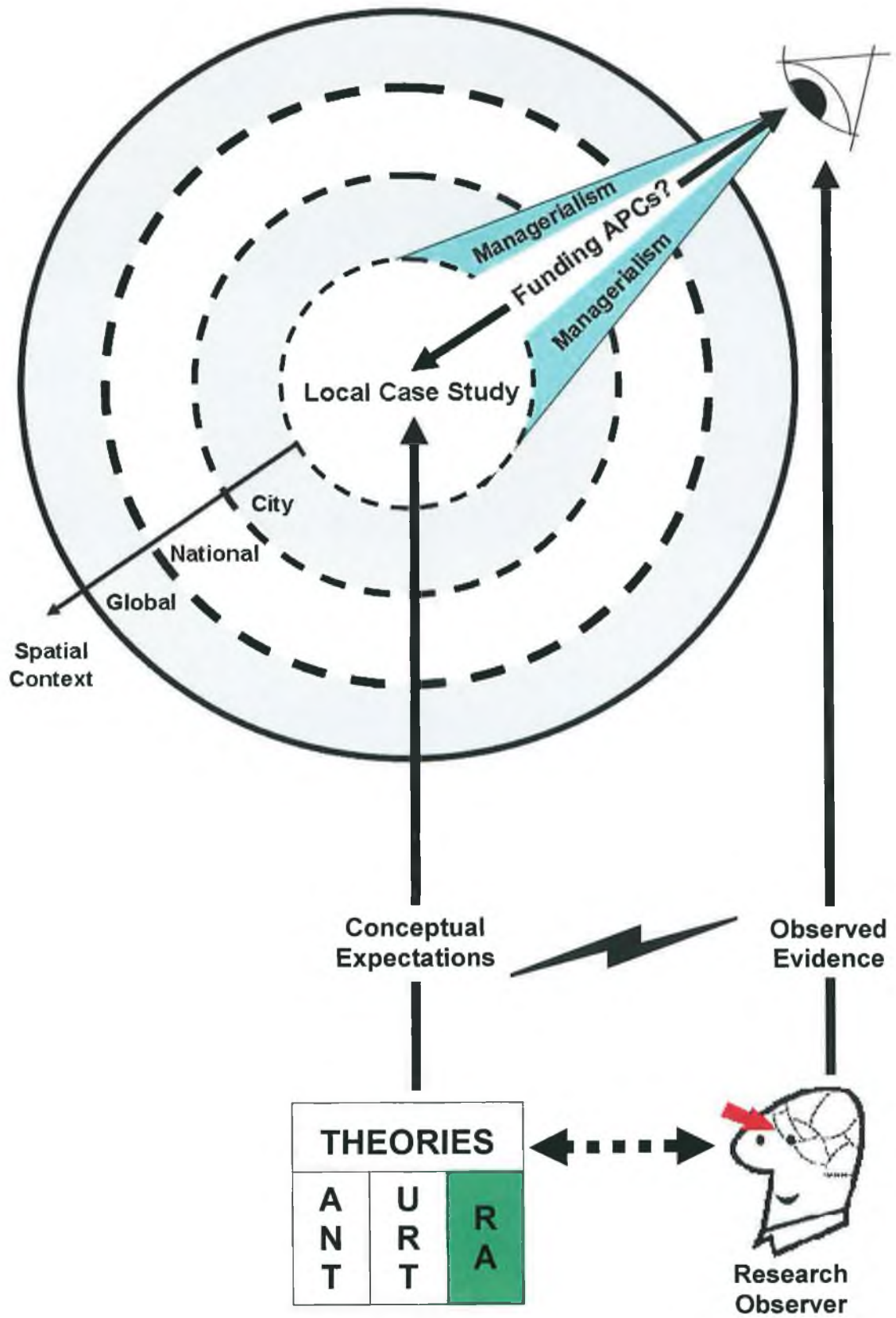


Figure 3 above attempts to illustrate the interlocking logic of the key objectives of this thesis as outlined in this section. Against the backdrop of an increasing emphasis in OECD countries (global context), it is attempted to explore – through an examination of the funding mechanism of APCs – the impact of an increasing utilisation of neo-liberal managerial practices in Ireland (national context) on restructuring the governance of local APCs in Dublin. In a further step, it is planned to ascertain which of the conceptual framework of three contemporary theoretical approaches can be applied to best explain the empirical findings (observations) obtained by means of local case studies.

Detailed evidence on governance change collected from a local case study is examined (a) in a spatial context, (b) through the prism of a specific issue (APC funding as an aspect of transforming managerialism and (c) to determine which of the three selected theories (ANT, URT, the RA) best accounts for the observed evidence. It is anticipated (hypothesis) that the shaded theory (the RA; see Figure 3) is the best of the three theories. This is impossible to 'prove' absolutely. Therefore, a less strict (and less exhaustive) method is deployed. This only requires that the two competing theories (ANT and URT) be examined to determine if they are inferior to the RA with respect to the collected evidence. If they are not, then the RA is deduced to be the best theory.

4.2 Setting the parameters for a case study

This study focuses on re-scaling urban governance because of the leading role of cities as the focal point for economic activities (Oatley 1998b). A comparison of international case studies on APC-type urban regeneration agencies indicates that governance arrangements have been analysed with a focus on community participation in both neo-liberal and more traditional Keynesian settings of governance (e.g. Hoek 2000; Raco 2000; Ander and Ekman 2001; ECOTEC 2004; Brudell *et al.* 2004; Maguire and Truscott 2006). A large number of case studies focus on the description of processes in *one* neighbourhood or city district that has been targeted by urban renewal initiatives. However, only a few studies could be located that pursued a theoretically grounded in-depth analysis of APC-type urban regeneration initiatives addressing socio-economic or physical transformation in designated areas (see examples given in Chapter 3, Section 3.3.1). It appears that the literature on socio-economic or physical urban regeneration and associated questions of governance takes a broad perspective rather than (a) focussing on detailed questions that address and scrutinise the driving forces for such developments, and/or (b) contextualising findings within a specified theoretical framework.

Against this backdrop, it was initially planned to carry out a comparative case study between two disadvantaged neighbourhoods in Vienna (Wien-Erdberg or Wien-Leopoldstadt) and Dublin (Dublin-Ballyfermot) respectively. Both cities operate comparable local development approaches. Moreover, the neighbourhoods chosen

were all within an area targeted by the EU's *URBAN II Initiative*⁸⁷, which indicated similar levels of urban disadvantage. Visits to the case-study areas in Dublin and Vienna illustrated that considerable socio-economic disparities prevail within two economically successful European cities (both of which long had suffered from being at the geo-political and economic periphery of Europe). Both cities pursue area-based remedial policies to address socio-economic disparities within their territory. Thus, it was intended to assess the commonalities and differences of funding arrangements in the context of the re-alignment of APCs in Dublin, under a neo-liberal governance regime, with those of a similar area-based model in Vienna, under a more traditional welfare-state regime. This cross-country comparative approach, however, could not be pursued for practical reasons⁸⁸. As result, the focus of the research became completely directed at Dublin, and, more specifically at the experience of actors in one APC-managed designated disadvantaged neighbourhood in west Dublin (Dublin-Ballyfermot).

Also, it emerged that local strategic partnerships, such as APCs in Dublin and *Grätzelmanagement*⁸⁹ projects in Vienna, were, in themselves, embedded in complex governance arrangements and relationships with a multitude of stakeholders, the full understanding of which required in-depth investigation. For example, six preliminary interviews with actors from different institutional and professional backgrounds in Dublin were carried out to explore whether the interview approach chosen was suitable or needed 'tweaking' (see Section 4.4). These interviews suggested that a new local governance model was being forged, with substantial implications for the work of APCs – such as increasing demands for reporting of progress to funders, changes concerning the allocation and monitoring of funding, a proliferation of Dublin City Council (DCC)-associated local development structures, and a reduced scope for the development of local strategies based on the bottom-up principle. The interviews also indicated that the state and local communities were equally affected by governance changes: however, whereas the state had to, and could, devise new technologies for monitoring activities of APCs and promote the integrating of APCs into the statutory apparatus, local actors in communities felt they had less scope for facilitating the participation of disadvantaged local people in decision-making processes affecting their communities.

⁸⁷ The URBAN II programme aims at supporting community infrastructure. It emphasises enterprise support and development within a broad based approach to urban regeneration (Dublin Corporation 2001).

⁸⁸ Even though visits to Vienna resulted in 17 one-on-one interviews with individuals from local government, town planners, state agencies, the URBAN II Initiative, a district mayor and local area-based initiatives (e.g. *Grätzelmanagement* staff), further efforts that were required to either carry out more interviews or follow up on interviews proved to be beyond the scope and resources of this thesis.

⁸⁹ *Grätzelmanagement* operates in the two EU Objective 2 areas within the city of Vienna (i.e. the 2nd and the 20th district). In comparison to the Irish local partnership model, in Austria, the local authorities play a key role in running, overseeing and implementing the local projects (cf. *Grätzelmanagement, Volkert- und Alliiertenviertel*, at <http://www.graetzlmanagement.at/20/documents/Projektstruktur.pdf>. accessed on 24/09/2007).

The re-structuring of the governance model under which APCs operate affects, and involves the interaction of, a variety of different stakeholders at different institutional and spatial levels. Also, APCs are complex organisations, which is, for example mirrored in their broad range of activities, their organisational structure and their board composition (see Chapter 2). This range of interests is reflected in the empirical research, which includes eleven interviews with board members and professionals from Ballyfermot Partnership (see Section 4.4.2, Figure 4). However, this depth and range of exploration could only be achieved by restricting the research to a single state/site. In order to reflect the complexities of the local partnership model in the context of governance restructuring, a decision was taken to only focus on the relationship between governance transition and funding arrangements for APCs in the Irish context.

It can still be argued that a comparative empirical study between APCs in two or three urban areas in Dublin would provide a broader range of perspectives, experiences and practices and, thus, would yield a more representative picture of the relationship between governance re-structuring, its manifestation in the funding framework and its impact on local development strategies pursued by APCs. As a result, conclusions drawn from the empirical research would be more substantial and, therefore, would be more suitable to validate or falsify the research hypothesis. However, in order to more fully understand the implementation of a new regulatory framework for the governance of APCs and to get adequately detailed insights, through an analysis of the funding and monitoring arrangements, as to how this new framework impacts on the *modus operandi* of APCs in Dublin, it is argued that a restrictive, in-depth investigation is required. Such investigation needs to examine policies and processes that affect the characteristic features of the institutional and organisational interface between one local APC and the state and, moreover, how these affect the local development agenda of APCs.

In addition, the choice of ANT – as one of three theoretical framework chosen to facilitate the understanding of the creation and flow of power that affects the state-APC relationship under an evolving regime of governance – requires a thorough analysis of the impact of (state-initiated) governance modernisation on local plans and activities of APCs⁹⁰. A detailed description of processes of governance re-structuring in Dublin was necessary to avoid falling into the trap of reductionism or “explanatory parsimony” (Law 1994: 12). An in-depth investigation of more than one APC, however, was not considered viable. It would have required additional samples of interviewees, which would not have been within the scope of this study – mainly, time and resource constraints prohibited a comparative in-depth analysis between two or more APCs. In spite of this limitation, perceptions of APC professionals in the case-study area were

⁹⁰ Also, it is common to utilise URT as a theoretical context to illustrate power relationships by means of focusing on individual projects within cities (e.g. Bassett *et al.* 2002; Hogan 2006).

compared with the views expressed by CEOs from two other Dublin-based APCs (see Section 4.4).

Still, the results from this case study can only meaningfully highlight how one APC area in Dublin is affected by impacts of governance restructuring. So, whereas the one-case-study approach pursued in this thesis can provide a detailed and theoretically informed analysis of implications of governance modernisation in one designated disadvantaged area, further research into the local partnership approach, involving more interviews with individuals from other APCs in Dublin, will be required to (a) check if the experience of Ballyfermot APC (hereafter Ballyfermot Partnership) is representative for developments in other areas and, thus, (b) enhance the general understanding of state-APC relationships and the changing model for local partnership arrangements under a new governance framework. In other words, this study, despite its limitations, can provide useful baseline data as a point of departure for additional research.

4.2.1 Choosing a case study: why Dublin?

Over the past 20 years, Dublin's geopolitical position within Europe's urban hierarchical system has changed considerably. Since the mid-1980s, Dublin has greatly benefited from the economic boom and experienced a rapid structural transition from a peripheral⁹¹ capital at the western fringe of Europe towards a post-industrial, competition-oriented European gateway city (Bartley and Waddington 2001; Marshall 2002; MacLaran and Williams 2003; Punch *et al.* 2004; Punch 2004). The spatial concentration of foreign investments in the Greater Dublin Area (GDA) has been fuelling the economic boom that consolidated Dublin's dominant position in Ireland's urban hierarchical system and also strengthened its position in Europe's league of competitive cities (Punch 2004).

Dublin became an 'adaptive entrepreneurial city' (Bartley and Shine 1999); i.e. contemporary policies pursue boosterist urban development strategies as a means to increase the city's attractiveness for investments into economic activities (McGuirk 1994, 2000; McGuirk and MacLaran 2001; MacLaran and Williams 2003). The approach leading to transformations of the landscape of urban governance was influenced by government-initiated competitive bidding processes and public-private coalitions. An excerpt from the local-authority website highlights Dublin's pivotal role for Ireland and also indicates the pro-business policy of public agencies:

Dublin has been transformed during the 1990's [sic]. The economy has been liberalised and made more competitive. Dublin has prospered as a major focus for

⁹¹ It is important to note that the term periphery is not only applied to describe how a place is geographically positioned in relation to other locations. In this paper, periphery is understood as a dynamic concept: spatial power structures – or, in other words, the geo-political and/or geo-economic position of cities – evolve and change within the historical context (Wood 2000). For example, in the post-iron curtain era, Vienna's geo-political position has changed tremendously. Over the last 10-15 years Vienna developed from a capital at the eastern backwaters of capitalist Europe towards an EU gateway city and a hub to the new eastern market economies (see Schopper and Hansely 1999; Hatz 2002).

foreign direct investment into Ireland, as well as an expanding centre of trade and tourism. The city has become a dominant national gateway. Dublin functions as the control centre of the economy and virtually all facets of Irish economic and social life. While being a comparatively small and peripheral city in European terms, Dublin dominates the Irish urban, economic and social landscape of Ireland [...] is a truly European City, a City of opportunity, a City for investment. Dublin is the world leader in software development [...] Dublin has been the engine of national economic growth [...] Attracting inward investment is a major challenge for Dublin City Council (Dublin City Council n.d.-a: no page numbers).

A Dublin-centric economic development strategy resulted in national spatial disparities in terms of job creation, quality and extent of service and infrastructure provision, costs of living and population concentration. A concentration of foreign investments in the capital led to an increase in back-office functions for global corporations in competitive services and technologies (Punch 2004)⁹². The pivotal role of Dublin and its hinterland for the Irish economy is illustrated by statistical data: in 2001, the figures for the disposable income per person and the gross value added (GVA)⁹³ in the Dublin Region⁹⁴ were the highest in the country, with 16.7 per cent and 29.6 per cent above national average respectively (CSO 2004).

Also, the scale of population concentrated in the Dublin Region has long been high in comparison to capitals other European countries (Bannon 1999). In 2003, about 30 per cent of the Irish population was located in greater Dublin. Projections for the period between 2003 and 2031 indicate a substantial increase in population by more than half a million in the area, from 1.14 million in 2003 to 1.65 million in 2031 (IDA Ireland 2004). This would account for about 85 per cent of the estimated total increase in population in Ireland, implying, first, a tremendous concentration in future job growth and, second, substantial planning efforts for the years to come for the Dublin Region (Reid and O'Connor 13/06/2007). Economic opportunities are also mirrored in international migration patterns, which are the key driving force for population increase: for example, between April 2005 and April 2006 approximately 122,000 individuals (98,392 non-Irish and 23,548 Irish) migrated into Ireland from abroad. More than one third of this group (35,020 non-Irish and 8,116 Irish) became residents in the GDA⁹⁵ (Government of Ireland 2007a).

However, despite an overall improvement of quality of life and increasing job opportunities, some neighbourhoods in Dublin show symptoms indicating a systematic

⁹² This development was paralleled by a decline in the domestic manufacturing sector (Punch *et al.* 2004).

⁹³ The GVA measures the values of goods and services produced in a region, including the profits made by non-Irish companies (CSO 2004). For the differences between GDP (gross domestic product), household income and GVA see CSO (*ibid.*).

⁹⁴ Dublin Region consists of four County Boroughs: Dublin City, Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown, Fingal and South Dublin. Even though the economic development of the Mid-East Region is increasingly intertwined with Dublin Region (CSO 2004), the statistics used only consider the latter geographical area in order to bring out clearly Dublin's exceptional position in Ireland.

⁹⁵ The majority of non-Irish migrants were from the new EU accession states (most from Poland and Lithuania) and in the core working age cohorts aged 15-24 and aged 25-44 respectively (CSO 12/09/2007). These numbers underpin the importance of the Greater Dublin Area for the Irish economy.

exclusion from (a) benefits associated with economic progression and investments into urban development and social infrastructure and (b) the political agenda and, as a result, experience societal isolation (e.g. Bartley 1999; Bartley and Saris 1999; Punch 2005; Hogan 2006). According to McGuirk (2003a), such disparities manifest through different degrees of connectivity between valued and less-valued territories: technological opportunities, territorial segregation and quality of infrastructure, understood as a function of local income patterns, is what physically separates rich from poor. The fragmentation of space, increasing social polarisation and clustering of rich and poor segments of society has profound implications for policy solutions concerning the shape of the local-governance apparatus. The establishment of APCs in designated disadvantaged areas in Dublin illustrates that urban economic development in Dublin occurs “on a quasi-random field of opportunities” (Dear and Flusty 1998: 66), which enhances disparities between valued and less valued neighbourhoods.

A large body of literature addresses and describes urban development policies and governance restructuring in Dublin and their impacts on communities, state-funded local development projects – such as APCs – and the voluntary sector. Even though the role of APCs has almost been exhaustively analysed (OECD 1996; Parkinson 1998; Walsh *et al.* 1998; Walsh 1998, 1999; Kirby and Jacobson 1998; Turok 2001; Bartley and Borscheid 2003; Haase and McKeown 2003; Ó Broin 2003), little empirical research could be found that investigates processes and relationships at the interface between APCs and their political sponsors and ensuing implications for both funding practices and the *modus operandi* of APCs in the local area. The changing role of APCs within the local-governance system, the key thrust of local development programmes, the operational procedures of APCs and funding and accountability arrangements are all defined, outlined and captured in legislation, policy documents, contractual agreements and guidelines. As the key objective of this study is to investigate the relationship between governance restructuring and funding arrangements of APCs, it is considered crucial to assess the views of individuals directly involved and/or affected by local-governance restructuring in Dublin.

4.2.2 Choosing a case study: why Ballyfermot?

Ballyfermot is a suburban neighbourhood in west Dublin that appears to be a ‘less valued area’ as it has not as much benefited from the new wealth as other places in Dublin. According to the Irish Index of Relative Affluence and Deprivation (Haase 1999), Ballyfermot is still among the most disadvantaged urban areas in Dublin⁹⁶. It belongs to a chain of suburbs that were built as a safety valve for increasing population pressure that was coupled with a policy of reducing the residential function of Dublin’s inner city (Punch *et al.* 2004). Processes of suburbanisation produced relatively isolated residential environments lacking social infrastructure and soon developed symptoms now associated with urban deprivation (Pringle *et al.* 1999).

⁹⁶ For a critical assessment of the index see Bartley and Kelly (no date) and Pringle (2002).

In 1995, in response to a strong visibility of forms of poverty and social disintegration, a local APC, Ballyfermot Partnership Company Ltd., was established as a 'second-generation Partnership' under the 1995-1999 local development programme (see Chapter 2, Section 2.4). The case-study area is one of seven geographical areas within Dublin City that has been targeted for social urban regeneration through the establishment of local APCs. Ballyfermot has a reputation for being among the most disadvantaged and stigmatised urban neighbourhoods in Ireland in terms of economic and social decay (e.g. Saris *et al.* 2000; Saris *et al.* 2002). This is particularly reflected in reports on the area in the national media that is usually focusing on incidents related to anti-social behaviour and drug-related crime – mainly in Cherry Orchard, an even more isolated western neighbourhood of Ballyfermot – and the interest in the area by social researchers (see below).

In 1999, Ballyfermot was also selected by the Irish government as the only area for participation in the 2000-2006 URBAN II Initiative of the EU. Ballyfermot competed with 9 other severely disadvantaged areas. Selection criteria that decided in favour of Ballyfermot were the degree of disadvantage based on the *Irish Index of Relative Affluence and Deprivation*, the relatively sizeable population (21,437 in 1996), the absence of regeneration investments, and the potential of the area to make the most of the funding by generating suitable programmes (Dublin Corporation 2001). There is some indication that the existence of the APC was favourably taken into consideration in the selection process:

There is an effective structure in place in the area, which would allow a bottom-up dialogue so that any activity has the active support and co-operation of the local people (Dublin Corporation 2001: 6).

The selection of Ballyfermot for the URBAN II Initiative indicates the perceived urgency to invest resources into the area based on the area's low socio-economic status. Between 2000 and 2006, Ballyfermot received € 11.42 million under URBAN II for the promotion of local urban regeneration initiatives. URBAN II was managed by the local authority that became increasingly involved in local development initiatives. As URBAN II was coming to an end, the Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, Éamon Ó Cuív, announced the introduction of the local authority-led RAPID⁹⁷ programme into Ballyfermot under the 2007-2013 National Development Plan:

The Minister intends to invite Pobal (formerly ADM Ltd.) to facilitate the establishment of an implementation group. Membership of this group will be drawn from key agencies and organisations involved in social inclusion work in Ballyfermot and will include representatives from the Statutory Agencies, Local Authority, Area Partnership and local development projects. The implementation group will be asked to prepare a list of priority projects to be funded from a € 300,000 allocation for Ballyfermot from the Dormant Accounts Fund (Ó Cuív 2006: no page numbers).

⁹⁷ Revitalising Areas by Planning, Investment and Development (RAPID) (see Chapter 6, Section 6.2.5.1).

Even though this more recent decision did not influence the choice of Ballyfermot as the case-study area for the empirical research, it illustrates that despite ongoing efforts to improve the living conditions for the population in the area the degree of social and economic disadvantage in neighbourhoods in Ballyfermot is still far below acceptable societal standards in Ireland. Previous analysis of local development processes and community issues in Ballyfermot provides detailed background information on the area that provides a good point of departure for the current study. Research papers and studies that focus on Ballyfermot address a variety of issues such as anti-social behaviour in local-authority estates (O'Sullivan 2003), the culture of protest (Saris *et al.* 2000; Saris *et al.* 2002) and the role of males in excluded communities (McCormack n.d.), the issue of policing (Saris and Bartley 1999), institutional collaboration and ethnographic insights in the field of drug misuse (Saris and Bartley 1998; Lyons 2000) and the impact of EU and national funding policies on institutional actors (Saris *et al.* 2002). In particular, the local APC in Ballyfermot has already been subject to research that commented on the governance-funding nexus (Bartley and Saris 1999). More specifically, Bartley and Borscheid (2003) looked at indicators that have an influence on the allocation of resources to APCs in the transition period between the 1994-1999 OPLURD and the 2000-2006 LDSIP. This makes Ballyfermot an optimal entry-point for an analysis of changes within the funding framework as a result of restructuring the governance system under the LDSIP. The existing trail of research in Ballyfermot offers an opportune platform to investigate further into the nature of contemporary funding-relationships against the backdrop of changing governance structures in Dublin and their impact on plans and activities of one local APC⁹⁸. Chapter 5 provides a comprehensive socio-economic profile of the case-study area.

4.3 Key themes for the empirical case study

This study puts much emphasis on the introduction of governance practices in OECD countries that were informed by the ideology of the New Public Managerialism (NPM) (see Chapter 1, Section 1.4.1). The prominence of business management practices in the area of public administration, such as the launch of the Strategic Management Initiative (SMI) in Ireland in 1994, is rooted in the assumption that welfare-related expenditures undermine economic competitiveness. Welfare provision is thought to tie up resources that could be invested more productively in promoting economic activities that, in turn, would open up income opportunities for those currently relying on welfare. Calls for a greater focus of public agencies on *best value* and an increasing emphasis on maintaining fiscal solvency represent an effort to re-structure the management, and optimise the use, of public expenditures ('taxpayer's money') as a productive investment into welfare provision (e.g. Clarke *et al.* 2000a: 259). This logic implies that inequality and a corresponding demand for welfare services in

⁹⁸ It could be argued that a comparative study between two or more APCs in Dublin would result in a more balanced picture as to what extent or whether or not, respectively, changes in the funding mechanism would influence and affect the *modus operandi* of APCs. By concentrating on one case study, however, it is intended to provide a more in-depth analysis that teases out in greater detail the interplay and operational weight of principles of accountability, effectiveness and efficiency within the funding relationship between an APC and their political paymasters.

leading OECD countries can be buffered by means of the design and introduction of business-like management principles together with both financial and accounting procedures.

This study argues that the three sets of key criteria listed in Table 4.1 (see below) are associated with the implementation of business-inspired concepts into the Irish governance system. They function here as surrogate measures to assess systematically (a) the explanatory power of competing theories in regard to SMI-induced changes in contemporary funding arrangements for APCs and (b) state-led efforts to optimise the outcomes of APC-directed programmes and actions. The analysis of publications addressing developments in governance concerning public-sector modernisation reform, policy documents and publications by the Irish government and affiliated organisations – such as the National Economic and Social Council (NESCC) and the Institute of Public Administration (IPA) – and empirical research on APCs in Dublin and their institutional environment (Bartley *et al.* 1999; Borscheid 2001; Bartley and Saris 1999; Saris *et al.* 2002; Bartley and Borscheid 2003) facilitated the identification of key themes against which governance modernisation could be measured.

In particular, the analysis of policies concerning the re-structuring of Dublin's governance landscape is informed by an exploration of written material and documentation such as:

- a succession of government publications originating in the Strategic Management Initiative (SMI) and related policy documents, contractual agreements and guidelines;
- evaluation reports;
- departmental press releases and circular letters;
- excerpts from debates in the Irish parliament and minutes of meetings, if publicly available.

Some of the most relevant sources consulted include the following:

- the Local Government Act 2001 (Government of Ireland 2001): under Section 129, this piece of legislation calls for an establishment of City/County Development Boards (CDBs) and outlines their envisaged role as a leading co-ordinating body for the economic, social and cultural development within local authority jurisdictions. CDBs are tasked to encourage a partnership between the local authority, statutory agencies the social partners and state-funded local development bodies “concerned with local enterprise, rural development or community development” (103). One of the key objectives of the CDBs is:

“to encourage and promote on an ongoing basis the coordination of the activities of the bodies and interests represented on the Board and co-operation generally between such bodies and interests so as to optimise resources and combined effort for the common good of the community” (104);

Table 4.1: Key criteria for the analysis of empirical data

Criteria	Explanation
Institutionalisation:	Processes associated with the transformation of APCs from pilot projects into permanent structures of the (local) governance system (cf. Parkinson 1998; Turok 2001; McCarthy 2007).
Partnership:	Establishment of APC-type agencies outside mainstream statutory apparatus with a view to developing innovative potential (R & D function) in a less regulated space: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - promote democratic experimentalism - equip them with negotiating power as the basis for forging alliances with other stakeholders and mainstreaming of pilots
Integration:	Increasing funding dependency on the state that amplifies the influence of central managerial systems of control over APCs. This finds expression: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - in the prescription of their agenda and remit by the state - in a focus on service delivery directed at supplanting public welfare provision
Professionalisation:	Promotion of managerial practices and corporate governance principles in the statutory-funded local-development sector with a view to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - making special-purpose bodies on the ground auditable - enhancing the development of output-oriented measures - promoting comparable standards for programme development and service provision
Accountability:	APCs have a dual responsibility. They need to ensure that programmes and actions equally satisfy the expectations of the political sponsors (being held to account) and the population within the catchment area (giving an account) (cf. Boyle and Butler 2003: 25).
Political Paymasters:	Prescribe the implementation of centrally designed guidelines, eligibility criteria, rules and regulations concerning: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the allocation of resources - the programme content (eligibility of actions)
Population in catchment area:	Development of innovative programmes and services: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - tailored to respond to local realities - ensuring participation from local stakeholders in decision-making processes and programme implementation
Value for Money:	Political paymasters develop auditing practices and evaluation modules against which the success of the individual APC in achieving desired objectives can be measured (cf. Power 1997; NESC 2002a; Boyle 2002b, 2002a).
Fiscal efficiency (output):	Introduction of evidence-based principles (e.g. Belfiore, 2004) and standards focusing on promoting the cost-effective provision of tangible services through promoting the achievement of measurable short-term (annual) targets
Effectiveness (outcome):	Evaluation of productive expenditure (outputs) against long-term aims and objectives of programmes and policies as previously defined by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the APCs, on the one hand, and - their political paymasters, on the other hand
(Internal) Economies:	Provision of best possible terms for receiving public resources as reflected in a professional organisational culture that is proving good practice in areas such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Human resource management and staff selection - Administration and financial controlling - Use of technology - Self evaluation <p>The recent introduction of the <i>Q-mark</i> and the <i>Excellence Through People Award</i> represent examples of standardised quality measurements indicating economic capacity of APCs to public funders</p>

Source: Literature review and preliminary analysis of interviews.

- evaluation reports carried out by consultants on behalf of the state (Goodbody Economic Consultants 1999; PA Consulting Group 2002; Indecon 2003; Fitzpatrick Associates and ERM Ireland 2003; Fitzpatrick Associates 2007) or statutory organisations (CPA 1994; ESF Evaluation Unit 1999; NDP/CSF Evaluation Unit 2003; Comptroller and Auditor General 2000, 2007). These reports assess the achievements and performance of the state-initiated local development sector and make recommendations towards optimising the area-based approach to local development. Some reports emphasise the need for closer co-operation and collaboration between state-funded APCs and statutory bodies (e.g. Goodbody Economic Consultants 1999); others, more specifically, call for better value for the use of resources provided for local development initiatives (e.g. Comptroller and Auditor General 2000, 2007);
- programme guidelines and monitoring criteria of local development programmes for APCs (Central Review Committee 1991; ADM 1995, 2000; Pobal 2006a): these define the role and range of activities that lie within the remit of APCs and, moreover, propose working models and set parameters for the use of funding;
- government publications promoting public-sector reform (e.g. DoT 1996, 1998, 2004; DoELG 1996; DoEHLG 18/01/2005): these documents generally call for the better management of public resources within the public sector to facilitate the provision of high quality public service-delivery to citizens at lower costs;
- reports of the (Interdepartmental) Task Force on the Integration of Local Development and Local Government Systems (DoELG 1998, 1999a, 1999b, 2000): these reports outline policies concerning local government reform and make recommendation towards the integration of state-funded local development initiatives into a local-government co-ordinated structure spearheaded by the CDBs;
- press releases, ministerial speeches and departmental circular letters and guidelines concerning local development issues and the 2003-2007 cohesion Process (e.g. DoCRGA n.d.-f, 18/02/2003, 18/06/2003, 04/02/2004, 13/09/2005, 01/08/2007, 04/04/2007, 31/07/2007a, 31/07/2007b, 2007; Ó Cuív 18/02/2003, 18/06/2003, 24/11/2005, 07/09/2006; DoEHLG n.d.-b, n.d.-a, 2004, 18/01/2005): these sources document government policies, plans and measures regarding the integration of APCs into the apparatus of the state; in particular, these sources refer to the cohesion process (see Chapter 6, Section 6.2);
- previous research and publications on the case-study area (see Section 4.2.2).

The published material that was examined for this research stresses the important role that accountability mechanisms, value for money-orientation and processes of institutional streamlining play in contemporary governance that are portrayed in Table 4.1 and provide a 'yardstick' for comparing and validating the contributions obtained from the interviews. The development and classification of influences that are considered instrumental for the repositioning of APCs within Dublin's governance framework inform and facilitate the design of the interview process. The development

of a set of key criteria allows a focused investigation into the identification of a suitable theoretical explanatory framework for processes that influence and affect funding arrangements of APCs.

4.4 Data generation

4.4.1 Introduction

It is argued that a comparison of different perspectives on governance restructuring and associated implications for funding APCs will point out merits, challenges and possible tensions concerning the local implementation of area-based development initiatives in disadvantaged urban neighbourhoods. The compilation of a set of key questions the interviews is informed by (a) the three key themes that were identified through publications reviewed (see Section 4.3) and (b) the conceptual frameworks provided by the three theoretical approaches discussed in Chapter 3.

The following core issues were addressed in the course of the interviews:

- Key influences of governance restructuring in Dublin on APCs
- Main features of contemporary funding arrangements for APCs
- Key criteria determining the allocation of resources to APCs
- The institutional mechanism through which resources are allocated to APCs
- Changes that occurred between the 1994-1999 OPLURD and the 2000-2006 LDSIP in regard to funding and monitoring arrangements for APCs
- Implications of the discontinuance of EU funding
- Characteristic features of what is considered good practice in the utilisation of resources by APCs
- The evaluation of APCs concerning the measurement of success and value added
- The relevance and definition of efficiency and effectiveness criteria
- The identification of obstacles to success in regard to multi-stakeholder collaboration, innovation, plan implementation and local participation
- The scope of APCs to influence decision making and to negotiate changes concerning governance restructuring
- The perceived status of co-operation between APCs and other organisations
- The scope for promoting participatory democracy
- The anticipated future role of APCs

Six preliminary interviews were carried out in January 2003 (Table 4.2); these interviews served as a pre-test. The key thrust of those interviews was targeted at finding out any problems in content and organisation of the key issues which were considered suitable to test the research hypotheses: (a) to find out – through focussing on the funding arrangements for APCs as an entry point – how the restructuring of state-led governance structures in Dublin has contributed to stepping up accountability procedures, effectiveness and efficiency of APCs and (b) to carry out a comparative analysis as to which of the three theories can best explain the evolving

funding and expenditure control arrangements for APCs. A thorough analysis of those preliminary interviews suggested that the approach and the array of questions were adequately tailored to meet the requirements underlying the research agenda. As no alterations to the design of the interview process had to be made, the preliminary interviews were included in the empirical analysis.

Table 4.2: Preliminary interviews

Code	Role	Date
DCC 1	Senior Official of Dublin City Council (South Central) and Senior Official of URBAN	January 2003
ADM 1	LDSIP Staff	January 2003
APC 1	Board Member of Area Partnership Company in case-study area	January 2003
APC 2a	Senior Staff Member of Area Partnership Company in case-study area	January 2003
APC 3a	Board Member of Area Partnership Company in case-study area	January 2003
APC 4a	Senior Staff Member of Area Partnership Company in Dublin	January 2003

4.4.2 Interview sample

By means of carrying out interviews with individuals involved in integrated local urban development processes in Dublin such as government departments, the local authority, statutory agencies, professionals from APCs and community activists, it is intended (a) to map out the power linkages between key interest groups involved in restructuring Dublin's governance landscape and (b) to identify institutional changes in governance and (c) to explore how existing power configurations influence funding arrangements and the *modus operandi* of APCs.

The empirical research sets out to investigate how governance changes and related consequences for funding arrangements are experienced, perceived and explained by stakeholders involved at various institutional levels and spatial scales of the APC-type approach to local development in Dublin. These data are then examined against the backdrop of the three sets of surrogate measures described in Section 4.3.

The majority of the interviewees were selected from APCs and organisations with a clear focus on those collaborating and/or networking with Ballyfermot Partnership (see Table 4.3 below).

Table 4.3: List of interviewees (1)

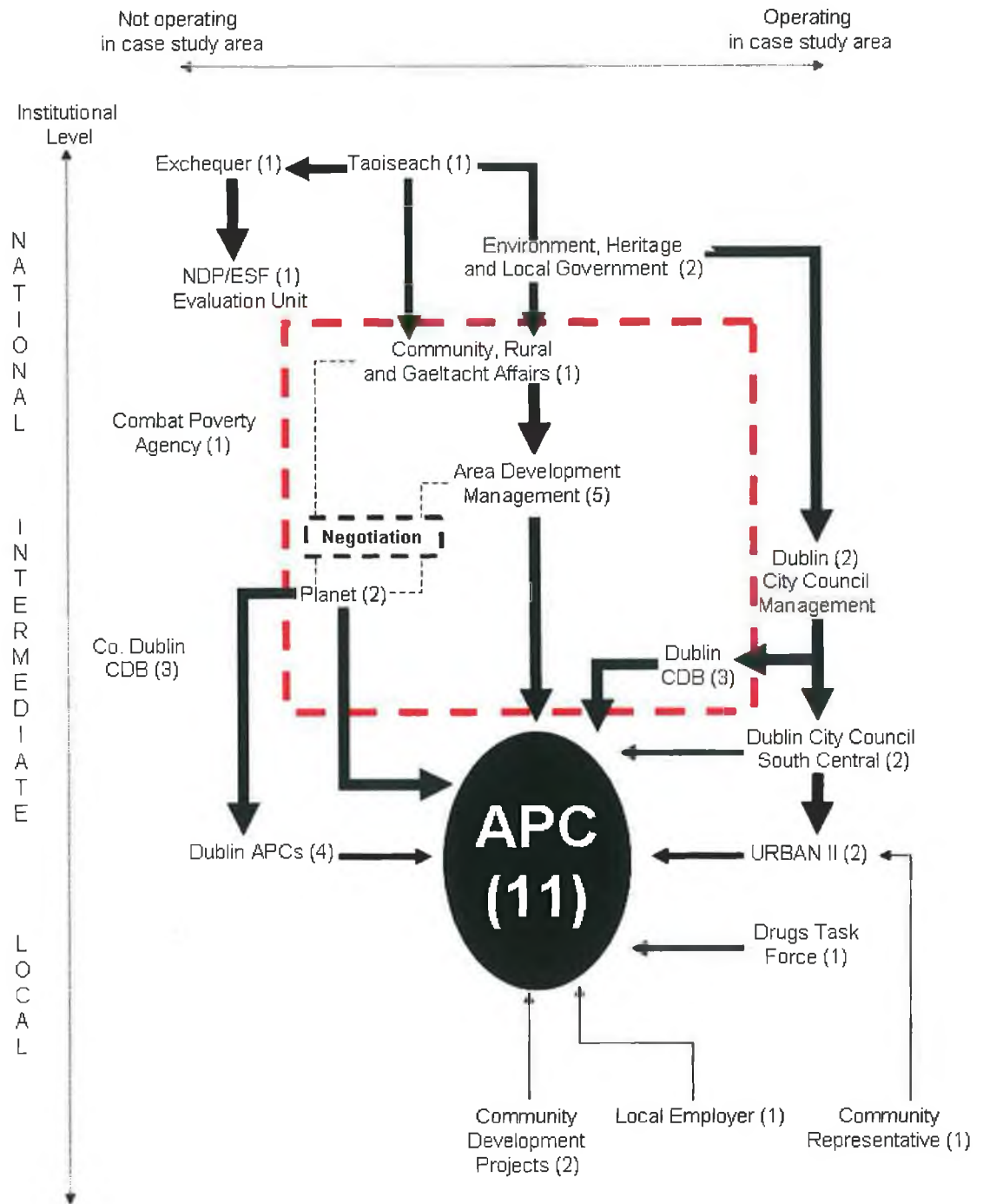
Code	Role (number of interviews)	Date
NE	National Experts (10)	
NE 1a	County Development Board in Co. Dublin	March 2003
NE 1b	County Development Board in Co. Dublin	May 2004
NE 1c	County Development Board in Co. Dublin	November 2004
NE 2	Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs	May 2003
NE 3	NDP/ESF Evaluation Unit	May 2003
NE 4	Department of Finance	May 2003
NE 5a	Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government	March 2004
NE 5b	Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government	November 2004
NE 6	Department of the Taoiseach	May 2004
NE 7	Combat Poverty Agency	November 2004
DCC	Dublin City Council & Affiliated Organisations (9)	
DCC 1	Senior Official of Dublin City Council (South Central) and Senior Official of the URBAN II Initiative	January 2003
DCC 2	Senior Official of Dublin City Council (Central Offices)	May 2003
DCC 3a	Senior Official of Dublin City Council (South Central)	May 2003
DCC 3b	Senior Official of Dublin City Council (South Central)	May 2004
DCC 4	Senior Staff Member of the Dublin City Enterprise Board	May 2003
DCC 5	Staff Member of the Dublin City Development Board	March 2004
DCC 6	Senior Official of the URBAN II Initiative	May 2004
DCC 7	Senior Official of Dublin City Council (Central Offices)	November 2004
DCC 8	Senior Staff Member of Dublin City Council (former CDB)	November 2004
ADM	Area Development Management (5)	
ADM 1	LDSIP Staff	January 2003
ADM 2	LDSIP Staff (Liaison Officer)	May 2003
ADM 3	LDSIP Staff (Liaison Officer)	May 2004
ADM 4	RAPID Staff	May 2004
ADM 5	Senior Staff Member	November 2004

Table 4.3: List of interviews (2)

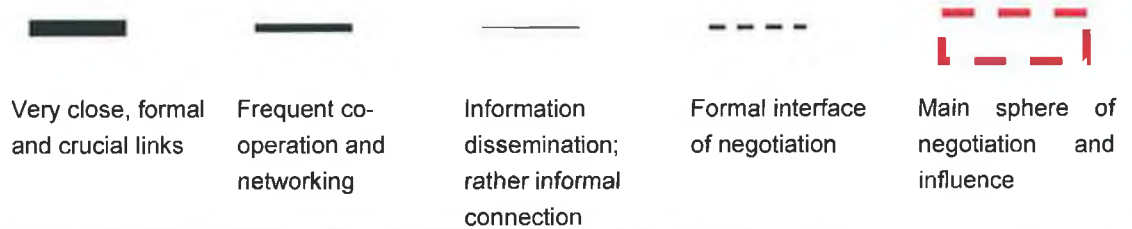
Code	Role	Date
APC	Area Partnership Companies (17)	
APC 1	Board Member of Ballyfermot Partnership	January 2003
APC 2a	Senior Staff Member of Ballyfermot Partnership	January 2003
APC 2b	Senior Staff Member of Ballyfermot Partnership	May 2004
APC 3a	Board Member of Ballyfermot Partnership	January 2003
APC 3b	Board Member of Ballyfermot Partnership	May 2004
APC 4a	Senior Staff Member of an Area Partnership Company in Dublin	January 2003
APC 4b	Senior Staff Member of an Area Partnership Company in Dublin	November 2004
APC 5	Senior Staff Member of Ballyfermot Partnership	May 2003
APC 6	Board Member of Ballyfermot Partnership	May 2003
APC 7a	Board Member of Ballyfermot Partnership	May 2003
APC 7b	Board Member of Ballyfermot Partnership	May 2004
APC 8	Focus group with Staff Members of Ballyfermot Partnership	March 2004
APC 9a	PLANET	March 2004
APC 9b	PLANET	November 2004
APC 10	Board Member of Ballyfermot Partnership	May 2004
APC 11	Area Partnership Manager in Dublin and Staff Member	November 2004
APC 12	Two Senior Staff Members of an Area Partnership Company in Dublin	November 2004
LV	Local Views (5)	
LV 1	Co-ordinator of a local organisation in Ballyfermot	May 2003
LV 2	Co-ordinator of a local development project in Ballyfermot	May 2003
LV 3	Local Employer in Ballyfermot	May 2003
LV 4	Local resident who is a Community Representative on the board of a local development initiative in Ballyfermot	March 2004
LV 5	Co-ordinator of a local development project in Ballyfermot	November 2004

As numerous contacts had already been established in a previous research project, the selection of interview partners could already take place at an early stage of the research process. In 2000, 31 interviews were carried out that focused on the review of funding-related aspects concerning APCs (Borscheid 2001). Then, the objective was to identify the impact of the funding mechanism on plans and activities of the Ballyfermot Partnership and the consequences for the allocation of resources locally.

Figure 4: Institutional background of respondents and their relationship with the APC



Perceived strength / importance of connection with APC as seen by respondents



Source: Empirical data (No. of Interviews in brackets).

The investigation pays particular attention to processes that occur at the interface between APCs and their immediate superordinated institutional authorities (i.e. ADM and DCC-led structures). In this study, based on the literature review and previous research findings, three 'main parties' could be identified as suitable sources of information:

- local APCs and affiliated organisations (e.g. other APCs, PLANET⁹⁹);
- ADM that had been contracted by the government to support and monitor the implementation of local development programmes;
- Dublin City Council (DCC) and affiliated organisations (e.g. the City Development Board) and initiatives (RAPID, URBAN 2) involved in local development (see Chapter 6, Section 6.2).

In addition, the views of two 'minor parties' had to be established:

- on the one hand, relevant government officials from various departments involved in governance restructuring¹⁰⁰;
- on the other hand, local community workers/activists that were involved in and/or supported projects in designated disadvantaged neighbourhoods within the catchment area of APCs.

Whereas interviews with government officials were expected to elicit insights into political processes and priorities that drive the contemporary repositioning of APCs within Dublin's governance landscape, community workers/activists were interviewed to tease out local impacts of restructuring the institutional governance system. These interviews can also be considered a 'check' to compare, contrast and contextualise data generated in interviews conducted with the three main parties. Interviews with individuals involved from different professional and institutional backgrounds were included in the research design to ensure a balanced view including different perceptions and viewpoints of governance changes that are relevant to funding arrangements concerning APCs. Figure 4 (see above) below illustrates that the key focus rests on the intermediate institutional level between the 'top', as represented by government departments and related institutions (and partly by those board members of Ballyfermot Partnership who represent institutions at the 'top'), and the 'bottom', represented by professionals actively involved in the local community. In other words, the research concentrates on those structures 'sandwiched' between central government and state-funded groups from civil society that operate in the local arena. On the one hand, the exclusion of ordinary local citizens that are not involved in local development could be arguably criticised as a weak point of this study because it

⁹⁹ PLANET was established in 1997 as an umbrella organisation for the 38 APCs. PLANET represents the network of 38 APCs in Ireland in the wider political arena, provides information on policy developments and a range of support services to its members. It is an independent company financed by the APCs (Planet no date).

¹⁰⁰ The Department of the Taoiseach (involved in the establishing and piloting APCs), the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (responsible for the local authorities), the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs (responsible for overseeing the work of ADM) and the Department of Finance (allocation of resources to individual government departments).

omits the grassroots perspective; i.e. the view of those individuals considered the beneficiaries of measures and actions initiated by funding funnelled into the area. On the other hand, previous research led by Bartley and Saris (see Section 4.2.2) already provides a profound overview of issues and concerns relating to the involvement of the community in local urban regeneration projects. Moreover, a detailed study on the views of local residents and volunteers would be beyond the scope of this study as the key objective is to look at the interface between the statutory sector and the local APC in terms of governance-led changes that affect the funding mechanism of APCs. The inclusion of a few views from those working in the community that are professionally or otherwise linked to the Ballyfermot Partnership serves to establish whether and to what extent those working in the community observe or experience changes on the ground induced by the re-modelling of the governance framework.

Originally, it was intended to take those interviews as a starting point for elaborating on the issue of governance-induced changes to the funding framework. The initial plan for this study was to conduct additional 15-20 interviews with selected key stakeholders with a view to identifying links between changes in governance that occurred since 2000 and their impact on funding arrangements for APCs. As the research proceeded, however, new connections became available that afforded new opportunities to investigate further into the issue. In total 46 interviews were carried out between January 2003 and November 2004 (see Table 4.3). This number includes follow-up interviews so that some respondents were interviewed on up to three occasions. Apart from one focus group interview with staff members of the APC in the case-study area and four interviews involving two respondents, the majority of interviews were one-on-one encounters. Furthermore, taking into account new developments that occurred between 2005 and June 2007, additional informal follow-up conversations took place with APC professionals from different APCs in Dublin.

The focus of the study is directed at the interactions between the statutory sector and APCs as an integral part of the state-funded, not-for-profit, local-development sector. Therefore, the selection of interviewees concentrated on individuals positioned at the 'intermediate level', i.e. on those working within the institutional apparatus that functions as a transmission belt to implement centrally-devised area-based initiatives into the local arena. Given the wider remit of APCs that extends beyond the locale, however, links to the 'top' – the institutional level on behalf of which the programmes are to be implemented – 'sideways' – with other Dublin-based APCs, partner organisations and agencies involved inside and outside the catchment area of Ballyfermot Partnership – and the 'bottom' – the receiving end of any programme-related measures – were established in order to allow for the inclusion of a wider spectrum of expertise and experience to be included. Links with other APCs were particularly considered relevant to ascertain whether developments in the case-study area would be similar to both strategies applied and experiences in other designated disadvantaged areas in Dublin.

The selection of respondents for the empirical research is considered suitable to elicit first-hand views of governance restructuring in Dublin and its felt effects on:

- interaction at the institutional interface between APCs (as quasi-independent state-funded local development initiatives) and the statutory governance apparatus
- the relationship between APCs and the local-development sector in their catchment area;
- the design and implementation of funding arrangements of APCs and the underlying control mechanisms;
- the achievement of success and value for money;
- the integration of local development and local government systems.

4.4.3 Interview approach

The different organisational and professional backgrounds of the interviewees called for specific approaches to conducting the interviews. Explicitly considering the role of the individual interviewee in the local development process (e.g. member of the local authority, local community group, public representative, board member or professional of an APC) specific issues and questions had to be included into the former-identified set of core issues, which were specifically tailored to the individuals' involvement in local governance and its professional and/or organisational background¹⁰¹. Interviews were based on a checklist of key issues that focused on aspects related to the drivers behind restructuring the governance system, underlying funding mechanisms, programme-related priorities and, finally, concerns and practices in decision making and programme implementation.

Most of the interviews took the form issue-oriented semi-structured face-to-face interviews (Diekmann 1995; Kvale 1996). According to the terminology used by (Kitchin and Tate 2000), the main interview technique applied would also classify as an interview-guide approach. At times the interview developed into a more narrative style (Diekmann 1995) and, on some occasions, even developed into an expert interview with both parties asking and responding to questions (cf. Kitchin and Tate 2000: 219). It was felt that a certain degree of freedom and flexibility in terms of the interview style was conducive to accessing information and clarifying issues.

Each interviewee had previously been informed about the research project, the area of interest, and the estimated duration of the interview of about 45 to 60 minutes through a personal encounter, by telephone or by email. This was followed by the submission of the research agenda if requested by the interviewee. The circulation of the research proposal was offered at first contact. The clarification on the subject of the research and the key thrust of issues that were intended to be addressed in the course of an interview turned out to be crucial because it provided the respondent with the opportunity to prepare for the meeting; it also signalled that the researcher is familiar

¹⁰¹ For example some respondents were involved, mainly by means of board membership, in more than one of the agencies depicted in Figure 4.

with the institutional context, terminology and developments concerning the governance system in Dublin. It was generally felt that interviewees were more comfortably addressing issues when they knew they could use their professional jargon. As a result, the time granted for the interview could be used more effectively. This especially held true for those individuals that had already been interviewed in a previous project addressing similar issues in 2000 (Borscheid 2001).

The duration of the interviews varied considerably¹⁰². Whilst some interviews took up to 90 minutes and more the majority of interviews lasted around 45-60 minutes. The coding and the analysis of the qualitative data was facilitated by using QRS NUD*IST, a computer programme developed to facilitate handling non-numerical and unstructured data in qualitative analysis. Taking into account both the benefits and dangers associated with qualitative data analysis (QDA) software (Weitzman 2000; Kitchin and Tate 2000), combined with previous experience in analysing qualitative data in a similar setting (Borscheid 2001), the application of NUD*IST computer-aided analysis was considered an appropriate tool to, first, identify key responses, second, develop a categorisation of responses according to content; and finally, compare these categories against (a) the role or position of the individual in the process of governance restructuring and (b) the key criteria identified in Section 4.2 that function as a surrogate measure for the modernisation of local governance in Ireland.

The empirical data generated is utilised to contextualise, and reflect on, documented policies, reports and guidelines and, moreover, tease out challenges concerning contemporary practices in urban governance and their bearing on funding arrangements for APCs. When analysing and, subsequently, interpreting the data derived, the point of views expressed by the respondents were treated as personal opinions, and not necessarily as representing the official viewpoint or the priorities of the organisation or interest group they work with. If used and cited here, any quotations from the data, therefore, should be seen only as indicative support for arguments emerging from analysis of both the literature reviewed and empirical data gathered.

The production of empirical data by means of an in-depth case study facilitates assessment of the relative utility of the three theoretical approaches (ANT, URT and the RA), which is the ultimate objective of this thesis. The interview material is the foundation for a systematic investigation of contemporary funding arrangements of APCs and associated policies and practices of re-structuring the local partnership model in Dublin's changing governance landscape. The analysis of perceptions, experiences and views of individuals from different institutional and professional backgrounds who are, or have been, instrumental at different levels of restructuring, implementing and/or interacting with the local partnership model serves to test the principal research question. Namely, if the conceptual framework provided by the

¹⁰² Ranging from 25 minutes to 110 minutes.

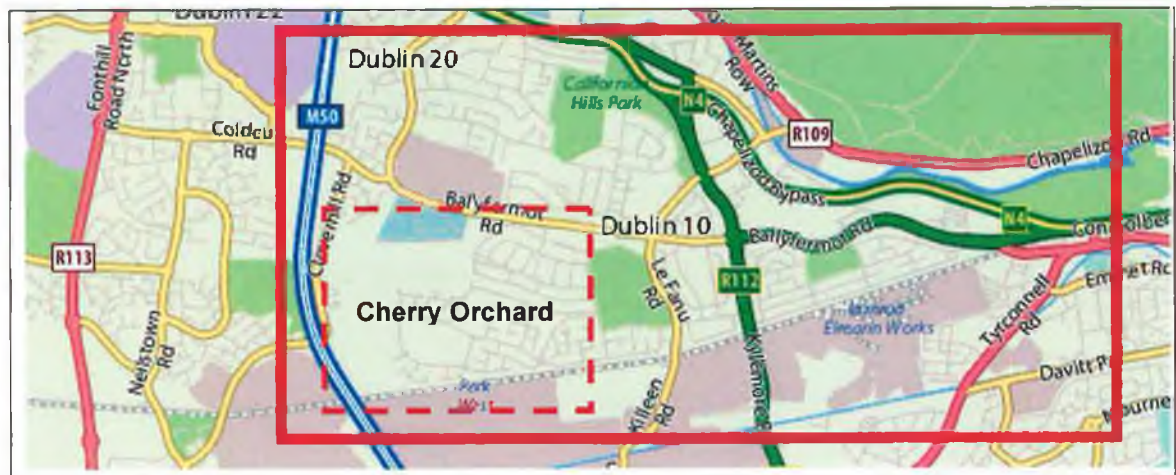
regulation approach (RA) is better suited than both actor-network theory (ANT) and urban regime theory (URT) to explain the driving forces for the re-configuration of funding and performance control arrangements for APCs in the context of the neo-liberal, New Public Managerial (NPM)-inspired, realignment of Dublin's local governance landscape.

5. A PROFILE OF THE CASE-STUDY AREA

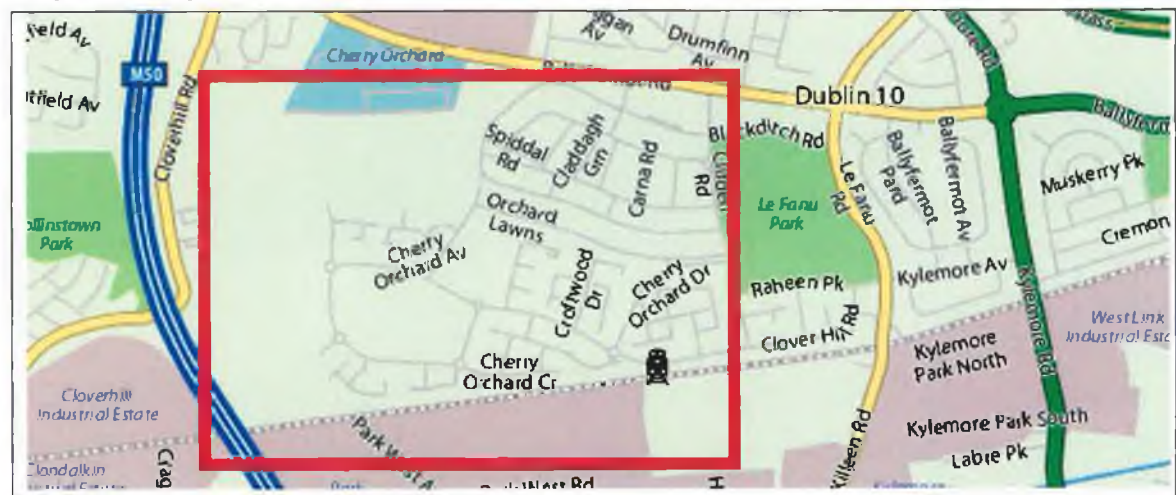
Map 1: Location map Dublin-Ballyfermot



Map 2: Ballyfermot



Map 3: Cherry Orchard



Source: Yahoo.com at <http://maps.yahoo.com/#mvt=m&q1=Dublin&trf=0&lon=-6.324177&lat=53.365919&maq=6>.

5.1 Introduction: general description of Ballyfermot

Despite a period of unprecedented economic growth in Ireland, some areas remain 'poor places' in terms of the absence of economic development opportunities, the lack of social infrastructure and low-quality public service provision for local individuals. This section illustrates that the case-study area is in many regards a socially and economically disadvantaged area at the margins of Irish society. Previous research (Saris *et al.* 2002: 176) describes parts of the case-study area as "squalid, drug-infested, anti-authority, welfare-dependent and crime-ridden", which, according to views of individuals working and/or living in Ballyfermot, also seems to be reflected in the 'collective psyche' of the community.

In the late 1940s, the local authority in Dublin built the first housing estate in Ballyfermot (Lower Ballyfermot). Subsequently, Ballyfermot was further developed in stages and became one of the largest local-authority housing estates of its time. It was developed as a response to an increase in population in Dublin City. Ballyfermot is a suburban neighbourhood located at the western fringe of Dublin City with a population of 21,027 in 2006 (Government of Ireland 2006). The area covered by the local Area Partnership Company, Ballyfermot Partnership, consists of the following seven Electoral Divisions (EDs): Cherry Orchard A, Carna (formerly Cherry Orchard B), Cherry Orchard C, Decies, Drumfinn, Kilmainham A and Kylemore. The area is positioned between the Liffey River in the North and the Grand Canal in the South.

Picture 1: Aerial view of Ballyfermot



Source: Google Earth.

The Motorway 50 (M 50) marks the western boundary of Ballyfermot. The Inchicore neighbourhood is bordering in the east. A look at the surrounding main road arteries illustrates the physical isolation of Ballyfermot (Maps 1 and 2). Ballyfermot Road – which expands from near the M 50 in the east, crosses the R 112 and, then, runs parallel to the N4 (see Picture 1 above) – is the main road artery that functions as a through road between the M 50 and the city centre. Residential areas are clustered alongside Ballyfermot Road. Ballyfermot is a residential estate with relatively few employment opportunities provided locally. Most companies in Ballyfermot are engaged in retail and manufacturing. Park West is a nearby industrial estate occupying the land South of Ballyfermot. It is located between the railway and the Grand Canal and stretches from Kylemore Road in the east to the M 50 in the west (Picture 1). Companies located in Park West mainly provide jobs that require specific qualifications (e.g. in the communications and technology sector). However, based on the low levels of educational attainment in the area (see Section 5.4), only limited job opportunities exist for individuals from Ballyfermot to access well-paid jobs in Park West:

There is a whole generation of young people coming up in the retail sector, in restaurants, fast food, do you know what I mean? We're still producing early school leavers. So do they live in Ballyfermot and work in Ballyfermot? I think Ballyfermot, traditionally, people from Ballyfermot have had to travel to work. There are more opportunities for employment. But I don't think, not for high-paid employment (...) Well Cherry Orchard. You see there is a railway track dividing Cherry Orchard from City, or Park West. I think the only people from Cherry Orchard who work in Park West are the van drivers or cleaners. Do you know what I mean (Interview LV 1)?

Large parts of Ballyfermot are characterised by poor access to public transport (bus routes only) and a lack of recreational facilities, retail services and social infrastructure. The design of Ballyfermot as a low-rise, low-density housing estate makes the residents in Ballyfermot dependent on individual transport, even for accessing basic services, which are concentrated along Ballyfermot Road. According to the 2006 Census, 42.8 per cent of households in Ballyfermot did not own a car. This is nearly double the national average of 19.7 per cent (CSO 2007). The layout of the road network in Ballyfermot's housing estates with a maze of cul-de-sacs, often with only one or two access roads (Picture 1), is an obstacle to the provision of efficient public transport services.

The design of Ballyfermot as a residential area with few investments into social infrastructure and economic development left large parts of the population physically disconnected from economic and social opportunities participation and contributed to the development of pockets of severe disadvantage. The heart of Ballyfermot is a dilapidated retail area on Ballyfermot Road, with a cluster of a variety of smaller shops (see Picture 2), a bank, a library, a college of further education, a school and a major retailer. Visits to the area at different times of the day indicated that concentration of services and amenities on the main road exerts a gravitational pull from all parts of Ballyfermot. Local people from remote parts of the community (e.g. in Cherry Orchard) refer to the area as 'the manor'.

Picture 2: Shops on Ballyfermot Road



Source: Picture taken by author in 2007.

Some areas have smaller clusters of shops, services and facilities (e.g. around the Markievicz Community Centre on Decies Road). Irrespective of statistical indicators that classify Ballyfermot as disadvantaged, some respondents remarked that Ballyfermot “got many new facilities over the last years” and that it could become “the new Foxrock [very affluent area on Dublin’s South side]” (Interview LV 4). A respondent highlighted the advantages Ballyfermot has in comparison to other areas and summarised his observations as follows:

Ballyfermot has the cheapest housing in Dublin. It’s ten minutes from the city centre, it’s got a railway line, it’s got good bus routes, it’s got quite good amenities, it’s got certainly a good library, it’s got swimming pools, it’s got sports grounds. It’s not under-supplied with things. It got a new town hall. I live in an affluent area in Dublin and our town hall is collapsing. Ballyfermot’s actually got a lot of things it doesn’t appreciate. Areas become fashionable because they become affordable, and people with the right sort of energy move to those areas. That isn’t happening in Ballyfermot. Perhaps it’s the reputation but I think it’s the people; the people who wanna live in Ballyfermot want to live with the people in Ballyfermot (Interview LV 3).

The statement indicates that ‘something is wrong’ with the local community as it is ‘the people’ in Ballyfermot that are considered an obstacle to change towards the better. It is as if a mixture of certain area-specific values, life styles and desires manifests in a local culture that is somehow immune to what is perceived by the respondent as positive external influence that could contribute to positive change in terms of ‘upgrading’ the area. A closer look however, brings to light, that the social and public infrastructure mentioned by the respondents is located in the vicinity of the central area in Ballyfermot. Apart from the new civic centre that was built on Ballyfermot Road and the establishment of a multi-million equestrian centre in Cherry Orchard that serves the interest of a selected few (Bartley and Saris 1999; Saris *et al.* 2002), little investment had been directed at upgrading the areas at the margins (see below). A

local-authority survey carried out in Ballyfermot in 2001 for the preparation of the URBAN II Initiative of the EU comes to the following conclusion:

The accumulation of public housing over a period of 40 years combined with a lack of infrastructure development and little private sector investment, has created a disadvantaged urban environment where key issues identified by the community itself include:

- High levels of substance abuse
- High levels of drug related crime and anti social behaviour
- Early school leaving
- High unemployment levels throughout the 1990s
- High levels of economically dependent persons
- High levels of dependent elderly (Dublin Corporation 2001: 5).

Even though the situation among the different areas differs in terms of socio-economic indicators such as social class, educational attainment, employment status, household structure and demographic profile, the physical appearance of the whole area is described as “drab and monotonous and in some estates this is combined with a feeling of insecurity amongst residents” (*ibid.*). The area is not only geographically but also socially and economically at the margins of society:

We got a presentation from welfare. Nothing substantial has changed in Ballyfermot over the last few years. Basically one in three, just under thirty per cent of all individuals in Ballyfermot, are on social welfare, of some description or another¹⁰³. And that was not including those that were on any of the disability benefits. And we know there are even more people who would qualify and who are not claiming it. So if you actually think about that and break that down to who would actually qualify in terms of age group and in terms of other kind of benefits we are looking at 45 to 50 per cent of the population. How do you really characterise what's an improvement or what isn't an improvement in the area when you got those kind of figures? (Interview APC 2b).

Despite a relatively high degree of welfare recipients throughout the area, spatial differences in terms of the socio-economic profile and quality of life prevail. These, for example, manifest in visible indicators such as a different quality of the urban fabric, accessibility to social infrastructure, the general appearance of houses and front gardens and other indicators such as voter participation, labour-market participation and household composition.

Overall each ED within Ballyfermot is characterised as a severely disadvantaged urban area according to contemporary poverty indices such as the Irish Index of relative Affluence and Deprivation (Haase 1999) or the SAHRU Index (Small Area Health Research Unit 1997). It bears symptoms of urban decay such as low quality of the urban fabric and a high concentration of individuals traditionally associated to be part of the ‘urban underclass’ (Saris *et al.* 2002), symptoms that are characteristic of large suburban developments with a high share of local-authority housing stock. Ballyfermot Partnership was established in 1995 to address issues associated with local poverty and socio-economic disadvantage (see Chapter 4, Section 4.2.2).

¹⁰³ In August 2003, 44.4 per cent of the population in Ballyfermot held a General Medical Services (GMS) card (Eastern Regional Health Authority 2004).

5.2 Population

Between 1986 and 1996 the population in Ballyfermot dropped by 12.5 per cent to 21,149 (Bartley and Kelly n.d.). Since then the population remained stagnant with 21,027 people living in Ballyfermot in 2006. In comparison, in 2002, the population figure for Ballyfermot was 20,699 (Government of Ireland 2006). The increase in population by 1.6 per cent between 2002 and 2006 can be attributed to new residential developments in Cherry Orchard C (Cedarbrook) and the higher number of individuals in communal establishments in Cherry Orchard A (i.e. higher number of patients in the national hospital and a high share of young inmates in the prison). New developments at the western margins of Ballyfermot are expected to result in a substantial increase in the population over the next few years.

A comparison of the population profile between Ballyfermot and the city (including Ballyfermot) by age cohort (Table 5.1) reveals a distinct difference for the cohorts aged 29 or younger. While the profile for Dublin illustrates an abrupt and significant reduction in population under 20 and an equally sharp increase in population aged 20-29, Ballyfermot's population did not undergo similar demographic changes.

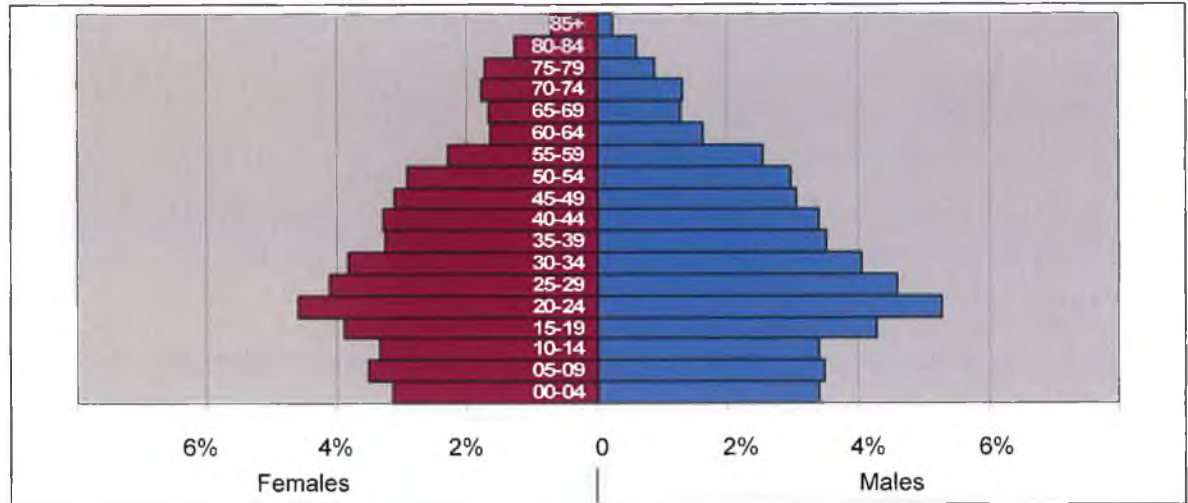
Possible reasons for these different developments are as follows:

- The changes in the overall Dublin demographic profile have been predominantly driven by inward migration and the location of this inward migration has been in a number of specific locations, of which Ballyfermot received few migrants.
- Ballyfermot was a settled community developed in the (1940s and 1950s) that demonstrated considerable growth over a 20 year period and is now showing a profile of a more aged community. The relatively young population profile of the newer parts of Ballyfermot (Cherry Orchard) ensures that the overall picture is only moderately skewed towards an older aged profile (communal facilities in Cherry Orchard, such as Wheatfield Prison, distort the age profile for the area considerably).
- Taking into account comparatively high fertility rates in Ireland (Fahey 2001), there is some indication that young families with children moved out into the wider commuter belt because they (a) cannot afford housing in Dublin and/or (b) consider Dublin as a suitable environment to raise children.
- An overall reduction in fertility since the 1980s (CSO 14/12/2006) took place as a result of the economic boom in the 1990s coupled with rising costs of childcare and/or a change in behavioural changes in lifestyle among those capable of benefiting from opportunities that arose in the period of unprecedented economic growth since the mid-1990s.
- A concentration of jobs and educational institutions in Dublin that, for example, attracts in first-time job seekers, foreign nationals (particularly from new EU accession states) and immigrants, students and post-graduates.
- Ballyfermot's relative isolation from mainstream developments, a limited capacity of residents to avail of economic opportunities and little evidence of population

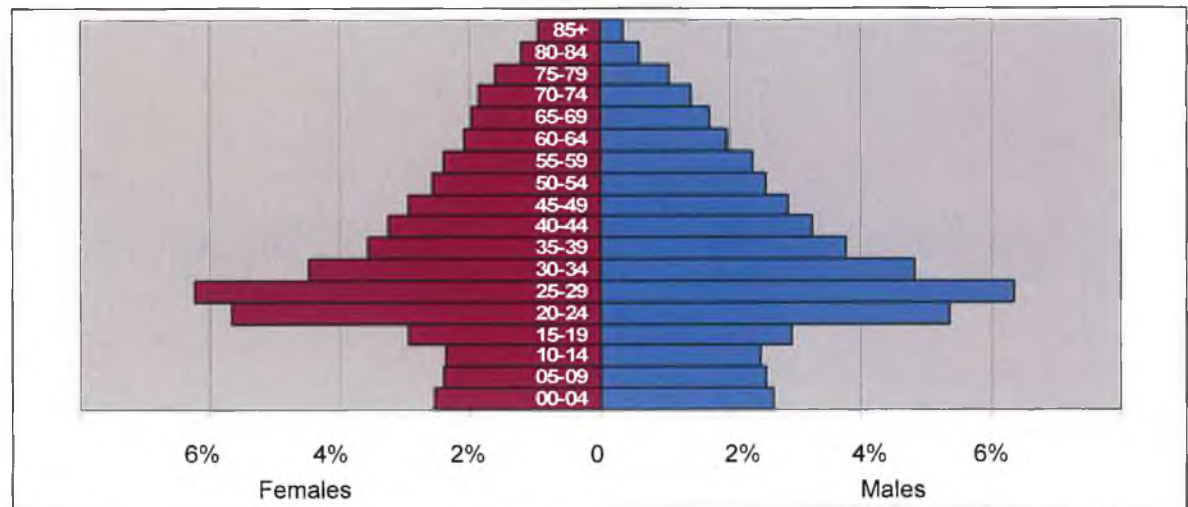
exchange between the area and other parts of the city, as the area does not appear to have a significant rental housing sector.

Table 5.1: Population profile of Ballyfermot by age cohort

a) Ballyfermot



b) Dublin



Source: CSO (2007).

5.3 Lone parents

The level of lone parents living in Ballyfermot with at least one child under the age of 15 is far above the national average. Census data show that between 1996 and 2002 the number of lone parent households has increased by 4 per cent. 24 per cent of households were led by lone parents in 2002 (the vast majority being mothers). This was more than twice the national average, which was at 11.7 per cent (Ballyfermot Partnership 2004). According the 2006 census, lone parents accounted for 19.6 per cent of all households in Ballyfermot whereas the national figure was 11 per cent. In Cherry Orchard A and C, the share of households headed by lone parents exceeded 25 per cent. Local workers that know the area well stated that “a lot of them wouldn’t

be working. And they would be at home" (Interview LV 2). Also it was indicated that as low levels of educational attainment would limit life chances, self fulfilment and income opportunities, early pregnancy was considered a way to escape the pressures in a meritocratic society:

Motherhood gives status – so a lot of women would get pregnant fairly early, at a very young age; I am talking 13, 14, 15 here. And if your educational opportunities are not great that's going to happen sooner rather than later (Interview LV 5).

Local workers who work with local families and lone parents identified a lack of local childcare provision as one of the key obstacles to labour-market participation for women living in Cherry Orchard. Ballyfermot Partnership identified "the lack of accessible, affordable and quality childcare provision" (Ballyfermot Partnership 2004: 20) as one of the priority issues under their 2003-2006 area action plan.

5.4 Educational attainment and job opportunities

There is a strong link between educational qualifications and quality of life in terms of health, income opportunities and place of residence (e.g. Burke 2001). Statistics show low educational attainment levels for Ballyfermot. In 1996, 67.8 per cent of the population in Ballyfermot had ceased education at the age of 15 or younger (Bartley and Kelly n.d.); the average for Dublin City was at 38.5 per cent. Since then figures have changed considerably. In 2006, these had come down to 18.2 per cent for Ballyfermot and 9.6 per cent for Dublin City. The proportion of the population with third level qualifications even more significantly illustrates the limited scope for high-paid professional careers for residents in Ballyfermot. In 1996, only 3.5 per cent of the population had received third level education whereas the average for Dublin City was 22.5 per cent (Dublin Corporation 2001). The 2006 census figures were 7.7 per cent and 24.9 per cent respectively. The lack of educational opportunities is best illustrated by the following excerpt from an interview with a local community worker and resident:

The education system here is producing the lowest percentage of students moving on to 3rd level education in the country, you know. There are more people in Trinity College from Eritrea than there are from Ballyfermot. Now that's interesting because we have a bus that goes from Ballyfermot to Trinity College. But we don't have one that goes from Eritrea to Trinity College (Interview LV 1).

Against the backdrop of relatively low levels of educational achievement, it is not surprising that the unemployment rate¹⁰⁴ in Ballyfermot in 2006 is over 20 per cent, more than four times the national average of 4.6 per cent (cf. CSO 2007). The economic boom years have increased job chances for the population in Ballyfermot. However, labour-market indicators suggest that residents in Ballyfermot could not capitalize as strong as other areas from the new developments. A comparison of the labour-market participation rate, the rate of self-employment and unemployment figures with national numbers show that the area lags far behind (Ballyfermot

¹⁰⁴ The unemployment rate in Ireland is defined as the total unemployed population (i.e. those registered unemployed and first time job seekers) expressed as a percentage of the total active labour force (i.e. those at work, unemployed and first time job seekers).

Partnership 2004). Empirical data from the interview material underlines the statistical data:

The type of people that would be resident in Ballyfermot are not being attracted to self-employment in the areas I'm looking at. I think the way that you become an entrepreneur is by being in a job and moving [...]. Your environment for an entrepreneur to develop is going to be a middle-class educated, frustrated person; frustrated with the job they are in, but not somebody who could become a semi-skilled worker or even a skilled worker. And those don't live in Ballyfermot. And this is the other key problem. Every other area of Dublin that has, say a Partnership, has a significant private sector, home ownership. Ballyfermot doesn't. Every single house in Ballyfermot was built by the local authority (Interview LV 3).

The reported increase in self-employment between 1996 and 2002 by 89 per cent (from a low base of 207 individuals to 392) is ascribed to the Area Allowance Enterprise Programme (Ballyfermot Partnership 2004); this number has to be treated with caution because "many go bust in the first year" (Interview LV 3). In any case, there exists an obvious mismatch between the job skills offered by the population in Ballyfermot and the demands of the labour market. Whereas new opportunities were created in professional services such as communications, engineering and information technology residents in Ballyfermot are reported to be mainly employed in manufacturing, construction industry, commerce and retail services and transportation (Bartley and Kelly n.d.).

In relation to prevailing high levels of long-term unemployment in the area, Ballyfermot Partnership reports that even though "the number of people unemployed for over three years fell slightly from 107 to 82, the main increase in long-term unemployment was for persons unemployed between one and two years. Overall, the trend in unemployment indicates that while there is improvement relative to the mid-1990s, the recent trend indicates deterioration in this situation" (Ballyfermot Partnership 2004: 13). The statistical profile is complemented by respondents from the area who highlighted that despite an overall reduction of unemployment figures a substantial core of unemployed individuals exists who do not have the capacity to meet the basic requirements for finding a job.

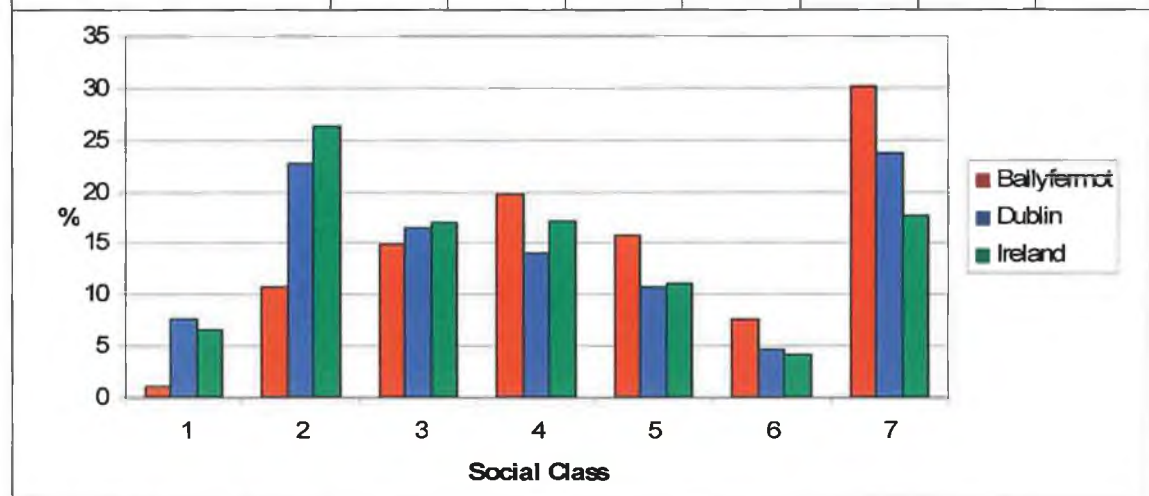
Research into "very long-term unemployed men concluded that they all had a similar profile – in short, not work ready and education or addiction issues added to them not being employable" (Interview APC 5). The respondent reported that the study shows that most of the men interviewed for the study left school at primary level; a lot of them were single or separated; some had families but were estranged from them; all had significant literacy problems and very few of them had any qualifications or certifications apart from the primary school certificate; some within the cohort of respondents work in the informal economy; also a few respondents admitted dependencies like alcohol or drugs, which prevented them from pursuing work.

5.5 Social Class¹⁰⁵

The 2006 census data reveal that the principal occupational profile of the population in Ballyfermot has not changed since 1996 (Bartley and Kelly n.d.). Economic opportunities in the Celtic Tiger years did not have a profound impact on the professional status of the majority of the labour force in Ballyfermot. Ballyfermot still bears signs of a particularly disadvantaged occupationally disadvantaged community (Bartley and Kelly n.d.). Table 5.2 displays the social class categorisation for 2006. The data indicates that the area has a considerably higher share of people in the lower social classes and an equally significant lower share of people in the higher social classes than corresponding figures for the city or the country. (The results for Cherry Orchard A can be explained by the influence of the low social class profile of the population of Wheatfield Prison.)

Table 5.2: Social Class

Area	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<i>Cherry Orchard A</i>	1.3	9.8	12.2	12.5	9.2	4.7	50.4
<i>Carna</i>	0.6	11.5	15.1	21.1	16.9	6.7	28.1
<i>Cherry Orchard C</i>	1.5	10.3	14.0	16.0	16.1	7.3	34.8
<i>Decies</i>	0.5	9.4	15.9	24.1	20.7	9.7	19.7
<i>Drumfinn</i>	0.8	11.9	17.3	23.3	16.4	8.3	22.0
<i>Kilmainham A</i>	2.3	13.5	15.2	20.7	16.0	7.2	25.1
<i>Kylemore</i>	0.8	9.3	14.5	21.0	14.9	9.6	29.9
Ballyfermot	1.1	10.8	14.9	19.7	15.7	7.7	30.1
Dublin	7.7	22.7	16.5	14.0	10.8	4.6	23.7
Ireland	6.5	26.4	17.0	17.1	11.1	4.3	17.6



Source: CSO Ireland 2007.

¹⁰⁵ Social class ranks occupations of all persons aged 15 or over by the level of skill required on a social class scale ranging from 1 (highest) to 7 (lowest). Social class is based on an ordinal scale with '1' being the highest social class. The social class of family dependants is derived from the social class of the parent having the highest social class. The codes are as follows: 1 = Professional workers; 2 = Managerial and technical; 3 = Non-manual; 4 = Skilled manual; 5 = Semi-skilled; 6 = Unskilled; 7 = All others gainfully occupied (Government of Ireland 2007b)

5.6 Local rivalry

Ballyfermot consists of seven electoral divisions (see above) and 4 distinct neighbourhoods: Upper Ballyfermot, Middle Ballyfermot, Lower Ballyfermot and Cherry Orchard¹⁰⁶. Local rivalry between the four neighbourhoods in Ballyfermot is a recurring theme that came up in interviews carried out in Ballyfermot. The interviews revealed that Ballyfermot consists of four distinctively different neighbourhoods and that there is “a great history of division between neighbourhoods” (Interview LV 3). Despite overall rivalries between the four neighbourhoods, the biggest divide is without a doubt between Cherry Orchard and the ‘rest’. Cherry Orchard is regarded as a dysfunctional neighbourhood that “answers to the demographic profile of a neighbourhood in trouble” (Saris *et al.* 2002). Local community workers think that the gap between Cherry Orchard and the older parts of Ballyfermot is unbridgeable as even residents in Cherry Orchard have ambitions to move out of the area if they could afford it:

People in Cherry Orchard see themselves as serving time until they get housed on the lower end of Ballyfermot. So this affects the sense of community. They see themselves as buying their time to be housed in Ballyfermot, to be housed near the lower end where the shops are, to be housed near the schools. So as long as we are proactive around Ballyfermot we sacrifice Cherry Orchard (Interview LV 5).

Even though the whole area is considered severely disadvantaged, this case study concentrates on developments in Cherry Orchard, a community that – despite being on the radar of a plethora of local state-funded organisations – feels neglected and written off. The allocation of funding from either Ballyfermot Partnership or URBAN II has always been a contentious issue:

Cherry Orchard residents felt nothing was being done for them. But hey, we noted that people in Lower Ballyfermot felt the same. All the money seemed to be concentrating in Middle Ballyfermot. It was like a blinkered view, ‘Everybody else is getting it. We’re not’. But money – it is true – wasn’t evenly spent in the area (Interview LV 4).

The following descriptive area profile illustrates the scope of poverty and exclusion in a local-authority housing estate that was completed less than 3 decades ago, but quickly developed into one of the most disadvantaged urban areas in the country. The designation of Cherry Orchard as a RAPID area in 2006 (see Chapter 4, Section 4.2.2) accentuates the degree of social and economic deprivation of the area.

5.7 Cherry Orchard: a stigmatised neighbourhood

Cherry Orchard is the most disadvantaged neighbourhood in Ballyfermot. Extending to the West, the development of Cherry Orchard was a response to an increase in demand for social housing. Cherry Orchard was built in four stages between 1976- and 1986 and is the newest part of Ballyfermot. Situated on the fringe of ‘the old’ Ballyfermot, Cherry Orchard can be described as a neighbourhood situated at the

¹⁰⁶ Through the local Ballyfermot Area Action Coop, which facilitated the establishment of the Ballyfermot Partnership Ltd., each area is equally represented on the board of the partnership with two community directors. The Co-op is the main vehicle for the election of community representatives onto the board of Ballyfermot Partnership. Membership is open to all residents in Ballyfermot.

margins of an already disadvantaged area. The layout of the streets and the cul-de-sacs further isolate the area so that only residents or visitors get into Cherry Orchard:

This area is isolated, no centre, no focus; there's no focus to the estate. People are the heart of the area but there's actually no focus. It is structural isolation. You come home, you go out collect your welfare or your wages, you buy your messages, you feed your family, you go home, you sit in front of your television for the week. You don't go out again. There's nothing you could do. You'd really have to be motivated (Interview LV 5).

The area lacks basic services and infrastructure such as shopping and leisure facilities, proper public transport services, a pub, or a post office – not even a post box was to be found in the area:

There is one shop in Cherry Orchard for 6,000 people; and this is not good urban planning (Interview DCC 3b).

This is particularly a disadvantage for those without access to a car. Moreover, until recently, the area did not have a primary school; and the public transport connection to the nearest suitable primary school was poor¹⁰⁷. There is strong evidence that the community in Cherry Orchard experiences structural disadvantage and social exclusion as the residents experience isolation from social, economic and cultural development opportunities (Saris *et al.* 2002). Despite a plethora of state-funded organisations or programmes that operate locally, such as Dublin City Council, Ballyfermot URBAN 2, the Ballyfermot Drugs Task Force, the Ballyfermot Partnership, LINK Community Development Project and the Cherry Orchard Developments Council, local people in Cherry Orchard are not getting the services they want:

Funding is coming in for different things but people want something else: There is no shop up here, no post-box, no public telephone. It is a very isolated area. Tommy's shop has been around for 30 years and it is the only shop in the area. For years people up here are waiting for a shop. We were negotiating for this the last five years and now they are now putting the shop way over to the other side where the private houses are, near Wheatfield Prison. I mean private houses is a good change for the area but why can't we have a shop up here? We're told by Dublin City Council that private developers and the guys running the big supermarkets, the LIDLs and the ALDIs, want to be in a prime location with so many houses or whatever. Well, they are taking the railway station away from here and they could negotiate something to compensate for it. Now we're trying to get a bus service up here (Interview LV 5).

Even Cherry Orchard consists of different neighbourhoods. Whilst exploring the area on foot, apart from a few streets, large areas of Cherry Orchard appeared generally as run down, as, for example, indicated by the poor finish of the urban fabric: sidewalks were poorly maintained with potholes provisionally filled with tar, and in some stretches, sidelined by collapsed walls. Moreover, public green spaces and front gardens were both littered and generally neglected.

¹⁰⁷ After years of lobbying for a primary school in Cherry Orchards the Department of Education and Children built a school which was opened in 2006. The project is a pilot scheme for teaching facilities in severely deprived areas. It provides extra services for parents and children from disadvantaged backgrounds.

The area was not equipped with litter bins. Occasionally, remains of burned out cars could be spotted on greens and in the side roads, which were skid-mark-studded. Some streets however, appeared in a different light: houses were maintained and front gardens were looked after; lawns appeared groomed and some gardens had well-kept flowerbeds. Cars in the driveways were of a newer make as revealed by license plates. The overall appearance of some streets in those 'pockets' was less uniform and suggested a concentration of middle class population:

Now people are buying their own homes. Here are houses up for sale and being bought, which is always a good sign for an area being on the up (Interview LV 5).

The transition between those pockets of relative affluence (or less deprivation), and the dilapidated housing estates of Cherry Orchards was abrupt; these changes in the urban landscape were best described by a local community worker:

When you go to a certain part of Cherry Orchard it's like going over a border – people don't want to be associated with that end of Ballyfermot and vice versa. Ballyfermot would probably see themselves as posher (Interview LV 2).

Picture 3: Footpath and open green space in Cherry Orchard



Source: Picture taken by the author in 2007.

Local community workers reported high levels of drug dealing, vandalism and incidents of joyriding having an effect in the wider area. Even though the issue of (narcotic) drugs dealing and usage is concentrated in Cherry Orchard, it has knock-on effects on the entire Ballyfermot area:

You asked me about the situation in Cherry Orchard, OK. You mentioned that the people in Cherry Orchard are concerned about a primary school, a shop, or a post

office. They probably are more concerned about that than about, for example, a litter problem. Yes, they probably are. But 50 per cent of them are probably more concerned about their methadone (Interview LV 3).

Besides the prevalent drug issue, respondents refer to low voter turnout asking, "So how representative are the local politicians?" (Interview LV 5); and voter participation levels in different neighbourhoods in Ballyfermot among the lowest in Dublin City (Kavanagh *et al.* 2004). Local workers and residents feel that the nature of the Irish clientelist political system (Komito 1984) aggravates the socio-political disadvantage of residents in poor neighbourhoods in Ballyfermot, as a low voter turnout leaves disadvantaged areas at the bottom of the agenda of politicians who prefer to focus their efforts on areas where voting patterns are higher¹⁰⁸. In the most disadvantaged area of Ballyfermot a certain *milieu*¹⁰⁹ has developed that is not conducive to the establishment of a local culture of participation in democratic decision-making and community issues.

Local community workers also referred to the stigmatisation of the area leading to a socio-psychological disadvantage of individuals from Cherry Orchard, which makes it difficult to develop a sense of community spirit. In this context (cf. Herlyn *et al.* 1991: 23-24), stigmatisation either occurs:

- formally through the way the community is being dealt with by institutions or the media (see Table 5.3):

The area here got a name in the newspapers and journalists ring up when something bad has happened in the area. They don't want to know when we are actually doing something positive up here with young people and the childcare. They want robbed cars and the riots. So the whole image was created. The newspapers, when reporting about crime-related incidents, sometimes even try to give somebody a Ballyfermot address even if they actually live in Inchicore. So they squeeze them into Ballyfermot. It's like Fatima [i.e. Fatima Mansions]. It's one of those areas here. I recently got a phone call from a newspaper. They heard that there were only so many real one-parent families in the country and they wanted me to arrange an interview for them with a genuine one-parent family. Jaysus, this is not a zoo! (Interview LV 5).

- or informally through the attitude of other individuals when interacting in social situations:

Cherry Orchard is an area at the periphery of Ballyfermot both physically and mentally. The teachers would have an attitude towards children from up here like, 'Well you know they are from up there. It would not amount to much anyway' (Interview LV 2).

According to Saris *et al.* (2002: 176), "Middle-class folks from up the country see in Cherry Orchard the prototype of the dark underbelly of urban life: squalid, drug-infested, anti-authority, welfare-dependent and crime-ridden". The stigmatisation is also mirrored in the language as local people refer to Cherry Orchard as 'up here' and to Ballyfermot as 'down there' (e.g. Interview LV 2). Even though the terminology used certainly refers to the geography of the area as Cherry Orchard is slightly elevated vis-

¹⁰⁸ See Kavanagh (2004) for patterns of voter turnout in Dublin.

¹⁰⁹ Cf. Herlyn *et al.* (1991).

à-vis the rest of Ballyfermot, it also symbolises the socio-spatial divide within Ballyfermot and, hence, is more than a mere topological description.

Table 5.3: Irish Times Headlines 2007

Man killed in Dublin knife attack	08 September 2007
A man (28) has been killed in a knife attack in Dublin. A second man is being treated in hospital with stab wounds after an incident at an apartment at Cedarwood Walk, <i>Ballyfermot</i> shortly after 6am (...)	
Gardaí seize cannabis worth €250,000	14 August 2007
(...) patrol as part of Operation Anvil, the Garda's crackdown on organised criminal gangs, on Kylemore Road, <i>Ballyfermot</i> , at around 7.30pm. Both are being questioned at <i>Ballyfermot</i> Garda Station, Dublin. (...)	
Man killed by unknown gunman	19 July 2007
A man was approached from behind by a lone gunman who shot him in the buttock and again in the groin at Cherry Orchard Drive, <i>Ballyfermot</i> , on March 7th, 2004, Dublin City Coroner's Court heard (...)	
Baby neglect trial for Circuit Court as judge refuses jurisdiction	02 June 2007
(...) ruled yesterday. The woman (37), who cannot be named to protect the child, was charged with neglecting the 16-month-old boy at the family home in <i>Ballyfermot</i> , Dublin, on December 16th, 2005, in a manner (...)	
McDowell concerned over safety of gardaí	28 April 2007
(...) anything when it was so obvious that this was building up. "Thank God, members of An Garda Síochána have not been killed." But he was aware that a garda had been hit by gunfire in the <i>Ballyfermot</i> area (...)	
Woman injured in Dublin shooting incident	12 April 2007
(...) 10pm on Tuesday by residents of a house on O'Moore Road, <i>Ballyfermot</i> . Detectives believe that the victim was taken to the house of a family she knew. Garda sources said they believed that the woman (...)	
Gardaí seize drugs worth €6.6m in Dublin operations	13 January 2007
(...) and are being detained under the provisions of Section 2, of the Criminal Justice Act. Last week, 3kgs of heroin was discovered by gardaí in <i>Ballyfermot</i> . This brings the total amount of heroin seized to date (...)	

Source: Irish Times

The negative public reputation of the area becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy as it reflects back on the area as an undesirable place to live, which fuels notions of Cherry Orchard as a 'no-go' area:

Cherry Orchard is the more criminal part of Ballyfermot. And nobody came to grips with Cherry Orchard. It is as if there's some monster lurking behind every hall door up here. But people here have the same needs and wants and desires as people elsewhere (Interview LV 5).

Residents who can afford to leave move out of the area. As a result, the area has developed a largely homogeneous social profile and extreme levels of poverty. This is, for example, indicated by a local culture of money lending, with local loan sharks being the last resort for many families, money clubs and the local shop owner operating a system where people can 'put something on the slate' illustrates the magnitude of income poverty in Cherry Orchard:

The local shop is more expensive than LIDL or ALDI but the owner changes cheques for people and he gives credit. And he has a great system. He gives credit for a week. And if your bill is not clear on your pay day you won't get credit the following week. It's a week-to-week system and he doesn't ever, ever roll over, you know. He won't roll over. So if you need to run up credit for a week, you know you can. But you'll have to pay it back the Thursday when you get your money. Or you pay it back the week your children's allowance... and you pay back on children's allowance day. But your children's allowance money is supposed to meet your children's needs. But 9 out of 10 times it's gone because you borrowed it. And you borrow on the strength of it. And there is some places where you borrow money where they will actually take your book, you know. And they'll hold your books so that you can't actually get it. They physically go with you. Now I am not talking about shops and places like that. But loan sharks will physically go with you to collect your books so that they get their payment, you know. You know, you physically have to give up your book. They hold your book against your debt. People also make their living too out of money clubs. If you have ten people who commit to giving ten Euro a week. That's 100 Euro a week, which is a lot of money that is available to each of those ten people. So you put your name down on what week you want your 100 Euro, right. So that week it'll be yours. So you have the 100 Euro to start it up front, you know. So you start it up front. So that 100 Euro goes that first week then to whomever. And then you charge maybe 12 Euro a week and you get that 2 Euro by ten people by ten weeks for doing the business, for the administration of it, working it out and that. There's loads, the ways people are making money is phenomenal. People see an opportunity for making money out of the misery of others. But it serves a purpose (Interview LV 5).

Picture 4: Corner shop in Cherry Orchard



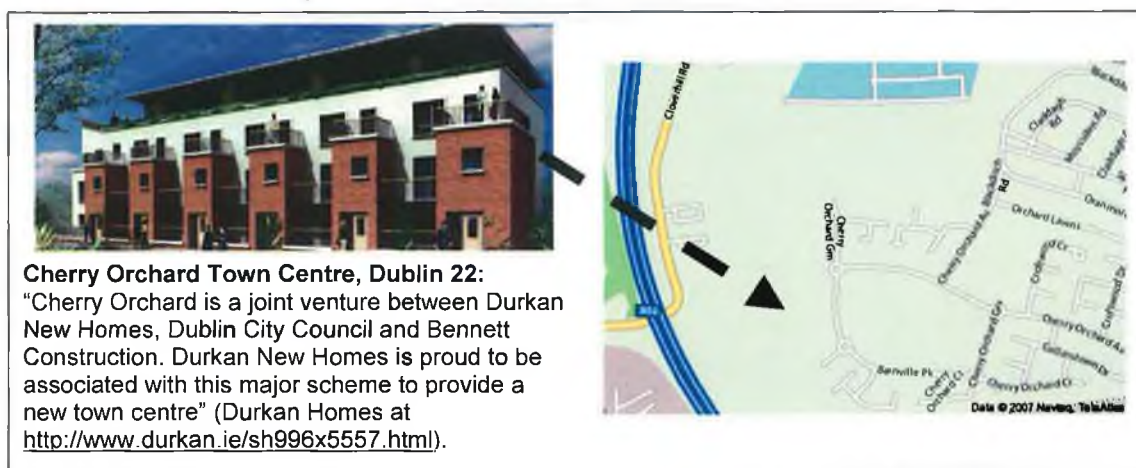
Source: Picture taken by the author in 2007.

Cherry Orchard is an area that, like other areas near Ballyfermot (e.g. Palmerstown), has little social infrastructure and that suffers from high levels of income poverty and social and physical isolation from mainstream society¹¹⁰.

5.8 New developments

A consultation process in preparation for the URBAN II Initiative initiated the planning process for a dedicated Youth Centre in Le Fanu Park at a cost of € 23 million, which will be developed alongside the Dublin City Council Swimming pool and Leisure Centre and is envisaged to open in Winter 2007 (Ballyfermot.ie n.d.). New residential developments take place at the margins of Cherry Orchard in public-private partnership between the City Council and private investors; i.e. those areas with development potential that face the main road or are easily accessible from the main road arteries. The development of a major action plan for Cherry Orchard outlines the development of the western fringe of Cherry Orchard for different housing schemes and the redevelopment of Cherry Orchard Park. For example, the affordable housing scheme in Cedarbrook with approximately 400 residential units (Picture 5) is described as a success by authorities (Eastern Regional Health Authority 2004). Local residents from 'the hidden side of Cheery Orchard' along the railway track do not noticeably benefit and even experienced further isolation with the relocation of the railway stop "which looks like something out of a 'Post Nuclear Winter Horror Movie'" (Platform 11 2006: no page numbers) – and the new retail shops located west of the newly developed area.

Picture 5: New developments



Source: Yahoo.com at <http://maps.yahoo.com/#mvt=m&q1=Dublin&trf=0&lon=-6.250019&lat=53.342968&mag=6>.

The neighbouring Park West, an industrial estate with new medium-rise residential developments serves as a surrogate for some residents in Cherry Orchard. Park West

¹¹⁰ In this context, it would be interesting to identify the reasons for re-naming the electoral ward Cherry Orchard B into Carna (Cherry Orchard B is closest located to the centre, the area with the shops or 'the mansion').

is situated South of Cherry Orchard between the railway line and the Grand Canal (Picture 6).

Picture 6: Cherry Orchard and Park West



Source: Google Earth

Residents, potential buyers and workers commented on the area in a website forum (Askaboutmoney.com n.d.: no page numbers): One participant describes the area as “a bit slap bang in the middle of an industrial park but across at the Plaza there is a spar [a shop], bennigans [sic] pub, gym, O'brien's [fast food chain] and a chinese restaurant. A Hotel is being built in the area also and more retail units are being incorporated into the apartments build” (*ibid.*). Other comments stated that they cannot see the scope for the development of a sense of community because it “lacks of any village feel”, is “the bleakest place I have ever been” and “could be bit dodgy at times due to some parts of the areas around Park West” (*ibid.*).

However, when an access road to the new developments was opened (via Cedarbrook Avenue and Park West Avenue), people from Cherry Orchard started using public spaces and social and retail infrastructure provided for the new residents in Park West:

Park West as you know is an industrial estate, a huge one. There is 5,000 new housing units going into the area between here at the top of Cherry Orchard and the Health Board field which is further down there. But just physically you can see that, the isolation has broken down, you can physically drive out. There's shops and supermarkets up here, restaurants and so on. There's a gym and people are beginning to use it, they are actually beginning to use the facilities. They actually

drive up to Park West at night just to let the kids play at the plaza, you know, have an ice cream and let them play. We're trying to give a sense of ownership – there are a few of the housing units going up literally overnight. We're trying to give a sense of ownership to the people in Cherry Orchard so that the area of disadvantage that was created will also benefit from these new developments (Interview LV 5).

Dublin City Council has plans to create a new town centre as part of a € 2 billion urban regeneration plan for the area, which will provide up to 5,000 residential units, a railway station and a civic plaza (Eastern Regional Health Authority 2004). The development is envisaged to consist of two town centres on the western boundary of Cherry Orchard, one 18 acre-site behind Cherry Orchard Hospital, the second between the M 50 and Cedarbrook Avenue, the railway line marking the southern boundary (Picture 6). The latter centre “will comprise 1,500 residential units, 30 per cent of which will be affordable and available in the early stages of the project” (The Irish Times 27/07/2004; cf. The Irish Times 28/07/2004). The master plan includes the construction of a 40-storey tower to give the area a new landmark (The Irish Times 03/02/2005). A look at the map illustrates that these sites are located at the margins of Cherry Orchard and will probably cater for new population moving into the area; the dilapidated areas of Cherry Orchard remain untouched.

5.9 Conclusion

The profile of the area with a focus on Cherry Orchard serves to demonstrate the magnitude of societal issues that fall within the remit of the local APC and other groups and agencies. It also shows that social exclusion and poverty are linked with bad planning policies as there seems to be a correlation between an agglomeration of single-class housing, the quality of place in terms of social infrastructure and accessibility to job opportunities.

Awareness of wider developments and causal process for the emergence and persistence of urban deprivation in neighbourhoods like Ballyfermot is relevant to understanding the socio-economic and spatial context within which APCs operate. These wider issues require multi-agency co-operation on a larger scale as APCs. The description of the case-study area demonstrates that state-funded APCs work in an environment, where relationship-building and area-specific project development that is based on local participation from those groups considered being socially excluded from mainstream society, is a challenging task. Under the LDSIP, Ballyfermot Partnership started working together more closely with other local agencies and programmes to improve the co-ordination of actions addressing social exclusion and poverty. The respondents pointed out that Ballyfermot Partnership works with the Local Drugs Task Force and URBAN 2 as well as with neighbouring APCs (i.e. KWCD and Canal Communities APC). However, it requires thorough planning (and hence time) and both political and financial commitment of those statutory agencies with the responsibility for the provision of social infrastructure and public services for citizens. In short, these wider societal and structural issues require multi-agency co-operation

on a larger scale. It remains to be seen to what extent, for example, plans for “a new town centre and a revitalisation of both the community and civic amenities” (Ballyfermot Partnership n.d.: no page numbers) will accommodate the views of local people in decision-making processes concerning developments affecting their community and contribute to an improvement of the quality of live in Cherry Orchard.

The analysis of the empirical data in the following chapter sheds light on contemporary policies and practices targeted at the integration of APC-delivered actions and services. This occurs under a state-controlled model of governance that is focused on maximising the impact of public resources channelled into the area of quasi-statutory welfare-related local development initiatives that, by default, pursue a bottom-up strategy towards ameliorating symptoms of poverty and deprivation. The case study serves to illustrate the extent to which the envisaged re-alignment of relations between formerly independent APCs and the state creates a more integrated, concerted and outcome-oriented approach towards addressing the nature and scope of local disadvantage in urban neighbourhoods.

6. ANALYSIS OF THE EMPIRICAL DATA

6.1 Introduction

The New Zealand model of public management provided the template for a public-sector reform in Ireland that is embodied in the 1994 Strategic Management Initiative (SMI) (see Chapter 1, Section 1.4.2). Public-sector modernisation in Ireland aims at the re-structuring of the national governance model through focusing on cost-effective quality service delivery of public services to the taxpaying 'customer', more transparency and accountability in government and the establishment of better management structures in public administration (Government of Ireland 1997). The literature reviewed suggests that the characteristic features of existing performance and monitoring methods:

- are inextricably linked to plans for public-sector modernisation; and
- have been mainly designed to increase the capacity of statutory and state-funded companies to measure progress, to improve operational practices and, thereby, to achieve best value.

It is argued that current funding arrangements and associated processes of accountability and institutional re-arrangements that affect Area Partnership Companies (APCs) in Dublin contribute to the achievement of what – from the perspective of the New Public Managerialism (NPM) – is described as *best value*: the optimisation of intra-institutional economies, fiscal efficiency and outcome-oriented actions (Power 1997; Comptroller and Auditor General 2000; NESC 2002a; McCarthy 2007). Roles and responsibilities of agents, key institutions and collectives within local-governance restructuring emerge as a result of complex negotiations between a variety of stakeholders that have different priorities (e.g. differences as to how social exclusion should be addressed), but that have partly overlapping remits (e.g. addressing optimisation of public service delivery). Depending on the balance of powers and the associated conversion or diversion of aims and objectives among all parties involved, governance systems can take the form of spaces of prescription, contestation or genuine consensus. This implies that an analysis of the funding arrangements for APCs must take into account the origin and direction of forces involved in the creation of the wider institutional environment, which has a bearing on the design of the funding mechanism.

This thesis investigates the institutional re-positioning of APCs in Dublin's governance system under the 2000-2006 Local Development and Social Inclusion Programme (LDSIP) and explores interrelated changes in funding and accountability arrangements for APCs. Taking into consideration the complexity of the local governance system in terms of its immediate and wider socio-political surroundings, this study is only capable of reflecting on certain aspects of the relationship between governance restructuring in Dublin and its implications for funding arrangements for APCs.

This chapter explores practices associated with the new managerial approach to local governance from the angle of three sets of key variables with reference to:

- the institutionalisation or incorporation of APCs into the statutory apparatus;
- the design and implementation of accountability procedures and guidelines regulating the allocation of funding; and
- the promotion of value for money-driven performance measures (see Chapter 4, Section 4.3, Table 4.1).

The analysis of the empirical material in this chapter deals with each theme under a separate main heading:

- Section 6.2: Institutional re-configuration of the governance framework;
- Section 6.3: Funding arrangements for Area Partnership Companies; and
- Section 6.4: Definitions of success and promotion of value-for-money principles.

The empirical data presented here illustrate tensions and trade-offs between opportunities to promote participatory approaches to decision making, on the one hand, and the development of a governance model that is responsive to calls for fiscal efficiency in the context of challenges associated with economic globalisation, on the other. A preliminary analysis of the interview material gathered indicated that the funding mechanism of APCs mirrors institutional changes in Dublin's governance system (Borscheid 2005). Also, research reports commissioned and policy documents released by the Irish government make ample reference to the influence of business-like principles in restructuring governance (e.g. NESC 2002b, 2002a; DoT 2004; Government of Ireland 2003, 2005; NESC 2005). The proliferation of new managerial practices in Irish administration has been accompanied by "an increasing emphasis on the need to specify and identify what will be delivered in return for public money rather than simply handing over a grant" (Boyle and Butler 2003). APCs have been subject to measures directed at both stepping up their performance and strategically repositioning them in Dublin's landscape governance. The interview material suggests that governance restructuring under the cohesion process facilitates a selective rolling back of the degree of political and financial autonomy of APCs. The empirical material highlights that the re-structuring of the institutional local development system in Dublin strategically increases the remit of the local authority through the work of the Dublin City Development Board (CDB) (Section 6.2.2) and its sub-structures (Section 6.2.5).

Against the background of contemporary efforts geared at restructuring the local-governance system in Ireland, this study sets out to carry out a comparative assessment of the extent to which actor-network theory (ANT), urban regime theory (URT) and the regulation approach (RA) can explain the nature of the relationship between observed changes of governance in Dublin and the design of funding arrangements for APCs. Chapter 3 outlined the conceptual strengths and weaknesses of each theoretical approach. The perspectives of ANT, URT and the RA on observed

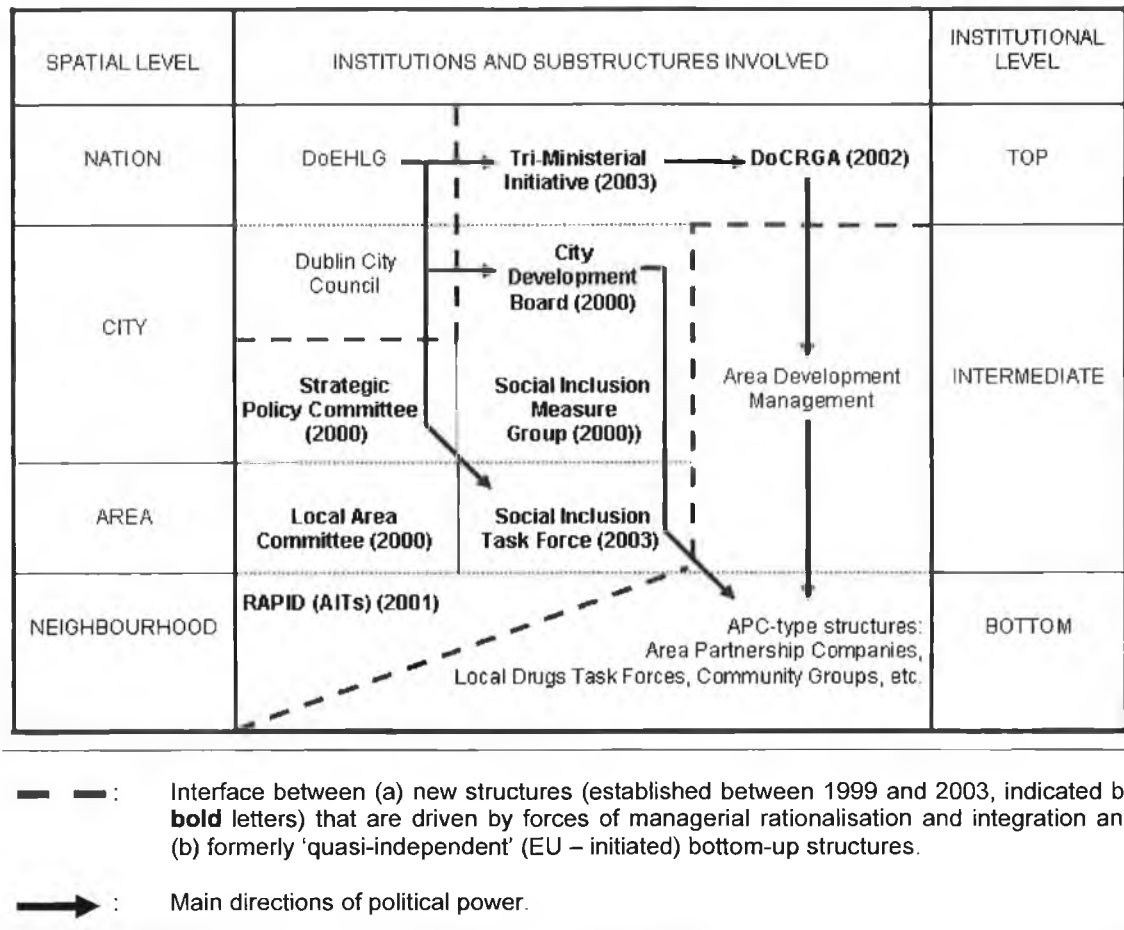
relationships between governance restructuring and funding arrangements of APCs will be explicitly discussed in the following chapter (Chapter 7).

6.2 Institutional re-configuration of the governance framework

This section provides an analysis and description of driving forces propelling forward:

- the restructuring of Dublin's governance landscape; and
- the processes of (re-)positioning of Area Partnership Companies therein.

Figure 5: Institutional environment and power flows concerning APCs in Dublin



Source: Borscheid (2005).

A variety of re-arrangements in Dublin's governance landscape led to a new situation for APCs. In particular throughout the LDSIP, the introduction of new initiatives (e.g. RAPID) and additional structures situated under the umbrella of the local authorities (e.g. City/County Development Boards or Local Area Committees) led to the gradual institutionalisation of APCs (Figure 5 above). In this context, the term 'institutionalisation' refers to processes promoting the transformation of APCs from pilot projects into permanent structures that are an integral part of the (local) state-controlled governance system (Walsh 1998; Parkinson 1998; Turok 2001; McCarthy 2007).

Table 6.1: Towards the institutionalisation of APCs

Process	What happened?	Timeline: Political Sponsoring and Monitoring
<p>Piloting 1991-1993 PESP</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12 APCs were piloted • Brief given to find new and innovative ways to tackle poverty and long-term unemployment in areas identified as 'unemployment blackspots' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1991: Approach jointly developed and sponsored by the EU and the Irish Government • 1991: Department of the Taoiseach responsible for APCs • 1991: Publication of guidelines by ADM: "The golden book" (Central Review Committee 1991) • 1992: ADM Ltd. was set up as support and monitoring body
<p>Systematisation & Proliferation 1994-1999 OPLURD</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1994/5: 26 new APCs were established after the pilot was considered a success • Selection of eligible areas for establishing APCs by means of a competitive bidding process based on: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) a statistical analysis of census data stressing the degree of deprivation; and b) perceived quality of the action plans submitted 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1995: New lead Department – Tourism, Sport and Recreation • 1995: Publication of new guidelines by ADM (2000): <i>Integrated Local Development Handbook</i> • 1998: Creation of the Task Force for the Integration of Local Development and Local Government Systems • 1999: Invitation of local public representatives to Boards of APCs • 1999: Value for Money Audit of the Local Development Programme by the Auditor and Comptroller General (Comptroller and Auditor General 2000)
<p>Incorporation 2000-2006 LDSIP*</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concerns about the proliferation of non-statutory local development bodies and related inefficiencies • Integration and co-ordination of local development initiatives became a priority • Endorsement of APC plans by City/County Development Board • Cohesion process as an efforts to streamline local development and strengthen the influence of the state • Changing the board structure of APCs and increasing the influence of the public sector 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2000: Local Government Bill • 2000: Establishment of City/County Development Boards, Social Inclusion Measure Groups, Strategic Policy Committees and Local Area Committees (Figure 5) • 2000: New guidelines (<i>Local Development Social Inclusion Programme</i>) • 2001: Local Government Act 2001 • 2002: New Lead Department – Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs • 2002: Launch of RAPID • 2002: End of EU support • 2003: Introduction of annual budgets and cutbacks in funding • 2003: Launch of the cohesion process (Review of state-funded local development bodies) • 2003: Creation of Social Inclusion Task Forces • 2005: Announcing plans for alignment of area-based initiatives with local government structures • 2006: New performance indicators emphasising the importance of collaboration (Pobal 2006a) • 2007: Value for Money Audit commissioned by the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs • 2007: Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs circulates guidelines addressing restructuring of APC Boards

Source: Empirical material and literature reviewed (* As no guidelines for a follow-up local development programme were issued in 2006, 2007 became a transition year).

The developmental trajectory of APCs since their establishment in the early 1990s consists of the following successive steps: piloting, systematisation and proliferation and, finally, incorporation (see Table 6.1 above; see also Chapter 2). Over time, APCs were gradually transformed. They were initially established as independent companies in disadvantaged areas to develop innovative approaches to tackle long-term unemployment and poverty in partnership with statutory agencies, to encourage vertical institutional learning within the public sector and to promote democratic experimentalism through involving local people in planning local actions and decision making (OECD 1996). This focus on bottom-up involvement and participatory democracy has shifted. Recent developments indicate that the future role of APCs will be in the area of contractual welfare-related service-delivery (NESC 2005). The following sections outline the re-organisation of Dublin's governance landscape and contextualise changes vis-à-vis empirical material gathered in the case study.

6.2.1 More involvement of Dublin City Council?

From the mid-1980s, a variety of bodies with pre-defined remits were established to deal with local economic and social urban regeneration issues (Adshead 2003). Area Development Management (ADM), the National Training and Employment Authority (FÁS¹¹¹), the Vocational Education Committee (VEC) and local development initiatives such as Urban Development Corporations (UDCs) became an integral part of central government policy that curtailed potential local-authority powers. According to some Irish commentators, central government decided to place these agencies outside local government because the local authorities' mode of operation was considered overly rigid and bureaucratic in nature (Walsh 1998; McCarthy 2007). Moreover, partly because of a limited budget, partly because of a limited interest in wider social and economic issues, partly because of a limited management capacity, local authorities' main responsibility was restricted to mere service functions such as planning, social housing provision and estate management, waste disposal, water supply, sewerage and road maintenance (Adshead 2003; Ó Broin 2003). A government official explained the establishment of ADM as the national support and monitoring agency for APCs as follows:

In the early days the local authorities were not seen as the natural home for sponsorship of Partnerships and area-based interventions as they did not have a policy competence or even policy interest in that issue. They did not have a holistic sense of local development or community development as a core area of their business. Now, a broader policy competence could develop through new legislation and new structures. And there is probably competition for authority and leadership in that area (Interview NE 6).

APCs were given the brief to play a more proactive role as "social entrepreneurs" (Interview NE 6) and address social and employment-related issues that were *outside* the remit of local government (cf. Chapter 2). In the mid-1990s, however, the local authority in Dublin, Dublin City Council (DCC), ambitiously started to engage more pro-

¹¹¹ *Foras Aiseanna Saothair* (FÁS) was established under the Labour Services Act, 1987 and reports to the Department for Enterprise, Trade and Employment (DoETE).

actively in local development initiatives and became an influential entrepreneurial power broker with a much wider remit in urban policy and regeneration initiatives (McGuirk 1994, 2000; McGuirk and MacLaran 2001; Ó Broin 2002; Bartley and Shine 2003; MacLaran and Williams 2003):

Dublin City Council is changing rapidly to cope with the pressures of the changing city. New political and organisational structures are being put in place to ensure that the city works well for people and business (Fitzgerald n.d.: no page numbers).

The development of an entrepreneurial role has been facilitated by a change in policy at central government level. In addition, policy documents pointed out a need for a greater democratisation of local government structures. The *1994 Programme for Government* stressed the need for a multi-stakeholder governance model and also acknowledged the local authority's role in local development:

The Local Authority must become the focus for working through partnerships involving local community-based groupings, voluntary bodies, the private sector, and public agencies. A particular focus must be to co-ordinate the efforts of existing groups such as County Enterprise Boards¹¹², LEADER and ADM Partnerships [i.e. APCs] (Fine Gael *et al.* 1994: 43).

Another influential factor of change can be attributed to the European Union (EU). The EU had long been a keen promoter for the utilisation of local expertise in policy implementation of EU legislation through increasing the involvement of both regional and local governments in policy making in Ireland (Boyle 2000; COM 2001; Callanan 2002; Marshall 2002; Adshead 2003; Ó Broin 2003). This local expertise, however, could not develop in Ireland due to local government's exclusive focus on managing the physical environment. The interview material shows that government departments and the local authorities pursued the idea of restructuring local government following the European model:

In most European countries the local government system is the main channel of funding for everything that happens locally. And it has one department which provides its resources. So it is conceivable that you could have such a system here (Interview NE 6).

Dublin City Council is primarily involved in engineering and physical infrastructure. We are not strong enough to do things local authorities do in other countries such as Germany. We are striving to move towards the European governance model where the local authorities are responsible for education, health, enterprise – and all those little players on the ground in Ireland are causing confusion. If you had one local development structure that massively expanded its functions you would not end up with a myriad of structures. So the European governance model was an eye-opener to Irish civil servants that Irish parallel structures are a disaster (Interview NE 1b).

The political will to reform local government is stated in the White Paper *Better Local Government* (DoELG 1996), which was quite influential in instigating change in local

¹¹² "The main objective of the City and County Enterprise Boards is to provide supports to facilitate the establishment, development and growth of micro-enterprises (small businesses employing less than 10 people) in their city or county. They do this by providing business information and advice, counselling and mentoring support and by providing financial assistance in the form of capital grants, employment grants and feasibility studies" (Enterprise Ireland n.d.: no page numbers).

governance (Callanan 2003; Ó Broin 2003). Apart from encouraging local authorities "to change the way of doing our business and go local development" (Interview DCC 7), it also encouraged interdepartmental cooperation. The Department of the Environment and Local Government spearheaded the establishment of the interdepartmental *Task Force on the Integration of Local Government and Local Development Systems* (hereafter Interdepartmental Task Force). The Interdepartmental Task Force produced a series of reports and recommendations that informed the Local Government Act 2001 (Chapter 1, Section 1.4.2). The act prepared the ground for a broader local development agenda for local authorities, which also set out to promote greater participation from the citizenry within local government-led structures (Ó Broin 2002). It facilitated ambitions of DCC to become the lead agency responsible for local development and gain influence and control in the development and provision of social and community services vis-à-vis state-funded special-purpose bodies such as APCs (e.g. Interviews DCC 7 and DCC 8).

In the context of contemporary state-initiated governance changes, it is important to keep in mind that APCs had initially been engaged in activities that challenged traditional state-led local development processes in Ireland (Walsh, 1998). DCC professionals felt, however, that "Partnerships took over issues they hadn't intended to take on as they got involved in things like community development and things we should have been doing" and also admitted, "it took us a few years to get our act together" (Interview DCC 7). The process of 'getting their act together' consisted of a variety of actions that were aimed at increasing the relevance of DCC as a key player in local development and promoter of more local democracy in decision making:

- the decentralisation of local-authority structures by means of dividing the city into five distinct administrative units. (Local area managers became responsible for dealing with local issues and reporting back into city hall);
- the establishment of Local Area Committees (LACs) in each of the five new administrative council areas and the formation of six thematic Strategic Policy Committees¹¹³ (SPCs) (Department of the Environment and Local Government 1999b);
- the establishment of an Economic Development Unit;
- a close affiliation with, and influence on, the City/County Development Boards (CDBs) and their substructures; and
- the piloting and extension of the RAPID programme as 'their extended arm' in disadvantaged neighbourhoods.

For example, the increasing involvement of DCC employees in local development agencies, such as newly established CDBs and the RAPID programme (Sections 6.2.2

¹¹³ The Strategic Policy Committees provide advice to the city council on questions concerning engineering and planning, economic development, traffic management, finance, housing and culture. Dublin City Council operates six Strategic Policy Committees (SPC), each of which addresses a specific policy issue. Each of the committees has 15 members; ten councillors and five sectoral group members (Dublin City Council n.d.-c).

and 6.2.5), illustrates the local authority's determination to become a key player in areas formerly being addressed by state-funded local development actors (Ó Broin 2003) (see also Section 6.2, Figure 5). A DCC professional working in the case-study area (Dublin-Ballyfermot) made the following comment:

Dublin City Council decided last year that we would have to be representatives throughout the city at my grade rather than having lower staff involved because we consider ourselves as a big player in the area; and there are certain things we should have more involvement in [...] Despite the involvement in many organisations at board level – I am on the URBAN board, I am on the partnership board and also on the Cherry Orchard Development Council and the board of the Equine Centre – we haven't really touched base with other organisations in the area. We know the buzz words but the implementation of our local development agenda is still a good bit away (Interview DCC 3a).

The change in policy and the new 'can-do' attitude officially professed by DCC is also recognised by local community workers in Ballyfermot:

The corporation [i.e. DCC] changed radically in the 1990s. The change came with John Fitzgerald [then City Manager]. They came from an authoritarian landlord-tenant model and moved towards a more social approach, which was a bit scary. And they came through community groups, when they came, and began to work from our side of the table. But they have the power, they have the clout and they own the land and they can actually develop it in whatever way they want – but people still want to be consulted, you know. And that they cannot come to grips with (Interview LV 5).

Dublin City Council have decentralised with all structures in place but are not perceived as being local because they operate a top-down local development model (Interview LV 1).

The involvement of local authorities is perceived by locals as 'posing' rather than being a genuine effort to collaborate with local people. There is a fear that the new developmental approach of DCC is an encroachment on territory and an effort, as one respondent put, "to get some handle on the situation and how it develops and that type of thing" (Interview APC 3b). In relation to the role of APCs, respondents from DCC and officials from relevant government departments left no doubt about the intentions of restructuring local governance: to create a vehicle through which APC-type organisations can be brought alongside with the local government system (e.g. Interviews DCC 2, DCC 7 and DCC 8; Interview NE 5b):

Partnership companies will be transformed into one structure. And that structure will be controlled by Dublin City Council. I am sure they won't be happy. But that's our language (Interview DCC 8).

DCC strives to exercise control over APCs' budgets and, consequently, their agenda by means of subsuming them into the local government system. The interview material strongly suggests that (a) the process of institutional integration has been facilitated through the discontinuance of EU-funding under the LDSIP and (b) the establishment of a variety of DCC-affiliated local development structures that operate in the geographic and thematic area of APCs. Under the LDSIP, a variety of institutional changes substantially influenced the re-configuration of power in Dublin's local development arena. The increased institutional density finds expression in parallel

structures that, from the view of DCC professionals, provide an opportunity to harmonise and integrate a *two-tiered* local development sector – i.e. DoCRGA-funded APC-type agencies, on the one hand, and the DoEHLG-led local authorities, on the other – under the leadership of DCC. This development mirrors political ambitions and processes associated with the SMI (Chapter 1). The following sections explore how local government reform, through a system of new local structures, gradually strengthened the position of local authorities to exert influence on state-funded local development structures that operate outside public administration.

6.2.2 More integration through City/County Development Boards?

In 2000, County Strategy Groups (CSGs)¹¹⁴ were replaced by County/City Development Boards (CDBs). CDBs were formally established through the *Local Government Act 2001* (Government of Ireland 2001: 37, Part 13, Section 129). CDBs have been commissioned to promote the integration of activities and budgets of the plethora of publicly funded local development actors into a concerted urban development strategy (Dublin CDB 2002; Fitzpatrick Associates and ERM Ireland 2003; NDP/CSF Evaluation Unit 2003; DoCRGA n.d.-a; DoEHLG n.d.-a, 2004). More specifically, they were given the following brief:

- to develop a broadly-based vision-led economic, social and cultural strategy covering all major services provided by various groups within their administrative area (DoELG 2000); and
- to ensure democratic legitimacy of, and 'good governance' within, state-funded local development initiatives (DoCRGA 31/07/2007a, 31/07/2007b, 2007).

CDBs were to "operate on the basis of real and meaningful partnership" (DoELG 1998: 14). Following the partnership model adopted under Partnership 2000¹¹⁵, the board of each CDB represented the dominant players and stakeholders involved in local economic, social and cultural development (see Table 6.2 below, cf. DoELG 1999a). The stated objectives are couched in a language of partnership that suggests a parity of esteem among parties represented on the CDBs. But the CDBs are by no means autonomous or neutral entities because they are closely associated with local authorities. They are led by the Director of Community and Enterprise. The key role of the Director is "to achieve a greater quality of service through the integration of the work and the budgets and the staffing and the structures of all of the actors who are on the ground, either directly as state agencies or funded by the state" (Interview NE 1a). In short, their key task is to facilitate the rationalisation process of the state-funded local-development sector.

¹¹⁴ County Strategy Groups were established in 1996 as a means to co-ordinate the activities of local development initiatives, i.e. APCs LEADER Groups, County Enterprise Boards and County Tourism Committees (DoELG 1996). These groups were actively involved in preparing the work of their successors, the CDBs.

¹¹⁵ In 1997, the voluntary and community sector became a formal partner in negotiating the national partnership agreement Partnership 2000.

The vision of a democratic and lean local-development sector in Dublin was developed in a 10-year strategy that is built around the core theme *A City of Neighbourhoods*:

At the heart of the strategy is the concept of creating and sustaining self-sufficient neighbourhoods within the city. The Strategy is concerned with developing a sense of neighbourhood identity, vibrancy and spirit. It seeks to integrate services at neighbourhood level and develop bottom-up participative structures. Developing a City of Neighbourhoods is critical to achieving the rest of the strategy (Dublin CDB 2002: 7).

Instead of utilising existing structures that were experienced in building up community involvement from the grassroots, Social Inclusion Measure (SIM) Groups were set up as a local sub-structure of the CDB (NDP/CSF Evaluation Unit 2003). SIM Groups are entrusted with the following tasks (DoELG n.d.-b):

- to report on progress to both the CDBs and the Interdepartmental Task Force;
- to draw attention to the wider remit of forthcoming CDB strategies for the 2002-2012 period; and
- to locally co-ordinate social-inclusion measures¹¹⁶ outlined in the 2000-2006 NDP and the *National Anti-Poverty Strategy*¹¹⁷ (NAPS).

Their role in co-ordinating and implementing social-inclusion measures at the local level is formally acknowledged in the 2000-2006 NDP (Government of Ireland 1999: Sections 10.38 and 10.39). The NDP/ESF Evaluation Unit (2003) highlights the capacity of SIM Groups to provide a forum for actors from the local development arena and underlines their role in enhancing the position of local authorities. At the same time, it identified serious challenges that cast doubt on the capacity of both CDBs and SIM Groups to accomplish the ambitious task given to them (cf. Fitzpatrick Associates and ERM Ireland 2003). One of these was the co-ordination of "thirty-eight measures in the NDP, with eight government departments involved and over thirteen implementing delivery bodies" (NDP/CSF Evaluation Unit 2003: 64).

¹¹⁶ Social Inclusion Policy in Dublin is concerned with the societal re-distribution of benefits from economic growth among society. A particular focus rests on providing services and support structures for disadvantaged groups (Dublin CDB n.d.).

¹¹⁷ The National Anti-Poverty Strategy was launched in April 1997 as a means to ameliorate poverty by targeting five key areas that are of particular concern: income adequacy, unemployment educational disadvantage, urban concentrations of poverty and rural poverty. Over the period of the 10-year strategy it is envisaged to achieve a general reduction (i.e. a global target) in "numbers of those who are consistently poor from 9-15% to less than 5-10% (based on 1994 data) by 2007" (CPA 2000: 19). As a result of economic growth those numbers were already brought down to below 10% in the course of 1997. This development is part of the explanation for a shift of attention from the global target towards specific target groups under threat of poverty such as long-term unemployed, the elderly, low paid employees, large families and children, lone parents, people with disabilities and vulnerable groups (Travellers, homeless people, refugees, asylum seekers). The implementation of the NAPS received institutional backing through the establishment of a variety of support structures, the development and introduction of poverty-proofing and increasing collaboration with other EU member countries which is based on the amendments of the Amsterdam Treaty (cf. CPA 2000). Despite the NAPS, analysts observed a widening in relative income poverty and social polarisation in Ireland (e.g. Breathnach 1998, 2004; Allen 1999; Kirby 2002; Powell and Geoghegan 2004). The NAPS is complemented by National Action Plans on Social Inclusion (NAPs/incl). NAPs/inc. was developed by EU member states to counter trends that jeopardise growth and future social cohesion in the EU (CPA 2002).

Table 6.2: Composition of the Dublin CDB as of June 2006

Sector	Name	Agency/Function
Local Government		
	Brendan Kenny	Assistant City Manager
	Cllr Catherine Byrne	Lord Mayor
	Cllr Daithi Doolan	Chair Economic Development and European Affairs
	Cllr Paschal Donohoe	Chair Environment and Engineering SPC
	Cllr Brian Gillen	Chair SPC
	Cllr Mary Murphy	Chair Housing, Social and Community Affairs
	Cllr Michael Donnelly	Chair Finance and General SPC
	Cllr Sean Kenny	Chair SPC
	Cllr Michael Conaghan	
Local Development		
Partnerships	Joey Furlong	Finglas Cabra Partnership
	Brian Nugent	KWCD Partnership
	Des Bonass	DICP Partnership
	Tara Smith	Rathmines Information and Community Services
City Enterprise Board	Pat Lynch	Chair
	Greg Swift	CEO
State Agencies		
	Jim Breslin/Fergal Black	Health Service Executive
	Frank Donnelly	FÁS, Director
	David Treacy	Vocational Education Committee, Education Officer
	Kevin Kavanagh	Enterprise Ireland, Director
	Brendan O'Sullivan	IDA Ireland, Regional Manager – East Region
	Frank Magee	Dublin Tourism, CEO
	Anne Delaney	Department of Social and Family Affairs, Regional Manager
	Bill Donoghue	Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform, Chief Superintendent Pearse Street Garda Station
	Stephen Falvey	Department of Education and Science, Regional Manager
Social Partners		
Employers & Business	Gina Quinn	Chamber of Commerce, CEO Dublin
	Alec Drew	Chamber of Commerce, Council Representative
Trade Unions	Position Vacant	
Community & Voluntary	Úna Uí Lachtnain	Pobal, Chluain Tarbh
	Brian Malone	Chapelizod Residents Association
	Brendan Dowding	Irish Martial Arts Commission
Others		
	Carmel Brennan	Dublin City Childcare Committee, Chair

Source: Dublin CDB (June 2006).

In addition, the co-operation of other actors with SIM Groups is neither enacted by legislation nor formally regulated. Hence, the backing for SIM Groups is not mandatory. Evaluations find a lack of support from actors both at national and local level, mainly because (a) the absence of any rewarding system that encourages co-operation and (b) the CDB's institutional positioning outside the NDP and NAPS structures (NDP/CSF Evaluation Unit 2003). The lack of 'buy-in' from relevant players is an additional obstacle for SIM Groups to bring about greater collaboration among state-funded local development structures.

6.2.3 More streamlining through a new government department?

The Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs (DoCRGA) was established after the general election in May 2002. It became the lead department for the local-development sector¹¹⁸ (Table 6.3 below).

Table 6.3: Overview of lead departments for APCs

Programme	Period	Lead Department	Election year
PESP	1991-1993	Taoiseach	1992
OPLURD	1994-1999	Tourism, Sport and Recreation	1997
LDSIP	2000-2002	Tourism, Sport and Recreation	2002
	2002-2007	Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs	2007

Source: DoCRGA (Pobail Press Office).

The department's role mirrors the philosophy of government renewal as outlined in *Better Local Government* (DoELG 1996) and the Interdepartmental Task Force reports (DoELG 1998, 1999a, 1999b, 2000):

There can be no doubt but that the establishment of the new Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs offers tremendous opportunities to achieve greater integration and efficiency across the range of functions coming within its remit, thereby providing better delivery of services to our customers (DoCRGA n.d.-d: 22).

Prior to the establishment of the DoCRGA, the responsibility for local development was highly fragmented among various government departments with no central co-ordinating mechanism (see Table 6.4). Among other roles, the department was given the remit to intensify links between the state and the local-development sector through tackling overlaps in remit, duplication of services and administrative dead-weight:

The Government is concerned at the multiplicity of structures and agencies through which local and community development schemes and programmes are delivered. There is an inherent danger of fragmentation and services and diffusion of resources. This can cause problems for communities in understanding and

¹¹⁸ In this process the responsibility for ADM, the national body responsible for administering APC-type structures, was transferred from the Department of Tourism, Sport and Recreation (DoTSR) to the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs (DoCRGA).

accessing funding and services on the ground (Ó Cuív 18/06/2003: no page numbers).

Since the establishment of the DoCRGA, the most important forces of restructuring local development initiatives seem to have emerged from the tri-ministerial initiative (see Section 6.2.4) and the cohesion process (see Section 6.2.6). Table 6.4 below illustrates that a number of tasks concerning local or regional development issues were re-located from other government departments to the DoCRGA.

Table 6.4: Initiatives, programmes and strategies managed by DoCRGA

Initiatives, Programmes and Strategies	Former lead department
- Local Development (POBAL, former ADM) - National Drugs Strategy Team and the - National Advisory Committee on Drugs (NACD)	Tourism, Sport and Recreation (now Arts, Sports and Tourism)
- RAPID	Tourism Sport and Recreation, Environment and Local Government (now Environment, Heritage and Local Government)
- LEADER, INTERREG, PEACE and CLÁR - Western Development Commission	Agriculture, Food and Rural Development
- Community and Voluntary groups - Functions under various charities legislation (including Commissioners of Charitable Donations and Bequests) - Dormant Accounts (Fund Disbursement) Board	Social Community and Family Affairs (now Social and Family Affairs)
- Bord na Leabhar Gaeilge ¹¹⁹ - Údarás na Gaeltachta ¹²⁰ - An Foras Teanga ¹²¹ - Waterways Ireland	Arts Heritage Gaeltacht and the Islands

Source: Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs (n.d.-d) (DoCRGA n.d.-d) and information provided in response to an enquiry by email from the press office (info@pobail.ie).

6.2.4 More cohesion through the tri-ministerial initiative?

A further step towards the integration of the local-development sector was the DoELG-initiated tri-ministerial initiative (Interview NE 5b). In 2003, the Ministers for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, Éamon Ó Cuív, T.D. (FF), Environment, Heritage and Local Government, Martin Cullen, T.D. (FF) and Justice, Equality and Law Reform, Michael McDowell, T.D. (PG), came together to develop steps “bringing greater cohesion across local and community development programmes” (DoCRGA 18/06/2003: no page numbers; cf. NDP/CSF Evaluation Unit 2003). The key objective of the initiative was to increase co-operation between government departments

¹¹⁹ The Irish Language Publishing Authority (Bord na Leabhar Gaeilge) supports publishers and authors to publish material in the Irish language.

¹²⁰ The role of Udaras na Gaeltachta is “to preserve and strengthen the Gaeltacht and the Irish language so that strong, self-confident communities can emerge to achieve their full potential and enjoy a high quality of life” (Udaras na Gaeltachta no date).

¹²¹ “An Foras Teanga is engaged [...] in significant work relating to the promotion of the Irish language and of Ullans, as well as the promotion of Ulster-Scots culture” (DoCRGA n.d.-b).

“whose work directly affects local and community development, so as to deliver the most practical and effective support possible to this sector” (*ibid.*). The tri-ministerial initiative resulted in a national review process of state-funded local development structures. The review consisted of three steps that were aimed at optimising the use of resources available for local development activities and strengthening democratic accountability of any service providers involved.

6.2.4.1 Step one: initiation of a national consultation process

In February 2003, a consultation process among various local service providers (statutory and non-statutory) was formally initiated by the DoCRGA in order to “attract an input from as wide as possible a range of bodies and agencies engaged in the delivery of services at a local and community level so as to inform the review process going forward” (DoCRGA 18/02/2003: no page numbers). In agreement with the social partners (DoCRGA 04/02/2004), the consultation process involved a dialogue with the actors in the field of local development operating under the umbrella of the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs (ADM-funded groups, the Community Development Programme, Local Drugs Task Forces, RAPID Groups, LEADER Groups), the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government (County/City Councils, County/City Development Boards) and the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform (County/City Childcare Committees).

As an integral part of the consultation process, a seminar was scheduled at the Burlington Hotel in Dublin on 18 June 2003 (DoCRGA 18/06/2003). In the presence of the three Ministers and representatives from groups involved and/or affected by the consultation process, Michael McDowell, T.D. (PD), Minister of Justice, Equality and Law Reform, in his opening address, placed the meeting into context by highlighting the need for efficiency-orientated collaboration as the driving force for consultation:

Today's seminar is designed to bring everybody who is a stakeholder, by virtue of their participation or their position in this process to a common partnership, which is aimed at securing that our effort yields the maximum results for the societies and communities and the areas that we serve (DoCRGA 18/06/2003: no page numbers).

Minister Éamon Ó Cuív, T.D. (FF), highlighted the following objectives for the development of a strategy directed at streamlining state-funded local development structures (*ibid.*):

- strengthening the impact of current resources in terms of on the ground services, supports and benefits for local communities;
- streamlining structures to avoid overlaps, duplication and undue administrative overheads;
- bringing transparency, co-ordination and improved control to the funding of local-community development measures; and
- strengthening the democratic accountability of agencies and service providers in this area.

The meeting was followed by the publication of a document that summarised the discussion at the consultation meeting. The document also outlined the next steps that were considered necessary to propel the reform of local development systems forward (DoCRGA 18/06/2003). It was proposed to review the status of ADM as the national monitoring body for APC-type local development structures. Another key recommendation was to enhance the collaboration between CDBs and APCs (Section 6.2.4.3).

6.2.4.2 Step two: review of Area Development Management

Area Development Management (ADM) was established as an independent partnership company to administer funding for joint EU and national local development activities on behalf of the Irish government (ADM 1994). Over time, ADM became a channel for managing a variety of state-funded programmes. In 1994, ADM's responsibility was limited to administer the jointly-funded Global Grant for local social and economic development. Since then, several national grants and programmes have been added onto ADM's agenda¹²². As a consequence, the amount of grants channelled through ADM accounts has increased considerably¹²³. Furthermore, the government-driven transformation of ADM into a special-purpose body brought about implications for the area-based local development programme (i.e. the LDSIP). As a result, as one respondent remarked, APCs slipped out of focus:

It [ADM] has now become a very, very big organisation. The government has been using it for the last 4 or 5 years in particular. But even before that – when they wanted to do something new in a socio-economic development area and the kind of idea didn't neatly fit into another state agency, be it the IDA [Industrial Development Agency] or FÁS [National Training Agency] or Education [Department of Education and Science], they said, 'Sure. We have ADM. So we give it to them'. So ADM is now a bit of a catch-all organisation for new and innovative socio-economic programming that doesn't fit comfortably somewhere else. The thrust and the specialism and the emphasis on socio-economic integrated local development is only one of the many things it does. And that programme [the LDSIP] is now very much diluted because it is one of 7 or 8 major programmes. And therefore, there isn't the attention at senior management level and to give it the support it needs because senior management is spread across so many other programmes (Interview NE 1b).

As a result of ADM's increase in remit and budget, the government started to question (a) the performance of the independent special-purpose body and (b) the viability of sub-programmes administered by ADM such as area-based development agencies and community groups (Interview ADM 5). In the advent of the post-structural funds era, i.e. a period prior to 2006 that was characterised by decreasing share of EU

¹²² Apart from the EU-funded area-based approaches that were the *raison d'être* for ADM's existence (Bartley *et al.* 1999), ADM's responsibility has been extended to administer the *Special Support Programme for Peace and Reconciliation*, the *Equal Opportunities Childcare Programme*, the *Taxi Hardship Payments Scheme*¹²², the *Dormant Accounts Fund*¹²², the *Rural Transport Initiative Programme*¹²², the *Millennium Partnership Fund for Disadvantage*¹²² and the *Revitalising Areas by Planning, Investment and Development* (RAPID) programme (ADM 2004).

¹²³ For example, in 2003 ADM received 134.15 million Euro as opposed to 7.150 million Irish Punt (9.08 million Euro) in 1994, a nominal increase by the factor of 15 (cf. ADM, 1994, 2004). Within that period of time operating expenses increased from 0.18 million Irish Pound in 1993 (0.24 million Euro) to 7.39 million Euro in 2003 representing a nominal increase by the factor of 31.

resources to be managed by ADM, the Department (DoCRGA) commissioned economic consultants to review ADM. The consultants stated that their role was to assess “the appropriateness of the existing arrangements between ADM and government departments and other stakeholders and the options for change having regard to accountability and cost effectiveness” (Indecon 2003: i). The report highlighted the changing context of programmes administered by ADM and expressed concerns about the organisation's quasi-autonomous status. The consultants claimed that ADM's *modus operandi* would not sufficiently reflect recent political developments, such as changes in management style, an increasing remit of the local authorities, a decline in long-term unemployment and a “deterioration in public finances” (Indecon 2003: ii). In addition, several challenges and weaknesses within ADM structures were identified:

- the potential to improve cost effectiveness;
- the lack of formal alignments of ADM with government administration and national policies;
- an accountability deficit with recipients of funding; and
- the duplication of services that interfere with recent efforts to achieve greater cohesion in the local government/local-development sector as mirrored in the establishment of CDBs.

Leading from there, the review suggests re-aligning ADM more closely under the umbrella of central government. The report outlines six possible scenarios for restructuring ADM each of which revolves around a perceived absence of (democratic and financial) accountability and sub-optimal systems regarding cost effectiveness. A clear affiliation is expressed for a strategy highlighting the necessity for ADM's special-purpose function “but to introduce a series of radical reforms to address the specific issues identified” (Indecon 2003: 42). In principle, the economic consultants proposed:

- to increase government involvement and control through organisational restructuring and tightening the reporting and performance-monitoring system;
- to introduce business principles through the development of contractual agreements with political sponsors of programmes and, taking into consideration the tendering for service supply (i.e. privatisation), to cut back on administrative costs; and
- to instigate knowledge transfer through a programme of selective secondments and “the possibility of the agency [i.e. ADM] providing specialist services to support the development of CDB's [sic] and the directors of CE's¹²⁴ [sic] and other local-authority programmes should be pursued” (*ibid.*).

The recommendations imply that ADM's specialist knowledge and expertise is considered indispensable for central government in the restructuring of local governance. Minister Ó Cuív, T.D. (FF), put it more reservedly in stating, “We know

¹²⁴ The Director of Community and Enterprise (CEO of the City/County Development Board).

and respect the critical value of the on-the-ground expertise that has been developed over the years” (Ó Cuív 18/06/2003). In comparison to the recommendations outlined in the *Indecon Report*, central government only moderately intervened by appointing three members to the board of ADM in 2004 (The Irish Times 10/03/2004). This could be interpreted as a step highlighting that both resources funnelled through ADM and decisions made by ADM are by no means by-passing financial or democratic accountability standards (The Irish Times 04/02/2004). From the perspective of APC professionals, however, the government-guided development of ADM is anticipated as just one step of a versatile approach to get the quasi-independent local development agencies closer to central control (Interviews APC 2a, APC 2b, APC 3a, APC 3b, APC 4a, APC 4b, APC 7b and APC 9a).

6.2.4.3 Step three: endorsement of APC plans

The third element of the cohesion reform is to align APC plans and activities to the 10-year social-inclusion strategies developed by City/County Development Boards (CDBs). The latter proposition requires an approval of APC’s mission-driven multi-annual action plans by the CDB. Endorsement should be dependent on the compatibility of APC plans with the CDB’s 2002-2012 social-inclusion strategy. The objective is to support CDBs in their task to bring about greater cohesion in the delivery of local development services within their constituency (DoEHLG n.d.-a) and “to increase the democratic accountability of service delivery agencies and bodies” (DoCRGA 04/04/2007: no page numbers). Even though the endorsement initiative had been launched in 2003, when most agencies were already implementing previously agreed plans, local development agencies were asked to inform CDBs on how their plans would link to support actions outlined in the 10-year CDB strategy.

On 31 July 2003 guidelines were issued that provided a template for the endorsement process. A circular letter sent to the directors of the CDBs on behalf of the Minister of the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government outlined steps towards adjusting local and community development structures and programmes in accordance with the findings and recommendations of the review process (Appendix 2, Correspondence A-2.1). Even though the circular highlighted “that these are guidelines, not a straightjacket” (DoEHLG 06/02/2004: no page numbers), it cannot be ignored that the process of having APCs send in their plans for the remainder of the LDSIP to the CDBs for appraisal¹²⁵ as such was not subject to discussion. In spite of the absence of any legally-binding link between APCs and the Dublin CDB it is understood that resistance to co-operation would have come at a high cost:

All projects are expected to co-operate with this process. In keeping with existing procedures, any project which refuses to submit a workplan to the Department or CDB will inevitably prevent the issuing of its new contract, and will inevitably

¹²⁵ Groups expected to comply with the endorsement process are: Area Partnership Companies, ADM-funded Community Groups, LEADER Groups, Community Development Projects, Core-funded Groups, City/County Childcare Committees and Local Drugs Task Forces (DoEHLG n.d.-a). City/County Childcare Committees have effectively been transformed into working groups that were subsumed into the CDB structures as a working group.

prevent any prospect of budget increase to its community (DoCRGA n.d.-a: no page numbers).

A discussion document published by the DoCRGA reflects that the endorsement process met opposition at the local level:

It is evident from the contributions that there is a level of concern, even resentment, at the involvement, as part of the triministerial initiative, of the County and City Development Boards in the endorsing of agencies [sic] annual plans (DoCRGA n.d.-f: no page numbers).

The resistance is mainly based on the argument of existing co-ordination advanced by local agencies. They argued that interagency co-ordination would already be practised and would not be – as indicated by central government-issued policy documents – the exception to the rule. For example, voices from within the local-development sector responded “that there was already substantial cohesion and considerable inter-agency collaboration in the implementation of social-inclusion measures by community development and local development bodies” (Regan 2003: 1). This view has also been expressed in the interviews:

But one of the things that's interesting is that in fact there's not a lot duplication on the ground. People talk about duplication. And what I do is trying to get the people to define what they mean by duplication, what they mean by overlap. Because everybody has a different perception of it. Everybody in the Dáil says, "Oh, duplication everywhere!" [...] In fact when you get down to it, there is not so much duplication (Interview NE 3).

A review of the endorsement process in Dublin by Cowman (2004: 13) states that “there is no review at all of how the local development agencies are cooperating/duplicating each other, at city or local level, or how effective they are in addressing social inclusion”. He highlights that, from the perspective of APCs, the objective of the CDB-led process is unlikely to be achieved under existing conditions. In acknowledging the potential and benefits of promoting co-operation between actors involved, Cowman suggests to build “a framework of clarity and agreement on certain principles” (2004: 8). This could be a first step towards effectively addressing existing discrepancies between political rhetoric and institutional reality concerning various aspects such as:

- the geographical focus of collaboration between statutory stakeholders and APCs;
- the compatibility of targeted measures between agencies on the basis of their mission statements/given brief;
- the demarcation of responsibility between political forces driving ADM and the CDB; and
- the need for a harmonisation and reconciliation between participatory democracy and representative democracy (Powell and Geoghegan 2004; Lee 2006).

It appears that a powerful ‘narrative of duplication’ has been created as an effective policy tool to justify intervention into what is perceived as not being in conformity with the dominant political agenda. In this context, Smith (2004) underscores the effect of ‘cognitive filters’ and belief systems that have a role to play in facilitating both the

emergence and longevity of grand narratives and paradigms that determine the scope and thrust of political actions:

After all, the way in which actors behave is informed by the ideas they hold about the context in which they find themselves rather than the context in itself (Hay and Rosamund, 2002). It might therefore be argued that politics is not so much the 'art of the possible' but the art of what is *perceived* to be possible (Smith 2004: 510, emphasis added).

Such complex processes of ideation have a role to play in creating local realities that appear to be unique at first sight and, hence, seem to contradict voices overemphasising the effect of economic externalities for restructuring of national economic and social policies (e.g. Blythe 1997). In the context of this study, it is equally interesting to note that the proclaimed need for further steps towards cohesion and streamlining among local development bodies is rather based on assumptions that are not underpinned by 'hard facts':

While many of the contributions received from the agencies and bodies involved in the delivery of services claim a high level of co-ordination at local level, *the feeling persists* that there is considerable room for improvement. Of themselves, the structures that are in existence do *not seem to provide* a basis for formal coherent linkages or a common consistent approach across the range of problems that might beset any one particular community (DoCRGA n.d.-f, Point 8, emphasis added).

This raises the question as to whether or not analytical evidence exists that – apart from feelings or perceptions – could underscore the need for reformatory powers in local development systems targeted at increasing inter-agency co-operation and value for money-oriented delivery of LDSIP-funded social-inclusion measures. If such evidence is available, why is it not used in DoCRGA's Discussion Document as the basis for arguing in favour of restructuring local governance? According to a special Value for Money Report (56) published in June 2007, *Improving Performance – Public Service Case Studies* (Comptroller and Auditor General 2007), the institutionalisation of APCs under the 2000-2006 took heed of previous calls for measures addressing duplication of in the local-development sector (Comptroller and Auditor General 2000).

The thrust and direction of the re-organisation of the state-funded local-development sector in Dublin indicates that the initiative for tri-ministerial co-operation in regard to social-inclusion measures came from the lead department of the local authority, the Department for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (Interview NE 5b). The introduction of DCC-affiliated local structures provides further evidence for the intensification of pressure on APCs to become integrated into state-led institutional reformatory processes (Figure 5).

6.2.5 Better value through new structures?

Despite the rhetoric of cohesion, which highlights the necessity for a better use of resources through streamlining local governance, even more players have been introduced into the institutional landscape of local development in the course of the LDSIP. Apart from institutional changes at the interface between local development

initiatives and central government, additional structures were introduced at local level (Section 6.2, Figure 5). In accordance with the philosophy of public sector modernisation that is promoted by Irish government. Local Area Committees (LACs), Social Inclusion Task Forces (SITFs) and the RAPID programme have been established¹²⁶:

- to step up the efficiency in local service provision;
- to improve the targeting of resources towards groups experiencing disadvantage; and
- to increase the overall effectiveness of social-inclusion measures.

These structures are associated with Dublin City Council and mirror strategic aims and objectives of the modernisation of public service management. This is so because, first, the Dublin CDB and RAPID work under the umbrella of DCC and, second, the CDB and their sub-structures not only include City Councillors and senior management team members of DCC but also operate in the same administrative boundaries. The membership of the CDB, RAPID and SITFs demonstrates strong links between the new structures and Dublin City Council (see Table 6.2 for the CDB, Table 6.5 for RAPID and Table 6.6 for the SITF).

6.2.5.1 Better targeting through RAPID?

In the preparation of a new national partnership agreement, the *2000-2003 Programme for Prosperity and Fairness*, the community and voluntary sector suggested addressing high levels of multiple deprivation in disadvantaged housing estates and isolated rural areas (CWC 2000a). Eventually, twenty-five areas were identified and designated as the most disadvantaged areas in the state. Under the name *Targeted Investments in Disadvantaged Areas* (TIDA) the objective was envisaged to prioritise expenditures under social-inclusion measures of the 2000-2006 NDP for locally tackling cumulative disadvantage. Finally, ideas and discussions around TIDA evolved into the establishment of 25 urban RAPID areas (*Revitalising Areas by Planning, Investment and Development* – Strand 1), which was followed by the designation of 20 CLÁR areas (*Ceantair Laga Árd Riachtanais*¹²⁷ – Strand 2).

RAPID was launched in areas that had already been targeted by APC-led actions. This move caused considerable confusion among both local communities and ADM-funded local development structures (e.g. Interview ADM 4; Interview APC 7a). In the context of restructuring governance, the focus of RAPID on extremely disadvantaged neighbourhoods aimed at improving the effectiveness of public funding allocations through better area-based targeting. It was suggested to utilise existing structures such as ADM-funded APCs and Community Groups to administer the RAPID programme because they could draw on issue-based expertise and local know-how

¹²⁶ Throughout the interviews, the Strategic Policy Committees (DoELG 1999b) have not been mentioned as relevant players in regards to processes influencing the role of APCs.

¹²⁷ Whereas RAPID targets urban areas, CLÁR targets disadvantaged provincial towns (DoCRGA n.d.-f).

(cf. CWC 2000a). Instead, RAPID Area Implementation Teams (hereafter AITs) were established as yet another player into the institutional arena (Tables 6.1 and 6.6). According to the empirical data, APCs were considered as a possible home for the RAPID initiative but, as one respondent put it, "the Department of the Environment *went ballistic* when Partnerships were discussed as possible candidates for RAPID" (Interview NE 3, emphasis added; also Interview ADM 4). Respondents from different backgrounds interpret the RAPID initiative as pilot aimed at testing the waters for a local authority-led approach for local development initiatives in poverty-stricken areas (Interview DCC 8). A local-authority official summarised the RAPID programme as follows:

RAPID is dying a death. It's a complete mess. They wouldn't use Partnerships. Dublin City Council would not have allowed them to use Partnerships. But this has now created another layer and I believe it's dying a death on the ground in terms of the Area Implementation Teams being dysfunctional – they have now created a monster (Interview DCC 3b).

As a basis for withdrawing funding from statutory bodies, AITs were asked to draft a strategic plan based on a local needs analysis. This was announced "some months after the area partnerships had completed the same process for the same areas" (Ó Broin 2003: 46). Led by co-ordinators appointed by the local authority, representatives on the AIT were largely recruited from agencies already represented on boards of APCs (Table 6.5).

Table 6.5: Composition of RAPID Area Implementation Teams in Dublin

Area	DCC*	State Sector**	C&V or NFP***	Community Representative	Other****
Finglas	2	5	4	1	
Ballymun	2	7	3	1	2
Northside	3	6	4	2	
North West Inner City	2	6	2	4	
North East Inner City	4	3	7	4	2
Ballyfermot	2	2	3	4	
South West Dublin City	2	4	2	1	
South Inner City	2	5	3	5	2
South East Inner City	3	5	3	2	2
Total	22	43	31	24	8
Per cent	17.2	33.6	24.2	18.8	6.2

* Dublin City Council: AIT Co-ordinator, Councillors

** FÁS, Health Service Executive (HSE), An Garda Síochána, Department of Social and Family Affairs (DoSFA), Education institutions, City of Dublin Youth Services Board (CDYSB),

*** Community & Voluntary Sector/Not-for-profit: Usually APCs, Local Drugs Task Forces and Community Development Projects

**** Independent or unspecified

Source: Information provided by AIT Co-ordinators by telephone or email.

Assuming that central government does know the operational mode of government departments in terms of work organisation and budgeting the following question arises: how, and under what circumstances, was the marriage between the idea of flexible mission-driven budgeting – that would have allowed for front-loading monies from subsequent budgets for RAPID areas – and the realities of the annual funding line budgets of government departments and statutory bodies conceived manageable? The interview material also suggests that the absence of (a) legally-binding contractual agreements, (b) an explicit legislative mandate or (c) other – non-enforceable but profound – incentives, reduces the potential for the development of an integrative anti-poverty strategy for disadvantaged neighbourhoods because statutory support for RAPID areas depends entirely on good will.

6.2.5.2 Going local through SITFs and LACs?

In the case of Dublin, the division of the city into five administrative areas was followed by the introduction of Local Area Committees (hereafter LACs) and Social Inclusion Task Forces (hereafter SITFs) (Figure 5). LACs were introduced as part and parcel of local government renewal (Government of Ireland 2001), which resulted in a decentralisation of local-authority operations throughout the city. LACs allow councillors to have an increased influence within their constituency and represent a relaxation of central powers. Monthly meetings with the respective local authority's area manager serve as a forum to discuss a wide range of issues such as planning, traffic, service provision and housing estate management (Dublin City Council n.d.-b). A DCC official speculated that LACs might take over functions from CDBs in the medium term:

The ideal situation is just to have 5 area committees and having them do everything. So I would see in a few years time that the area committee would subsume the Social Inclusion Task Force. I see the Local Area Committees subsuming a few structures on the ground (Interview DCC 7).

Whereas LACs are directly operating under the aegis of Dublin City Council, SITFs can be understood as the local outreach body of the Dublin CDB (Section 6.2.2). They were established as sub-divisions of the Social Inclusion Measure (SIM) Groups of the Dublin CDB (see Section 6.2: Figure 5). The SITFs were set up in each of Dublin's five administrative areas in order to "provide a more local application of both the National Anti-Poverty Strategy (NAPS) and the City Anti-Poverty Strategy¹²⁸ (CAPS) by preparing an area-based anti-poverty plan" (DoELG n.d.-a: no page numbers). It was envisaged that members of SITFs would consist of "senior staff of statutory agencies that have a major input into social inclusion measures" (Dublin CDB 2004) and government-funded agencies that are considered to have "primary responsibility for the delivery of social inclusion measures into the city" (DoELG n.d.-a: no page numbers).

¹²⁸ A strategy prepared by the SIM Groups. It is based on the assumption that government-funded community and statutory agencies can deliver thematic, target-group related and area-based social inclusion measures and, thereby, complement the overall development strategy for Dublin city (cf. DoEHLG n.d.-b).

Avoiding administrative overlaps, the area covered by each SITF is consistent with the jurisdiction of DCC's new LACs. Looking at membership representation at the SITF, it becomes evident that the links between Dublin City Council and the Dublin CDB come full circle. Table 6.6 indicates that the representation at SITF level is somehow 'top heavy' in the sense that local authority is the biggest single body represented. The operational boundaries of the SITFs match DCC's division of Dublin into five administrative areas. This process of decentralisation did not take into consideration the existing boundaries of partnership neighbourhoods or catchment areas of statutory agencies.

Before the establishment of SITFs, APCs were already engaged in a plethora of administrative activities. These include performance monitoring and other legally-binding contractual proceedings with their political paymasters (usually via ADM), the new CDB-led endorsement process and relationships with a variety of sponsors, local groups and agencies they interact with (e.g. FÁS, Local Drugs Task Forces, Vocational Education Committees, the Gardai, RAPID, collaboration with the business/private sector etc.). Against this backdrop, it is not surprising that SITFs are regarded by APCs as yet another layer of administration that requires engagement of scarce internal resources of APCs, for example, in form of maintaining new inter-organisational linkages and the provision of staff for reporting, proof of networking and co-ordination (Interviews APC 2b, APC 9a and APC 11). There is evidence that the SITFs did not manage to engage successfully with relevant stakeholders. The lack of collaboration from both statutory bodies ('primary partners') and local development agencies ('secondary partners') is illustrated with the dominance of DCC's influence in shaping the agenda of SITFs. APC-type agencies maintain that local authorities in Dublin have not developed the expertise that would justify taking a dominant position in playing a leading role in social local development:

Dublin City Council is using the language of local development but they don't understand the concept. No skill, no expertise, no understanding. Dublin City Council is the killer. Social Inclusion Task Forces need to be outside the City Council agenda. All people attending the meetings are of a low order. They are not committed at all. The Social Inclusion Task Force is not working (Interview APC 11).

At the grassroots level, the introduction of SITFs and RAPID is perceived as an additional bureaucratic layer that, first, has contributed to institutional fragmentation and, second, in combination with a general feeling of dissatisfaction regarding previous involvement, has resulted in a general sense of "meeting fatigue" (e.g. Interview LV 5). Moreover, the establishment of new structures increased the competition among local development bodies for commitment from 'the big players', in particular competition for senior board representation from statutory agencies (see, for example, Tables 6.2, 6.5 and 6.6). In this context, APC professionals expressed concerns that influential and resourceful statutory agencies have become increasingly reluctant to commit themselves to proactively supporting local committees in disadvantaged areas (e.g. Interviews APC 2b and APC 11).

There is speculation among DCC professionals that the position currently occupied by SITFs might be usurped by other players in the field of urban governance. One respondent, for example, feels that APCs could take over the role of SITFs:

If Dublin City Council decided that Partnerships are well-placed to deal with social exclusion, then there is no reason why a service-level agreement could not be entered between Dublin City Council and the Partnerships. Partnerships would then operate a social-inclusion agenda on behalf of Dublin City Council. So then you would not need Social Inclusion Task Forces as Partnerships could replace them (Interview DCC 8).

Even though the statements concerning the relationship between APCs and LACs or SITFs are mere speculations of DCC officials as to what might happen in the future, they illustrate that the thrust of governance changes is directed at controlling the resources and, ultimately, the agenda of APCs through the local authorities. Against this backdrop, the government-initiated cohesion process (see below) is a plausible step towards bringing the state-funded local-development sector under the remit of local authority-managed structures.

Table 6.6: Members of Social Inclusion Task Forces in Dublin

Area	Members	DCC	RAPID*	Statutory**	APC	Community
North Central	12	1	1	7	1	2
North West	12	1	2	5	2	-
Central	11	2	2	6	1	-
South Central	14	2	2	6	3	1
South East	13	4	1	6	-	2
TOTAL	62	10	8	30	7	5***
Per cent	100	16.2	12.9	48.4	11.3	8.1

* RAPID operates under the aegis of DCC. AIT Co-ordinators are on the payroll of Dublin City Council (DCC)

** Majority are from the National Training and Employment Agency (FÁS), the Vocational Educational Committee (VEC) An Garda Síochána, the Health Service Executive (HSE), Probation and Welfare Service and the Department of Social and Family Affairs (DoSFA).

*** 4 are from the Dublin City Community Forum that operates under the umbrella of the Dublin City Development Board (which is affiliated with DCC).

Note: In total 18 members (29.1 per cent) of SITFs represent organisations or groups that work under the umbrella of Dublin City Council; nearly 50 per cent are from the statutory sector.

Source: Dublin City Council, Press Office (August 2006).

6.2.6 The cohesion process: prelude or showdown?

The cohesion process is particularly suitable to illustrate and analyse the nature of statutory-led efforts towards re-centralising the state-funded local-development sector. In a chain of moves, formerly semi-autonomous APCs were effectively co-opted into the apparatus of the state (see Section 6.2, Figure 5 and Table 6.1). Changes in Dublin's governance landscape that came to affect APCs under the LDSIP resemble a

process of 'creeping institutionalisation' that was facilitated through the ethos of public-sector reform (Government of Ireland 2001). The White Paper *Better Local Government* published by the Department of the Environment in December 1996, and reports by the Interdepartmental Task Force (see Chapter 1, Section 1.4.2) already pointed towards aligning APCs closely to local government structures:

We were putting together a White Paper or a local policy reform paper, called 'Better Local Government' which [...] saw the local development bodies, including area partnerships, very firmly rooted within local government, certainly very closely aligned to it, under the leadership of the local authority [...] What was needed was a vision of how all the public services would come together, at county and city level, operating under a number of principles, like partnership, and equity, and so on and so forth. And that the outcome would be a more seamless delivery, and cohesive delivery, of services for the citizen at the local level. And that the County and City Development Boards would be established to achieve that purpose (Interview NE 5a).

Against this backdrop, efforts to increase the influence of the local authorities on local APCs converged into the cohesion process, which started in 2003 with the review of local development structures that was initiated by the tri-ministerial initiative (see Section 6.2.4). On 27 September 2005, after the completion of the review of the state-funded local development sector, senior officials¹²⁹ from the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs (hereafter DoCRGA) gave a briefing on the cohesion process in the Regency Hotel. Circular LG 16/05, which was issued to APCs on 13 September 2005, outlines the main objectives and goals of the cohesion process (DoCRGA 13/09/2005). According to Minister Ó Cuív, T.D. (FF), the rationale for the cohesion reform was to find a response to social and economic challenges within a changing and more diverse Irish society (Ó Cuív 07/09/2006). The Minister stated that state-funded services delivered through APCs and other players "have developed over time in a haphazard, uncoordinated way" and that the fact that individuals who live in pockets of disadvantage outside targeted areas and "who urgently need services from the State but who are not getting them [...] is absolute madness" (Ó Cuív 07/09/2006: no page numbers). According to Minister Ó Cuív, the overall objectives of the cohesion process are:

- to improve local delivery of statutory and state-funded services;
- to streamline state-funded structures "so as to avoid overlaps, duplication and undue administrative overheads" (*ibid.*);
- to optimise the funding and governance structures of local development organisations; and
- to strengthen the democratic accountability of state-funded local development organisations.

These objectives led to the extension of APC catchment areas to accommodate the needs of disadvantaged individuals and groups currently not qualifying for services offered because they live outside catchment areas of APCs (for example the Local

¹²⁹ Brian Milan (Assistant Secretary General) and Susan Scally (Principal Officer: Review of Structures Committee/Dormant Accounts).

Employment Service (LES) or the Millennium Fund operated by APCs¹³⁰). Minister Ó Cuiv requested – where practicable – a re-alignment of APC boundaries to match City/County council areas so that country-wide overarching unified structures for the delivery of state-initiated programmes are in place by 1 January 2007. This is to lead “to a more cohesive approach to tackling the problems of disadvantage through social and economic programmes” (DoCRGA 27/09/2005: no page numbers). On 31 December 2005 the DoCRGA issued a press release stating:

[...] These changes will make it much easier for communities who are tackling disadvantage to access a wide range of local and community development programmes. I am very happy to see that the organisations involved are embracing this process of streamlining and I have no doubt that the communities they serve will benefit greatly (DoCRGA 31/12/2005: no page numbers).

The provision of € 7 million once-off funding to support the local restructuring was made available in a competitive bidding process to LDSIP-funded community organisations. Applicants were tasked to develop plans as to how the objectives outlined by Minister Ó Cuiv, T.D. (FF), could be best implemented in their catchment area. However, in the case of Dublin the assessment of funding applications from APCs underwent a lengthy process, which slowed down the creation of country-wide overarching structures addressing symptoms of social and economic disadvantage¹³¹.

The cohesion-guided approach of a blanket delivery of social-inclusion work shifts the centre of attention from tackling distinct spatial disparities with a focus on addressing neighbourhood effects (Haase and McKeown 2003; Lambe 2007), to a more generalist approach of designing welfare-related activist measures for specific target groups. Overall, the cohesion process implies a move away from the area-based approach to local development towards a target-group oriented approach with a focus on the tailor-made support of services, which dovetails with the philosophy of promoting a more cost-effective bureaucratic logic in governance (DoT 2004; NESC 2005; McCarthy 2007).

Centrally-driven efforts to change the mode of conduct of local development schemes in Dublin resulted in the creation of a complex institutional superstructure that operates at various spatial and institutional levels (see Section 6.2, Figure 5). As a new layer of public administration and special-purpose bodies propels the integration of local development systems (NDP/CSF Evaluation Unit 2003; Ó Broin 2003; Cowman 2004), there is some indication that “there has been considerable confusion and no little tension generated because of real and perceived overlaps of responsibility arising from this additional layer of social inclusion planning administration” (Regan 2003: 1). However, according to respondents from government departments or DCC, the idea of

¹³⁰ Cf. FÁS (n.d.-b) and Pobal (n.d.-b).

¹³¹ Moreover, discussions around exceptions in regard to the exact re-alignment of APC boundaries with administrative boundaries of local authorities (e.g. Northside Partnership operated in Dublin North Central and County Fingal) and the co-existence of more than one APC-type agency in one local authority area (e.g. Ballyfermot Partnership, KWCD Partnership and Canal Communities Partnership being located in Dublin South Central) could not be resolved before the end of the LDSIP.

cohesion is clearly based on the assumption that there exists a lack of coordination of services on the ground:

At local level there is a myriad of semi-quangos tripping over themselves with no co-operation between them whatsoever (Interview DCC 8).

Interviewees were generally sympathetic towards the concept of cohesion. The idea for the creation of a forum that facilitates the collaboration between local development agencies and statutory bodies was welcomed by most respondents. More particularly, APC professionals originally saw the calls for cohesion as a possibility to create a neutral space where all parties with an interest in, or responsibility for, local development can meet and discuss the joint development of concerted measures that would use resources in a more effective way. However, especially respondents from ADM and the APCs held the view that the Dublin CDB cannot provide such an environment because it is considered to be overly controlled by DCC. The Director and staff members of the CDB were mainly recruited from public administration and are on the local authority's payroll. Even though the CDB's board representation is diverse, it is apparent that Dublin City Council dominates the Board (see Section 6.2.2, Table 6.2):

The leadership role of the CDB is expressed in a number of ways. It is expressed by the fact that the chief executive of the CDB is a senior official from the city or county council. The main staff and resources to support the work of the boards are located in the county and city council. The elected members, or a number of the elected members, known as the chairs of the strategic policy committee plus the chairman or mayor of the council sit on the board, as does the county manager. So that's the leadership role. Among a membership of thirty-odd, roughly one quarter of the membership are from the local authority. They are leaders, they are key influencers but it is not a dictatorship (Interview NE 5a).

Respondents from APCs felt that the close affiliation between the Dublin CDB and the city council kept APCs and statutory agencies from pro-actively engaging with the CDB (Interviews APC 3b, APC 4b, APC 7b and APC 11). They argued that the establishment of the CDB and its sub-structures, as well as the DCC-led RAPID programme, represent an imposition of parallel structures into the APC-type system. Moreover, the required representation from statutory bodies on new structures would lead to a competition among local groups for getting commitment from key stakeholders to join their boards. Together, the Dublin CDB, the 9 RAPID AITs and the 5 SITFs have 82 individuals from the state sector represented on their boards (see Tables 6.2, 6.5 and 6.6).

APC professionals found that the cohesion process has only been rhetorically promoting interagency collaboration and integration among local development agencies. Their experience has led them to assume that the cohesion process is a measure that paves the path for incorporating APCs into a local authority-dominated governance network. Some asked that if the CDB is about better coordination and integration between statutory service delivery and local development, then why are the statutory bodies that are represented on the CDB (see Table 6.2) not requested to

have their plans approved? In contrast, when asked about the objectives of the cohesion process, some government officials and most DCC employees gave an account of how a lack of coordination among a plethora of state-funded local development agencies led to an under-utilisation of 'taxpayer's money'. APCs were criticised for:

- duplicating services instead of developing innovative projects for mainstreaming;
- following cumbersome and undemocratic decision-making procedures; and
- for being overly process-oriented, which would result in a slow implementation of projects.

These views could not be substantiated by findings of the NDP/CSF Evaluation Unit (NDP/CSF Evaluation Unit 2003):

[...] the lack of coordination is not necessarily among the local development bodies because in fact the Partnerships had a good level of co-operation with state agencies. But the co-operation between state bodies is not there – the Department of Education is not talking to FÁS, FÁS is not talking to the Health Board and so on. And in those areas we have large sums of public money. There is a distinct lack of coordination and interagency collaboration there among them. So it was decided that the [Interdepartmental] task force would then, as well as coordination, it would look at the issue of better public service delivery at the local level to the client by eliminating duplication, by ensuring coordination to a better public service delivery. And that's a bigger task that integrating local government and local development, if you think about it. But in fact the focus seems to be on the Partnerships (Interview NE 3).

At first sight, CDB, SITFs and the RAPID programme appear to be an additional layer of public administration that contradicts calls for greater integration, less confusion and avoiding duplication, which were the very reasons for the introduction of CDBs (DoELG 1998). A DCC professional, however, described the establishment of parallel structures that were perceived by APC professionals as a duplication of the existing state-funded local development system as a strategic prerequisite for the integration of APCs into the public sector-administered governance network:

These additional layers of administration are required to allow the integration of Partnerships into the system to happen in a structured way (Interview DCC 8).

In this context, the realignment of APC boundaries with administrative areas of Dublin City Council re-enforces the notion expressed by some respondents that the cohesion process effectively aims at incorporating APCs into the local government system¹³². A

¹³² No such demands were made to statutory agencies with a stake in issues concerning local development such as the Health Service Executive (HSE), the Training and Employment Authority (FÁS) or the Vocational Education Committee (VEC). Adshead (2003: 118) highlights that those special purpose agencies "with devolved powers and decentralised administrations all operate boundaries to suit themselves" and that these boundaries in fact do neither coincide with one another nor with the local authority boundaries. Chubb (1992: 263) describes this situation as "a jungle of administrative areas that is both impenetrable to the ordinary citizen and frequently inconvenient for any kind of business that involves more than one authority or regional organization". It is interesting that statutory bodies with considerable resources are allowed to operate in administrative units that are suboptimal for multi-agency cooperation in important areas of public service provision whereas APC-type agencies operating in designated areas – and on relatively meagre budgets – are not allowed to cross council areas. It is not within the remit of this thesis, however, to investigate into these matters.

senior DCC official provides a more detailed explanation for an authoritative implementation of the cohesion strategy:

See, there was a big push from the Partnerships. They wanted control over all the social-inclusion measures. And their boundaries don't match with our boundaries at all. So there was a strong view that we took at that time that this all needs to come under the umbrella of the local authority. The best way of doing that is that it had to be the same areas as the City Council Area Committees but that it wouldn't be subsumed into them because they wouldn't have accepted that. So, you know, what's happening is that in a very slow kind of process that we will get full integration in a few years time [...] the local government structure should be the main structure. It should be the structure for dealing with everything that moves in the city including social inclusion and local development issues. [...] I believe that we are being used by ADM and CRAGA [i.e. the DoCRGA] to make the decisions that they don't have the guts to make. They are putting us in a situation here, "OK, you are complaining for years about the funding. Here! Make these hard decisions yourself now!"- And they can blame us for the decisions then because Government Departments are reluctant to be the bad guys. And in time I will see the CDB making those hard decisions (Interview DCC 7).

The cohesion process, from this perspective, is seen as an opportunity to facilitate the integration of APCs into the sphere of local government. This is justified by means of a *perceived* authority, or tacit consent, that allows DCC to take 'hard decisions' on behalf of government departments. The agenda of DCC is illustrated by another statement extracted from the same interview, which was carried out in late 2004:

The organisations that have been set up certainly don't want to be subsumed. They're afraid. And they feel threatened. So what we have to do is do it gradually over a number of years [...] We have the structures and we have the financial systems. So all the funding for local development should come through us. And we are better positioned to be held accountable for it and we are better positioned to account for it. Both sides. We are better positioned to make the organisations accountable. Some of the organisations that are out there are very useful and very welcome. They do some work out there that we will never be able to do. But there should be much more integration. They should be doing work and getting paid for it. We would pay for it. We could pay for it. And that, in time, will change. It's moving gradually and I think these organisations see the writing on the wall (Interview DCC 7).

Empirical evidence points out that partnership-type structures acquired an expertise in local development that is now sought to be mainstreamed into the statutory apparatus under the umbrella of the local authorities (cf. Government of Ireland 2001; Adshead 2003; DoEHLG n.d.-a). The empirical material presented so far clearly indicates that APCs have been incorporated into a local-authority-administered governance system that has been re-designed to prioritise the development of (welfare-related) services to disadvantaged individuals and groups, rather than developing area-based strategies that support particularly marginalised neighbourhoods (Roche 26/11/2005).

Taking into account the weak position of APCs vis-à-vis their political masters – as they *completely* rely on statutory core funding – it is extremely challenging for them to elevate themselves into a position for negotiating their future role within the new governance landscape:

Making Partnerships and other small players co-operate and having their plans endorsed by the CDB is a cheap shot by government because they are so

dependent, have so few resources and such a small budget. They are the small guys. But government is not attempting to make the big hitters proving their plans with the CDB – because they are the big boys and they can resist and cause trouble. Partnerships, however, can be kicked around; they are the small fry (Interview NE 1a).

How 'being kicked around' could manifest is illustrated by a letter from the DoCRGA circulated together with *Guidelines on the Governance of Integrated Local Development Companies and Urban Based Partnerships* to APCs in April 2007. The cover letter outlines a joint proposal put forward by the DoCRGA and the DoEHLG. It suggests "revised arrangements in relation to the board membership and mandate of integrated companies and urban based partnerships and appointment by Government of the Chairs. This concludes the current phase of the cohesion process" (DoCRGA 04/04/2007: no page numbers). The letter also states that APCs should pursue "a cohesive approach with other national and local agencies, including county and city development boards" (*ibid.*) and that this co-operation "must operate in harmony, and maintain close liaison, with all State agencies and local authorities and other official structures within its operational area and should avoid duplicating the activity of other bodies" (*ibid.*)¹³³. More explicitly, APCs are expected to participate in CDB structures through board representation¹³⁴. APCs had little scope to re-negotiate, or even resist, entering a relationship with the Dublin CDB (cf. also Finnegan 2005 - see Appendix 2, Correspondence A-2.3):

Is there a way Partnerships could get around the CDB?

No there is no alternative. Co-operation with the CBD is the only way forward for them. Do you know Star Trek?

Yes.

Do you know the Borg [Aggressive alien species half machine half human]?

Yes.

It's [the Dublin CDB] like the Borg. Do you know what they say to their enemies?

No.

Resistance is futile (Interview DCC 8).

Even though APCs and other LDSIP-funded local development initiatives are independent companies limited by guarantee, the departmental guidelines circulated in April 2007 prescribe changes to the board structure that interfere with the company's autonomy. In essence, it stipulates the size of the board, its composition by sector, the procedures and mechanisms through which board members are elected or appointed, and potentially limits the possibility to get senior members from statutory bodies on board. Whilst highlighting democratic principles and transparency in decision making and nominating community representation onto the board, the letter omits information on the criteria and reasons that were the basis for arriving at the proposed composition

¹³³ In this context, it is worth noting that most respondents from APCs, APC-affiliated individuals, ADM and one senior civil servant at departmental level reported that a lack of initiative in regard to co-operating and liaising is a characteristic feature of the Irish statutory apparatus (see Section 6.4.5). This implies that a harmonisation of relationships between APCs and the state can only be successful if *both sides* make an effort – and, hence, consider it relevant – to work towards a collaborative working model that is responsive to vertical institutional learning (cf. OECD 1996).

¹³⁴ Dublin APCs have two CEOs as their representatives on the Dublin CDB.

of the board¹³⁵. According to the draft guidelines, representation from the social partners and members of the Oireachtas (Senators and T.D.s) on APC boards is envisaged to be curtailed. If these guidelines are agreed, this will undermine the long-established partnership principle of consensual decision making on APC boards, which was based on a parity of esteem and equal representation among social partners, community representatives, statutory agencies and public representatives.

Moreover, it is indicated that the selection procedures for community representatives require approval from the DoCRGA and – if ministerial approval is denied – also foresee a mediation role for the director of the CDB. As mentioned further above, APCs are *de jure* private companies limited by guarantee. The draft guidelines, however, ignore the formal (*de facto*) independence of APCs. According to the draft guidelines, the DoCRGA request to have the chairperson of APCs appointed by the Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, Éamon Ó Cuiv, T.D. (FF). APCs have to change their constitution accordingly (i.e. their articles and memorandum of association). The guidelines highlight the importance of democratic legitimacy, public accountability and good governance, which requires a board to “have the appropriate balance of public expertise, experience and local involvement to oversee the executive functions of the Company” (DoCRGA 04/04/2007: no page numbers). The departmental guidelines also demand better internal evaluation and checks to be devised to ensure a governance model that can demonstrate transparency in financial transactions and that ensures “that the Company has appropriate robust controls and systems of risk management in place” (*ibid.*). The recommendations for restructuring APCs are similar to proposals made in the Indecon Report for restructuring ADM (Section 6.2.4.2), which illustrates the more general move towards:

- a professionalisation of the state-funded local-development sector in accordance with business-like governance models; and
- bringing state-funded companies that target societal disadvantage based on a model of participatory democracy under government control.

The draft guidelines outline a scenario where the state-funded local-development sector ceases to exist as a local version of the national social partnership model with the four pillars – trade unions, statutory bodies, community representation and public representatives – being equally involved in decision making, which is at odds with the following aspects:

- local partnership arrangements have been identified as a recipe to address the local democratic deficit in Irish governance (OECD 1996; Walsh 1998);

¹³⁵ For example, urban APCs are asked to have no more than 18 board members, limit board membership to 5 community representatives and a maximum of 3 representatives from the trade unions and employers and, moreover, reduce public representation to 3 city Councillors (this has implications for APCs that have national politicians on their boards). Moreover it is proposed to have 5 board members from the statutory sector, 1 from the local authority and 1 from the County/City Enterprise Board (DoCRGA 04/04/2007).

- APCs have received international recognition and were identified as a showcase to demonstrate innovative approaches to local development in disadvantaged areas (OECD 1996, 2001, 2005a, 2006, 2007); and
- a reported lack of joined-up thinking and co-ordination between government departments and related agencies, such as An Garda Síochána, FÁS, the Health Service Executive (HSE), Vocational Education Committees (VECs) and the local authorities (Interview NE 1 and NE 3; Interviews APC 2a, 3b, 7a, 9b and 11).

Government departments are perceived to be driven by territorial thinking that prohibits reformatory or meaningful interdepartmental and, more generally, multilateral collaboration, which is experienced as an obstacle to constructive co-operation (e.g. Interviews APC 1a, APC 4b, APC 9a, APC 9b and APC 12; Interview LV 5) (cf. NDP/CSF Evaluation Unit 2003; Pobal 2006a). It remains to be seen whether and how an envisaged transfer of know-how from APC organisations into more effective forms of governance can be followed through in a concerted way that continues to allow APCs:

- to pursue their research and developmental brief of 'trial and error' as requested by their funders;
- to promote community empowerment based on principles of bottom-up participatory democracy;
- to realise their potential to make an innovative contribution to the Developmental Welfare State (DWS)-model (NESC 2005); and
- to encourage the mainstreaming of successful outcome-oriented projects into the statutory apparatus (ADM 2000; NESC 2005; Pobal 2006b).

6.2.7 More democracy in local governance?

Policy documents reviewed (see Chapter 4, Section 4.3) stress the importance of fostering participative approaches among APCs alongside with measures directed at maximising the impact of resource spending, reducing bureaucracy and creating more flexible programmes. Contemporary developments in the institutional environment of APCs, however, suggest that there is still no suitable mechanism that motivates constructive and meaningful co-operation and vertical learning between central government institutions, special-purpose bodies and state-funded local development organisations (Powell and Geoghegan 2004; Lee 2006). The integration of participatory approaches into decision-making processes is equally felt to be obstructed by traditional top-down thinking, inter-institutional/-departmental turf wars and personal power-struggles behind the scenes. So systemic resistance of various kinds has adverse effects on the planned re-structuring of governance within which APCs are firmly embedded (e.g. Interview ADM 4; Interview NE 1a; Interview APC 2a).

The piecemeal and fragmented progress of collaboration between APCs and statutory agencies and a lack of institutional learning from locally-developed innovative actions has long been identified as a problem that is thought to be rooted in the over-reliance

on the commitment of key individuals from within the statutory apparatus (Turok 2000; Watters 12/04/2000):

I would argue [...] that the experience of Partnership Companies and Community groups over the last number of years has, in direct contradiction to the aforementioned rhetoric, demonstrated that in practice the commitment, input and resources necessarily required from the statutory sector at the local level in order to implement responsive and integrated projects varies considerably and is often dependent on the quality of, and commitment of senior management support given to, individual statutory representatives at the local level (Watters 12/04/2000: 5).

Interpersonal networking seems to be a characteristic feature of policy-making in Ireland at all levels (Komito 1984, 1992, 1993; Callanan 2002; Marshall 2002; Murphy 2002; Adshead 2003). The research confirms that this is also evident for the work of APCs, which makes them dependent on their ability to form relationships with key decision-makers (see Sections 6.3 and 6.4). However common or unspectacular this accustomed attitude may be perceived among civil servants and politicians or even among citizens, it illustrates a friction between the rhetoric of representative democracy and public accountability, on the one hand, and political practice, on the other.

The OECD (1996), besides acknowledging the potential of APCs to encourage vertical institutional learning throughout the statutory system, highlighted the capacity of APCs to address a democratic deficit in Irish society through promoting participatory democracy. The interview material indicates that recent efforts to align APCs with local government structures have challenged the autonomy of APCs and, furthermore, that the potential for participatory democracy as a complementary model to representative democracy has also been undermined. Actors involved at central level generally stated that APCs were initially envisaged to promote a needs-based approach to local development with a view to enabling participation from below. However, there is empirical evidence that the potential for such an approach is probably very limited and unlikely to be tolerated because putting bottom-up principles into practice could jeopardise vested interests of statutory stakeholders involved:

Partnerships [APCs] were set up to promote a bottom-up process – but only if it suits us, not as an absolute. So is this now all being sacrificed? Or what parts would it be? We will only do bottom-up when and where we need it or where it makes sense for us. Because you will never get consensus with the local community on controversial issues. So we do it where it suits us to give people a sense of involvement, not as an absolute. Where it doesn't suit us we ignore it and we live with that contradiction. In the end people have a short memory (Interview NE 1c).

The single biggest issue brought up by those respondents working within central or local government is the challenge participatory democracy poses to representative democracy. A few civil servants expressed the view that participatory democracy promoted by APCs undermines representative democracy; it bears the threat of local activists using their involvement in APCs as a way to compete with and/or bypass publicly elected politicians – despite the fact that APCs invited public representatives

onto their boards in 1999 (Interview DCC 8; Interview APC 7b)¹³⁶. It sounds somewhat hollow, however, if civil servants and public representatives argue for representative democracy as the ultimate and sole form for decision making because the re-structuring of governance seems to be shaped from within government buildings rather than by democratically-elected representatives (and voters do not elect the administration):

All this rationalisation process concerning local government and Partnerships is a movement from government – and I don't mean the government in power. I mean it is coming from the heads of departments, which are the real government. Never mind the politicians because they believe that there is the possibility of having two forms of democracy, which is universal suffrage and representative democracy on one side and then this other participatory democracy (Interview DCC 8).

A similar, almost cynical, attitude towards the mandate of democratically elected local politicians seems to prevail within council offices in Dublin:

The public reps depend on papers prepared by the officials. The City Manager and his staff have concerted written papers. But we are not elected in a strict sense. And we would have certain preconceived ideas [...] Management in here is like the real government. [...] I think we will reduce the number of elected representatives at local level and professionalise it. That's what you're going to have if you want to see real democracy (Interview DCC 2).

Against this backdrop, it is no wonder that the best option considered by DCC to cope with the concept of participatory democracy is to bypass local state-funded structures involving community representation and pursue a strategy of co-option when discussing local developments:

We need to get the community on board and get buy in from them through providing incentives – and this happens at the expense of full economic value for money. But we still make a profit. The best option for us is to bypass the Partnerships and deal directly with the residents as the Partnerships can be a buffer and act against us; they just drag the process on and on. We may start inviting local reps onto the local area committees but we will have to look at who suits us (Interview DCC 7).

DCC's ethos of seeking input from selected local actors torpedoes the bottom-up principle of participatory decision making. The local authority in Dublin is inclined to invite groups to the table that neither challenge their pro-growth agenda nor their ambition for both authority and control over state-funded local development initiatives (Bartley and Shine 2003). The interview material suggests that DCC may involve local groups and individuals that are associated with the community. But participation appears to be limited to those individuals and groups that are likely to become allies and agree to the agenda pursued by the city council:

There are very powerful lobbies in Ballyfermot such as the Co-op [Ballyfermot Area Action Co-op] who see themselves as representing the community even though they don't actually have a directly elected mandate. So you go beyond them and deal directly with local communities (Interview DCC 6).

¹³⁶ Still, there is evidence that public representatives see community representation on APC boards as competitors (e.g. Interview APC 3a) (cf. Powell and Geoghegan 2004).

In contrast, APCs are expected:

- to focus on outreach activities and developmental work with local groups and individuals that are worst affected by structural disadvantage;
- to facilitate a process through which local citizens from disadvantaged areas/backgrounds can – on par with other stakeholders – become involved in decision-making processes affecting the community.

Apparently, there exist two diametrically opposed practices of local participation that need to be integrated into an overarching structure. Whereas APCs were given the agenda to promote participation based on a parity of esteem in decision making between those segments of civil society that usually do not engage in traditional political processes, the local authority chooses the path of least resistance. The cohesion process pursues the development of a more effective model of governance through merging traditional forms of centralised public administration with more local and innovative approaches to engage with civil society. An example was given by a community worker in Ballyfermot who commented on observations made in regard to the local development approach taken by the DCC-led URBAN II Initiative:

URBAN came here with a very set idea. And listening to their manager could make you believe he had a prototype in his head as to what the area needed; and I went to the consultation meetings and they would not respond to your ideas, you wouldn't be listened to. Because in the end they decided to do things their way. And we did not necessarily ask to be integrated into their decision-making structure in such an organised and bureaucratic way (Interview LV 4).

According to the interview material the key challenge is to agree on a kind of participatory approach that can sustain the idea of an effective and inclusive governance model for Dublin:

The City Development Board should bring people around the table from statutory agencies that can take decisions on funding and that can engage with local players but they cannot achieve it. And it is very important for the success of the City Development Board that that gets sorted out and that they involve themselves in participatory democracy. If they can do that then town hall is the right place for social-inclusion measures (Interview APC 2a).

Taking into account (a) the different ethos between public sector-administered approaches to involving actors from civil society in decision making (mainly through co-option and material incentives) and (b) strategies practiced by APCs (mainly through trust and voluntary commitment), it seems unlikely that common ground can be found without an external mediation mechanism that is accepted by all relevant actors involved in Dublin's governance landscape. Contemporary trends in governance suggest that APCs are part and parcel of what can be described factually as a localised top-down strategy (e.g. Storey 1999).

6.2.8 Summary

Under the LDSIP, a succession of steps was targeted at pulling APCs closer under the control of official statutory agencies. The empirical material reviewed and the interviews carried out indicate that these developments are based on a centrally

designed strategy directed at aligning APCs with local authority-administered structures. Dublin City Council diversified from being a provider of basic infrastructure and was re-positioned to become a more influential player in both economic development and urban regeneration projects. Backed by the 2001 Government Act, the local authorities started claiming a stronger role for overseeing social-inclusion measures that had been managed by ADM. The reformation of local governance in Dublin is characterised by the political will to allow for an increasing influence of local-authority-led structures, which effectively is a demonstration of public authority to both APCs and their management and support agency, ADM.

Empirical data supports the view that the institutional restructuring pursued under the cohesion process resembles a glacial movement towards implementing the stated core objective of the Interdepartmental Task Force: to integrate local development and local government systems (see Chapter 1, Section 1.4.2). The analysis of Dublin's changing governance system leads to the conclusion that state-funded local development approaches will probably be increasingly orchestrated from within the public sector. The findings from the case study suggest that the decentralisation of DCC-structures and the 'colonisation of the urban governance system' with DCC-affiliated and DCC-staffed local development structures at its centre represent government efforts to encourage a stronger affiliation between APCs and the local authority. In some of the interviews, in particular those with national experts, it transpired that the lead department of the local authority, the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, had considerable interest in the launch of the cohesion strategy.

Government statements and publications make ample reference to the SMI as a guiding principle for public-sector reform and for the envisaged alignment of APCs alongside newly established local structures associated with local government under the cohesion process (see Section 6.2, Figure 5). Respondents from government departments and DCC particularly stress their preference for a more accentuated role of APCs in supporting public service delivery. They also emphasise the necessity for tackling perceived deficiencies within the state-funded local-development sector that are at odds with key principles of public administration reform.

The establishment of a new government department in 2002 with a responsibility for state-funded local development initiatives and programmes facilitated the NPM-inspired rationalisation agenda propagated by the SMI. The Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs was tasked to achieve a better coordination and quality of service delivery provided by state-funded local-development sector to citizens. It plays a central role in promoting the streamlining of local development structures under the cohesion process. Comments from government officials and senior DCC employees confirm that the cohesion process originated in the strategic approach to promote and implement a systemic compatibility and harmonisation of

local development and local government systems that culminated in the Local Government Act 2001. In other words, the cohesion process and its implications for funding arrangements of APCs has been informed by the business-like ethos of public-sector modernisation and, ultimately, the core principles of the SMI (see Chapter 1, Section 1.4.2).

Government-initiated reviews of ADM (Indecon 2003) and local-development structures (Comptroller and Auditor General 2000) concluded that the contemporary practice of funding and administering the state-funded local-development sector is not cost-effective. Both reports generally criticised the duplication of service provision and unsatisfactory procedures in terms of ensuring democratic and financial accountability. In other words, it was claimed that a multiplicity of largely un-coordinated structures operating with little government control results into a fragmentation of service delivery and, hence, an underutilisation of taxpayer's money. These arguments were reinforced by government officials and professionals from the public sector. In contrast, respondents from APCs or those affiliated with APCs call into question the value of focusing on scrutinising the state-funded development sector. They, in turn, argue that a lack of inter-departmental co-ordination and joined-up thinking at government level and between statutory agencies are to blame for inefficiencies highlighted in government-initiated reports. Accordingly, professionals from APCs experience the cohesion process as a DoEHLG-led encroachment on APC's institutional independence, which is considered detrimental to the development and implementation of innovative concepts addressing disadvantage through participatory models. Most respondents from APCs perceive new structures such as RAPID or the SITFs as a duplication of what is already there. This, however, emerges in a different light when seen from the perspective of the local authority or central government (Section 6.2.6).

In regard to the overall objectives for governance reform, views expressed by DCC professionals and government officials mirror the priorities outlined in the reports of the Interdepartmental Task Force. For example, DCC employees clearly stated that new structures were set up to prepare the ground for an institutional alignment of APCs with DCC and its sub-structures in order to increase the influence of DCC on both setting priorities for local development and controlling actions of APCs. Individuals who promote governance re-structuring from within the statutory apparatus justify the systemic alignment of APC with DCC-administered structures by spreading 'narratives of duplication' (see Section 6.2.6) and giving accounts of 'over-colonisation' of community space by state-funded local development agencies that 'are tripping over themselves'. The same group of respondents argued that contemporary malpractice and procedural deficiencies in administering APCs would jeopardise good governance and, effectively, a cost-efficient use of taxpayer's money (which implies adverse effects for the competitiveness of the Irish economy).

The streamlining of multi-stakeholder local development programmes through a government-initiated process is expected to bring about substantial challenges for the operation of state-funded APCs. This can, for example, be illustrated by the traditionally torn relationship between local communities in working-class areas and the local authority. Community workers from the case-study area stated that any group that is somehow associated with the local authority is looked upon as suspicious by the locals and would find it difficult to build meaningful relationships with the community (Interview LV 1). A DCC professional who works in the case-study area observed that "local groups in Ballyfermot think that a lack of government and local government involvement are partly responsible for deprivation. So they would have a very close eye on me as well in terms of what they expect to come out of this" (Interview DCC 1). One APC professional found that "Dublin City Council became an aggressive and arrogant player that uses the language of local development but does not understand the concept" (Interview APC 11) and it was felt that the Dublin CDB operates in a similar fashion:

The City Development Board is looking at gaining control rather than achieving greater integration – and in this order. The other way around might have brought along local players more easily [...] And I believe that they if they went through the integrative route the control would come with it. And I think it would come with a lot more people on board rather than the other way round (Interview APC 8).

Whereas respondents involved at departmental level or from DCC mainly see APCs as a vehicle to achieve the creation of local economies of scale through facilitating the alignment of local initiatives with local-authority structures, APC managers, board members and staff expressed a different view. Even though most APCs professionals generally acknowledged that the concept of cohesion was a good idea it was also stressed that the management of the cohesion process should have been delegated to a neutral clearing house; not to a structure staffed by and operating from within DCC offices because this stifles genuine co-operation from both statutory and community-based organisations (e.g. Interviews APC 4a and APC 11). APC professionals and board members voiced concerns:

- that the planning of the cohesion process took place without any consultative exercises involving APCs or other organisations affected by it, which calls into question the concept of participatory democracy;
- that DCC and affiliated structures lack the experience of social-inclusion work and, therefore, are not necessarily in a position to organise the cohesion process;
- that the obligatory endorsement of their plans by the Dublin CDB undermines the autonomy of APCs as independent companies limited by guarantee;
- that the cohesion process ignores the need to have parity of esteem between stakeholders involved in partnership arrangements (see Table 6.2 for the composition of the board of the Dublin CDB); and
- that the cohesion overly focuses on the institutional interface between formally independent state-funded local development initiatives and local government whilst

well-resourced statutory bodies are not required to re-visit their *modus operandi* or to have their plans endorsed.

In the current situation APCs seem to be caught up in an institutional muddle which is characterised by efforts to locally implement the objectives of the current cohesion process and local authorities and affiliated official structures demanding more control over local development processes. This was reported to result in a distraction of energy and resources that endangers the achievements of APCs' programmatic objectives. The following two main sections explore the degree to which (a) alterations concerning changes in accountability and monitoring arrangements and (b) the growing significance of business-inspired proliferation of value-for-money principles impact on the systemic compatibility between public administration and local APCs.

6.3 Accountability and monitoring arrangements for APCs

The purpose of this section is to de-construct the accountability practice that is part and parcel of funding arrangements designed for APCs. The allocation of funding to APCs follows a variety of contractually-agreed accountability procedures. These should ensure a certain degree of financial and public accountability of APCs. Accountability is a complex concept (Bunda 1979; Miller 2002; Considine 2002; Sullivan 2003). A useful working definition is provided by Lessinger who sees accountability as "the product of a process. At its most basic level, it means that an agent, public or private, entering into a contractual agreement to perform a service will be held answerable for performing according to the agreed-upon terms, within an established time period, and with a stipulated use of resources and performance standards (Lessinger, 1970: 21)" (Bunda 1979: 358).

A more specific description of accountability is offered by Considine (2002) who observed that contemporary forms of public-sector modernisation led to the devolution of political power to public administrations. He argues that performance-based budgets and management regimes give "greater power to officials but do not increase the institutional means to have them account for what they do" (Considine 2002: 27). Considine purports that traditional forms of vertical accountability between parties that are directly connected through top-down reporting structures are not designed to capture the complexity of shared responsibilities within new governance structures and, therefore, need to be coupled with a horizontal dimension of accountability to make up for emerging accountability deficits:

This horizontal dimension raises questions about the nature of agency and thus the accountability of agencies not lined up under a vertical mandate. A diffusion of goals and interests complicates any assumption regarding the purpose of action itself. Such differences also call for different instruments to exact whatever accountability is deemed important. In this environment, contracts may become more important than commands, and performance is measured as output rather than process (Walsh) (Considine 2002: 27).

An APC is typically answerable to political paymasters, local stakeholders represented at board level and the local community. APCs are situated at the interface between political paymasters and targeted communities (i.e. the designated beneficiaries of APC activities). This requires a two-way flow of reporting in terms of *vertical accountability*: 'upwards', to the funders; and 'downwards', to the local community. The main objectives of being answerable are as follows:

- 'upwards', to account for the orderly implementation of their programme of activities and monies received and spent; and
- 'downwards', to account for the establishment of an inclusive *modus operandi*.

The latter should, first, respect the importance of participatory principles that "support and enable the voice of the 'real' poor" (Lee 2006: 21) and, second, ensure the appropriate investment of resources according to the priorities identified by the local people. The 'double-accountability' of APCs suggests ownership of the process to both political sponsors and local stakeholders. In the context of this study, the 'sideways' or horizontal dimension of accountability refers to relationships between APCs and those parties that are responsible for supporting the work of APCs. These include, for example, stakeholders and interest groups that are represented at board level and other potential partners with a public or moral responsibility to make meaningful contribution to collaborative development of disadvantaged areas. Considine's view of accountability as the "core property of the systemic interactions between separated actors sharing responsibilities for outcomes" (Considine 2002: 23) succinctly captures the multi-dimensionality and complexity of accountability relationships within which APCs are embedded.

Changes in the wider institutional framework and public management reforms in Ireland led to the development of evidence-based policies that required a corresponding performance-oriented budgeting system (e.g. DoT 2004), which is mirrored in the sophisticated and complex auditing system of the LDSIP (see Table 6.7 below). The following sections show that the pressures generated by existing accountability and monitoring practices overemphasise the assessment of quantifiable and tangible results at the expense of the pursuit of people-centred process-oriented activities. Previous research indicates that current accountability practices reduce the potential for genuine grassroots involvement and democratic accountability because APCs feel obliged to "focus on the requirements of formal networking and reporting in order to justify activities of funding" (Bartley and Borscheid 2003: 240).

6.3.1 Reporting requirements

Table 6.7 shows that the upward accountability mechanism of state-funded local development programmes consist of complex reporting and performance-monitoring requirements. An array of arrangements – consisting of reports, eligibility criteria, guidelines for programme development and time frames – monitor the implementation of contractually-agreed actions and corresponding expenditure of earmarked funding

by APCs. The existing accountability mechanism is considered capable of, first, controlling the use of public resources within an agreed-upon funding period and, second, making sure that the outcome of programmes and actions implemented by APCs meet the expectations of both public funders and the designated beneficiaries of the local development programme (ADM 1995, 2000; Pobal 2006a).

But the local community also demands accountability from APCs. The community representatives on the board of APCs are mandated to influence policy and strategy of the company in a way that its programmes and actions are tailored to meet local realities on the ground and adhere to an anti-poverty and equality policy mirrored in the LDSIP (ADM 2000). This necessitates democratic processes of electing and choosing local representatives as equal partners onto the board of the APC, which requires the proactive local promotion of participatory approaches to engaging with local residents and groups. In order to avoid tokenistic or self-appointed representation on APC boards, it is pivotal to devise transparent procedures that yield appropriate and authentic stakeholder representation in decision-making structures.

In this context, ADM highlights the need for APCs to be accountable to their communities and facilitate and promote appropriate participation from disadvantaged individuals through inclusive procedures and other developmental support. Moreover, poverty proofing is required to justify legitimacy of measures and actions outlined in strategic plans of APCs (e.g. Lloyd and Kennedy 2003; Lloyd and Geraghty 2004). According to guiding principles proposed by the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs (DoCRGA 04/04/2007, 31/07/2007a, 31/07/2007b), however, participation from the community and voluntary sector¹³⁷ on the board of APCs is to be sought from *established* community organisations and networks with a social-inclusion agenda. Only little reference is made to facilitating the involvement of those considered the 'targets' of partnership action:

We have a community platform. And the community platform is meant to be represented of community people representing all the areas. But I think if you actually look at the make up of the community platform, there is a high proportion made up of sports clubs. It's not necessarily individuals representing communities (Interview APC 8).

ADM's *Integrated Local Development Handbook* outlines criteria for board representation from the community and voluntary sector as follows:

The community and voluntary sector will comprise organisations active in economic and social development in the area and *which are able to contribute effectively* to the local development initiative (ADM 1995: 12, emphasis added).

Apart from highlighting the importance of including interest groups addressing programme-related disadvantages and target groups, no elaborated process-oriented strategy is in place that attends to the task of securing appropriate representation of marginalised individuals in decision-making fora.

¹³⁷ The term 'sector' itself suggests a degree of organisational professionalism that is required for being included in decision-making.

Table 6.7: Formal performance monitoring and reporting requirements for APCs

Measure	Tools/Mechanisms	What it consists of
Performance Monitoring & Evaluation	SCOPE	APCs submit quarterly reports that are captured in an ADM-administered database called SCOPE (Systems for Co-ordinated Programme Evaluation). The database is an effort to capture both quantifiable and qualitative achievements of an APC. These data are used by POBAL to inform the lead department (DoCRGA), the Monitoring Authorities (i.e. one Monitoring Committee in the BMW Region and one in the S&E Region) and the Community Support Framework Unit in the Department of Finance (Appendix 3, Table A-3.1).
	Financial Returns	Quarterly financial report on all LDSIP-related expenditures.
	Annual POA	The Programme of Activities (POA) outlines costs, targets, strategic partners, beneficiaries for each set of actions as a means to inform the appraisal process and the allocation of funding to the APC (Appendix, Table A-3.2).
	Annual Target Sheet (ex ante targets)	Agreement on the number of clients, children, individuals, groups, initiatives and networks envisaged to support through programme actions across the three measures of the APC (see also SCOPE).
	Annual Case Stud(y)ies	Participation of APCs in one research study per year to assess the qualitative dimension of the work outlined in their programme of activities.
	Annual Report	Summary on activities and achievements, names of board members (and the sectors they represent), staff and positions held, most recent audited accounts, recent publications and research projects, other programmes managed, case studies and annual financial allocation to each programme.
	Strategic Plans	Submission of a long-term (6-year) and a short-term (3-year) strategic plan that entails a socio-economic profile and a SWOT analysis of the area (the latter outlines Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats). It also outlines the objectives and the strategies through which identified issues are envisaged to be achieved. The strategic plan is (a) bound to the life time of the National Development Plan and (b) must be compliant with the 2002-2012 strategy of the City Development Board as the designated overarching body for coordinating local development initiatives in Dublin.
	Budget Parameters	Prescription of bands for budget allocation under each of the following measures (excluding administration costs): Services for the Unemployed: 40 - 65 per cent Community Development: 25 - 40 per cent Community Based Youth Initiatives: 15 - 25 per cent
	POBAL Liaison Officer	Attends board meetings as 'ex-officio' (no voting right), provides developmental support, challenges, oversees progress and operations and assesses annual performance (appraisal report).
	APC Board	Receives progress report on operational matters and programme actions.
Matching Funding	Amount of extra-resources levered is monitored by POBAL and positively acknowledged in future budgets (cf. ADM Handbook 1995: 16).	
Implementation Approach	Delivery (frowned upon)	Direct provision of locally needed services to target groups in communities on a pilot-basis.
	Agency (accepted)	Subcontract others to provide services to target groups.
	Brokerage (ideal)	Engage in activities that encourage existing delivery agencies to tailor services to meet local demand of target groups.
Collaboration Model (Himmelman)	Conciliatory (frowned upon)	Risk-avoidance with little visible commitments to pro-actively engage with others. Take initiative and ownership of processes leading to positive change and challenging the <i>status quo</i> not high on agenda.
	Co-operative (accepted)	Issue- or project-based co-operation with others in order to facilitate the achievement of common objectives.
	Progressive (ideal)	Outcome-oriented model based on a joined-up thinking and collaboration (partnership approach) that brings along other local stakeholders and programmes on an equal footing in a meaningful way.

Source: ADM (1995; 2000); Pobal (2006a); Interview material.

In a simplified way, the *extreme* positions of political sponsors and local stakeholders in regard to their viewpoint on accountability can be reflected as follows:

- the former mainly focus on tangible services and actions funded or ‘purchased’ (financial efficiency) with a view to demonstrating good use of public resources to the voting taxpayer (Interviews NE 1b, NE 3, NE 4, NE 5b and NE 6); and
- the latter strive to somehow increase the decision-making capacity of disadvantaged communities with a view to producing relevant and long-lasting outcomes at the local level that are meaningful to those considered poor and marginalised (procedural effectiveness) (Interviews APC 1, APC 3a, APC 6, APC 8, APC 10 and APC 11; Interviews LV 1 and LV 5)¹³⁸.

In regard to changes in the area of public accountability, empirical evidence points out that the state-funded local development programme tends to privilege financial efficiency over procedural effectiveness, which undermines the concept of participatory democracy:

There’s politics, there’s paperwork, and there’s people. And if we get tied into doing the politics and paperwork – what happens to the people? There has to be equal respect for the people. But I need to be able to project and get trapped in bureaucracy and paperwork because we create so many layers of paperwork and so many layers of evaluation – evaluate, evaluate, evaluate! (Interview LV 5).

In terms of financial accountability, one respondent commented that “we are not asked to produce more output locally but to be more accountable to our funders” (Interview APC 11). It is generally felt that the demands for financial control are at odds with the relatively small amount of funding allocated to APCs (see Chapter 2, Section 2.2.2, Table 2.1):

The amount of administration and paperwork Partnerships have to do is a farce if you look at the amount of money involved (Interview APC 9a).

Respondents also reported that the disproportionate increase in staff time being tied up in bureaucratic procedures such as financial control and programme evaluation procedures reduces the scope for pursuing bottom-up processes directed at developing actions addressing poverty and social marginalisation (cf. Lee 2006). Even in early 2003 an ADM professional commented that “ADM and Partnerships may well shift to a delivery agency for government programmes rather than being an experimental type of organisation” and that “it looks as if civil society and the community and voluntary sector is going to be dumped” (Interview ADM 1).

6.3.2 Outlining good practice: a case of being ‘high-profile’

State-sponsored local development measures in Ireland operate in an institutional environment where the allocation of funding is increasingly based on compliance with bureaucratic accountability practices, the utilisation of competitive bidding processes and a business-like contract-culture (Bartley and Borscheid 2003). As a result, the

¹³⁸ It is interesting to note that, when asked about the development of accountability criteria, nearly all respondents exclusively referred to financial procedures in place.

allocation of funding is only to a certain extent dependent on the actual degree of disadvantage of an area. Empirical evidence suggests that, when making decisions on the spatial disbursement of funding among APCs, two sets of indicators apply: a set of formal criteria that determine the allocation of funding operating in tandem with a variety of less tangible and rather unspecified 'extra criteria' that assess the performance of the individual APC on the basis of competitive indicators. The former set of indicators includes quantifiable indicators such as the population size and the degree of deprivation as measured by common statistical indicators (Small Area Health Research Unit 1997; Haase 1999; Pringle 2002). These indicators are complemented by a less straightforward qualitative assessment of the paperwork and case studies submitted (Pobal 2006b). The importance of promoting successful flagship projects is also emphasised because they generate public awareness and function as examples that justify the subsidies channelled into designated disadvantaged areas (Walsh *et al.* 1998; McCarthy 1998; Turok 2001). Therefore, even though not directly stated, the perceived 'marketing ability' of APCs is considered a crucial indicator for the allocating resources (Bartley and Borscheid 2003).

Empirical research carried out under the LDSIP suggests that informal criteria function as a filter through which 'good partnerships' are intended to be identified and, subsequently, to be awarded by means of the resources funnelled into 'their' area: because "when they are high-profile [...] and their leaders are high-profile then it's easier for them to go to the state and say, "We need money to do this and we need money to do that". When they are not high-profile they have to explain who they are" (Borscheid 2001, quoted from interview with APC Staff on 08/06/2000).

The necessity to secure the commitment of senior officials and nationally prominent figures from influential organisations, statutory bodies and major employers on the board of APCs was highlighted by respondents from all quarters as a key variable for success. For example, the involvement of a powerful personality as leader on the board of an APC facilitates contacts with key decision-makers from potential funding organisations, statutory bodies and/or economic players. This is a crucial element in achieving the maximum for the area, be it for financial or other support. As a result, lobbying and informal networking on a personal basis – thriving on a strong Irish tradition of lobbying and political brokerage (cf. Komito 1984, 1993, 1992) – play a significant role in determining the potential of APCs to draw down funding and overcome perceived obstacles at the interface between statutory bodies and APCs on the other (cf. ADM 1995, 2000; Pobal 2006a).

In seeking to establish what makes for a successful APC, Turok's (2001) report for the OECD supports the argument that it is the calibre of individuals that can be won from statutory bodies and partner organisations to actively participate in the local partnership structures that proves crucial in determining the strength of the individual APC. In other words, just like in the process of receiving core funding from ADM, the

importance of being considered a 'good organisation' or 'high-profile' is instrumental for successful coalition-building, lobbying, canvassing and leveraging extra resources (Table 6.8). As a consequence, the local community is potentially dependent on the quality of 'their' APC as perceived by political paymasters and other funders that invest into an area.

Table 6.8: Indicators for good performance and 'high profile'

Indicator	What it tries to capture
Leverage funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The amount of additional funding levered (i.e. additional to core funding) • The number of partners supporting the APC financially • The quality of the plan "because money will follow a good plan" (Interview NE 3)
Public Relations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The recognition of an APC by the community and by agents outside the local-development sector • The number of launches of evaluations and reports • The media coverage such as the number of occasions being quoted in local and – even more important – national newspapers • The reputation of the company
Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The calibre or profile of the Board; in particular the capacity of both Chair person and the CEO
Perception	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The compliance with procedures and protocols based on the opinion and experience of the ADM Liaison Officer • The number and the profile of government agencies and strategic partners that work with an APC • The acknowledgement given to statutory funders of successful programmes developed by APCs • The capacity to establish 'Flagship Projects' and encourage mainstreaming of innovative projects
Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good money management and reporting systems in place • Community involvement – especially from target groups – on board and sub groups • Good internal economies as indicated by HR practices and staff training (e.g. <i>Excellence Through People Award</i> and the introduction of the <i>Q-mark</i>). • Qualifications and capacity of staff • Efficiency and transparency of decision-making structures

Source: Bartley and Borscheid (2003) and empirical data.

All the above implies that – as a precondition to acquiring action ability – APCs must develop the institutional capacity to 'build bridges' and create multiple (interpersonal) ties at the interfaces between all kinds of relevant local and extra-local stakeholders. Therefore, local APCs are highly dependent on producing marketing, communication and leadership qualities (e.g. Stewart 1998). As first steps, local APCs typically strive to create a sphere of trust, find common denominators and, in due course, achieve

shared understanding and to maximise consensus around key issues and workable strategies as the foundation stone for collaboration (Interview APC 12). Trevillion (2001: 22) underscores that:

[the] sharing of problems and collective working on those problems is a way of building a collective identity founded on flexibility. Partnership networks are therefore rooted in a positive valuation of different contributions rather than a desire to eradicate difference in order to build some false sense of oneness.

As trust building and the creation of round-table structures alone are not sufficient to induce commitment, success often hinges upon the ability to negotiate acceptable terms and conditions among all relevant stakeholders so that potential benefits, expected outcomes and costs of involvement are transparent.

Taking into consideration the relatively great importance attached to 'extra-criteria' in determining the intensity of support for APCs vis-à-vis the assessment of formal criteria, one could assume an 'inverse-care principle' in operation: i.e. aid is diverted from the most disadvantaged areas and individuals without the social capital to participate in partnership structures to those who can clearly demonstrate their strength although their level of social and economic marginalisation may be less pressing (Bartley 1999; Pringle and Walsh 1999).

The capacity of an APC to lever and make the most of core funding allocated is acknowledged favourably as an indicator symbolising success and "will be positively evaluated and will, other things being equal, merit a higher level of support under the programme" (ADM 1995: 16). In other words, local support in the form of matching funding and other contributions from third parties are key criteria indicating success to ADM. If the dissemination of funding-related know-how (e.g. the ability to get information on, and apply for, funding) is negatively correlated with the degree of deprivation of an area, the following question arises: should the assistance provided through funding area-based programmes be subject to a competitive bidding process that possibly results in the local manifestation of an inverse-care principle?

Empirical data support the assumption that the accountability and evaluation system results in a bias in the allocation of funding. 'High-profile' APCs are rewarded because they are perceived to operate efficiently and effectively within programmatic guidelines and regulations. Some APCs can mobilise the social capital necessary to deliver on the plans according to the requirements of the regulatory system and/or to cope efficiently with the perceived constraints of the regulatory framework. Those APCs are more likely to succeed in drawing down funding than others that are not being regarded as strong (i.e. efficient and outcome-oriented). This also implies that areas that already have favourable indigenous endowments¹³⁹ are, from the very start, likely to benefit more than less favoured areas. The following section illustrates that new arrangements in allocating funding to APCs introduced under the LDSIP have

¹³⁹ For example, a strong community and voluntary sector or employers that are engaged in local issues or opportunities for economic development.

consolidated the existing (output-oriented) performance-based allocation of resources into designated disadvantaged areas.

6.3.3 Changes in funding arrangements

The transition from the jointly EU- and government-funded 1994-1999 OPLURD to the Exchequer-funded 2000-2006 LDSIP resulted in only minor programme changes. Also, the main objectives for the utilisation of core funding remained the same (ADM 1995, 2000; Pobal 2006b), namely:

- to mobilise local resources (e.g. social capital and support from private sector);
- to lever directly additional resources from statutory bodies and other relevant sources; and
- to develop local best-practice models concerning service provision, environmental upgrading or employment opportunities that can be mainstreamed into the day-to-day practice of existing statutory agencies.

A comparison of the programme guidelines reveals a reduction of measures from the 1994-1999 OPLURD to the 2000-2006 LDSIP (ADM 1995, 2000). Overall, the guidelines appear just to have undergone a formal procedure as they subsume eligible actions and target groups under fewer headings without substantially altering the overall thrust of the programme:

The OPLURD guidelines have not changed. They've been printed on glossier paper and a few words have been changed – but they are still there (Interview ADM 2).

Despite little change in content, it is argued that the overall operational nature of the local development programme has been altered considerably because new funding arrangements and performance-monitoring procedures were introduced. These are discussed in the following sections.

6.3.3.1 The end of EU-funding

Changes in funding arrangements were facilitated by the phasing out of EU-funding for APCs after the 1994-1999 OPLURD¹⁴⁰. The withdrawal of EU funding meant a shift in responsibility for core-funding APCs into the remit of national government. Whereas the EU and the Irish exchequer jointly funded APCs for the duration of the 1991-1993 PESP and the 1994-1999 OPLURD, core funding for APCs under the 2000-2006 LDSIP was provided by the exchequer only (see Chapter 2, Section 2.2.2, Table 2.1). Respondents stated that EU funding protected APCs from too much state intervention. State responsibility for funding was quite influential in reforming local-governance structures because it assisted bringing APCs closer under the control of central government (Ó Broin 2003). The transition period leading from the OPLURD towards

¹⁴⁰ Ireland's economic development that moved the GNP per capita above EU average led to a substantial reduction in entitlements of structural funds allocations. Due to the so-called n+2 rule the EU funding effectively ended on the 31st of December 2001.

the LDSIP was characterised by the uncertainty as to whether or not central government would continue funding APCs under the 2000-2006 NDP.

The blueprint for the government-led restructuring of state-funded local development initiatives had already been on the political agenda before the advent of the LDSIP. In 1999, about six months before the end of the OPLURD, the issue of funding APCs was discussed in the Dáil (Dáil Éireann 01/07/1999). Mr. Deenihan, T.D. (FG)¹⁴¹, and Mr. Broughan, T.D. (LAB)¹⁴², questioned the then Minister responsible for the OPLURD, Mr. Flood, T.D. (FF)¹⁴³, about the government's commitment to the continuation of statutory support for APCs post-1999 and whether a financial bridging mechanism would be put in place to secure an operational budget for APCs in 2000. In his response, Mr. Flood, T.D. (FF), reinforced the government's commitment to the area-based approach to local development in designated disadvantaged areas. But he made it conditional:

- first, on the creation of "a more sustainable framework" for the operation of area-based local development structures as proposed by the interdepartmental task force on the local government and local government systems; and,
- second, "on the financial envelopes available post-1999 under the new national development plan" (Dáil Éireann 01/07/1999: no page numbers).

In short, the continuation of the area-based approach to local development and, hence, the existence of APCs, was dependent on sufficient tax income and the alignment of APCs with CDB structures (see Section 6.3.3.1). Following the shift in responsibility for funding from the EU to the exchequer, APCs experienced tighter parameters concerning the allocation of funding and, subsequently, less room to manoeuvre:

Funding became more institutionalised and regulated with a greater focus on accountability and performance ensuring a match between the overall goals of ADM, the programme, and what they want Partnerships [APCs] to do. So what happened is a loss of autonomy coupled with a stricter control of funding (Interview APC 9a).

Despite international recognition of APCs as a show case to establish more civil involvement in decision making through new forms of democratic experimentalism (OECD 1996; Parkinson 1998; Turok 2001), the political priorities concerning APCs' bottom-up policies and their degree of independence, both of which had been conditional to receiving EU funding, came increasingly under scrutiny by the state. In accordance with the decline in public budgets following a downturn in the economy, APCs experienced a reduction in core funding by 6 % in 2003, varying between 4 and 7 % for individual APCs (Dáil Éireann 25/06/2003). The Irish government also introduced

¹⁴¹ Fine Gael spokesperson on the Office of Public Works 1997-2000.

¹⁴² Labour Party Spokesperson on Enterprise, Trade and Employment and on Social, Community and Family Affairs.

¹⁴³ Minister for Tourism, Sport and Recreation. The Department of Tourism, Sport and Recreation was the lead department for ADM and APC-type agencies between 1997 and 2002 (Section 4.2.3, Table 4.3).

stricter auditing and performance procedures. The following comment illustrates that APCs consider the current monitoring mechanism overly complicated:

In terms of accountability, I would firmly believe that we are under the most stringent monitoring processes that can be there for any organisation. Compared to the amount of money we get, the reporting mechanisms are actually quite complex. We underwent an audit from ADM. And the things they picked up and pointed out, I would see them as petty – and I am an accountant myself (Interview APC 2b).

There is also some indication that the use of resources became more prescribed as APCs were effectively incorporated into Irish public administration:

When it was European moneys, there was much more flexibility about how funding was used (Interview APC 4a).

The previous section pointed out that the amount of core funding for APCs only partly depends on the actual degree of disadvantage; and that management skills and the already existing indigenous potential of an area are positively taken into account by ADM and other funding bodies that funnel resources into designated disadvantaged areas. In contrast to the complexity of both, formalised and less tangible 'extra' criteria that are used to measure success of APCs (see Section 6.3.1, Table 6.7), APC professionals stated that they mainly have to report on crude numbers. Monitoring systems for APCs are apparently geared towards evaluating the numbers of individuals placed into training or education, the number of unemployed individuals registered with support services and the number of local community organisations that received developmental support:

They [ADM] would evaluate – and to be quite honest with you – I think they are really evaluating in terms of the numbers that I sent to them on a quarterly basis. They would be much more interested in the financial procedures and that the money is being spent on time et cetera. And then they would judge really the performance of the Partnership according to the annual report (Borscheid 2001, quoted from interview with APC Staff on 12/06/2000).

This practice – the above quotation is from an interview carried out in 2000 – has not changed under the LDSIP (Interviews APC 8 and APC 11; Interview ADM 3; Interview LV 5). Even though it is evident and widely accepted (a) that social-inclusion measures should do more than facilitate the placement of people into employment, education or training and (b) that deprivation is not a one-dimensional concept (Curtin *et al.* 1996; Pringle *et al.* 1999; Dixon and Macarov 2000; CPA n.d.), the performance-monitoring system has a strong focus on output. APC professionals stated that the evaluation of their activities is based on 'headcounting'. As a result, it fails to capture the complexity of processes and activities required to address poverty and deprivation:

The statutory agencies now get very territorial around funding and around having to tick boxes as to how many people you work with or how many are using your service. Because for funding purposes again, how do you quantify for really good community development? How do you quantify success in terms of developing an area? Against what do you measure progress? (Interview LV 5).

APCs are also expected to submit case studies in their annual report to illustrate qualitative aspects of their work (Section 6.3.1, Table 6.7). This practice can be

understood as a kind of 'satellite system' that illustrates aspects of their work rather than being a reporting requirement that is on par with quantitative monitoring techniques. It is easier to devise a performance measurement system that captures changes in local employment or educational attainment over a period of time rather than assessing the value of APC activities geared at increasing participation, public accountability, networking and collaboration. Over the life span of the LDSIP, little progress has been made to adjust monitoring and evaluation procedures – such as the SCOPE system – to the realities within which APC-type agencies operate¹⁴⁴.

6.3.3.2 The end of multi-annual budgets

Much confusion was caused by the re-organisation of the budget of APCs. Under EU guidelines budgets were allocated on multi-annual basis, which allowed APCs to carry over funding not spent into subsequent years. This was considered a flexible mechanism that accounted for the different pace of various local development efforts, depending on the nature of the project. According to respondents from APCs (e.g. Interviews APC 6 and APC 11), in 2003, however, APCs' multi-annual budgets that enabled APCs to progress at the pace of 'their' communities started to be allocated on an annual basis. As a result, funding that was not spent in year one or two in the life span of an APC's multi-annual area action plan (3-4 years) could not be carried over into the subsequent year. The decision was presented at short notice and came as a complete surprise to APCs (Interview APC 2a). Multi-annual funding for what was a four-year action plan (2000-2003) within a seven-year strategy (2000-2006) was, without any dialogue or consultation with stakeholders affected by changes, changed to an annual budgeting system from 1st January 2003. The combined effect of budget cuts and the changing practice of carryovers (i.e. budget being allowed to be carried into the following year) were reported to have amounted to a loss of up to 28 per cent and more of the 2003 budget for individual APCs (Interviews APC 2a and APC 4a). As a result, APCs had to call off projects and, moreover, were forced to release staff:

For the period 2000-2003 funding was being sold to us as multi-annual funding. In March 2003 all Partnerships received a letter stating that funding would be on annual basis from now on. If you haven't spent your money, tough luck; it was going to be deferred into 2004. They did not say it was a cutback; they termed it deferral. In total we've had a 28 per cent budget cutback between 2002 and 2003. So we had to let staff go (Interview APC 8).

A board member of the APC in the case-study area criticised the sudden change from multi-annual to annual budgets and the resulting loss of funding as a political decision that did not have a positive effect, but a decision that hit those individuals considered the key beneficiaries of funding in the first place:

We are not being rewarded for being frugal and not rushing into wasting money. We lost a good few 100,000 because we did not waste it. We had plans to invest in local people, to skill them up in a way that suits them, not the bureaucracy (Interview APC 6).

¹⁴⁴ The Himmelman Model, for example, has been utilised to measure degrees of collaboration between partnerships and stakeholders as a means of making up for a deficit in attributing value to developmental activities of partnerships that could not be captured by existing performance criteria (see Section 6.4.1).

The bureaucratic logic behind annual funding is particularly well illustrated in a Dáil debate where Minister Ó Cuiv, T.D. (FF), answering a question by Mr. Broughan, T.D. (LAB), defends annual budgeting for APCs:

As I have repeatedly pointed out, there were underspends in previous years and, as every deputy knows, money not spent returns to the Exchequer [...] There are three-year plans with annualised budgets. Therefore, money cannot be carried forward because the financing system does not allow for it [...] I stress that it is much better discipline that those [Partnerships] given money in a given year should set about spending that money within the year. Some of the partnerships did that and they have no problem. It is only partnerships which did not go about their business, and were carrying the money forward because they were not getting on with things, which thought they would have a bonanza year in year three, not having spent the money (Dáil Éireann 25/06/2003: no page numbers).

The case study provides an example for what the Minister portrays as underperformance or 'not going about their business'. There is strong empirical evidence pointing out that the APC in the case-study area had long been operating as a grant giving body with "massive underspends" (Interview ADM 1); i.e. they mainly drew down core funding from ADM and allocated resources on an *ad hoc* basis to those groups with the information and the experience rather than looking at the implications for the wider community. The data gathered reveals that this approach fostered a competitive environment among different local interest groups which prevented weak groups from accessing resources (Interviews ADM 1 and ADM 2; Interviews APC 2a and APC 6; Interviews LV 5 and LV 4):

Insiders and those involved in the community would have knowledge around the funding and would be much aware of where money is coming from and where else they can draw funding down (Interview LV 4).

Through an intense restructuring process in 2002 that came along with a change in management, Ballyfermot Partnership adopted a more strategic approach towards budgeting and engaging with local stakeholders with a view to ending what was perceived as a "minder's activism" (Interview ADM 1) fostering a local dependency culture (Interview ADM 2; Interviews APC 2a, APC 3a, APC 6 and APC 7b):

Ballyfermot has reasonably well-established projects. And the difficulty in this area is that a lot of them are actually seeking funding to maintain themselves, rather than to develop new ideas. We have to try overcoming that. And I think that we have done that through our programme for 2003. But I would find that we are going to get less and less involved in funding local groups from the LDSIP money. I think that we're getting more and more involved in trying to develop new groups, new projects, and policy; and trying to get things to develop at that level. I think that we've made a sea change in the last few months within that. But it takes time, you know (Interview APC 2a).

The developmental role of APCs requires addressing structural inequalities in designated disadvantaged areas through involving and empowering those who are worst affected by societal inequality. Therefore, a flexible working model needs to be in place that is based on the principle of parity of esteem and, moreover, that caters for the inclusion and participation of individuals that usually might not engage in decision-making structures and might need to be brought along at a slower pace. Also, some local issues might require long-term strategic planning. It is questionable to what extent

annual budgets¹⁴⁵ could encourage APCs to 'get on with things' (see above) without overly compromising their core principles of 'downward' accountability and inclusive decision making.

In the light of APCs' quest to find innovative and creative ways to elevate areas up through 'trial and error', the annual budgets are locally perceived as constraints that "increase the pressure to be innovative" (Interview APC 11). Already under the 1994-1999 OPLURD, when funding was based on a multi-annual budgeting system, APCs felt the pressure to spend funding, which had adverse effects on their potential to engage in mainstream policies (Turok, 2000). Moreover, a lack of support structures in some areas prevented meaningful engagement with statutory agencies. Still, in 1998, the Interdepartmental Task Force criticised APCs because they did not profoundly impact on mainstream programmes and national policy making processes; a criticism Turok (2000: 17) considers "slightly harsh"¹⁴⁶.

When interviewed, most respondents from APCs, ADM and some national experts made reference to key factors they consider crucial for establishing fruitful working relationships and being successful:

- the indigenous local social capital that can be mobilised by an APC;
- the overall resourcefulness and creativity of APCs
- the professionalism understood as (a) a way to run the organisation following to good practice and (b) a toolkit consisting of a variety of skills of core professionals and committed board members such as political skills, interpersonal skills, diplomacy, networking capacity and management skills;
- the ability to build up a 'high profile', a good reputation among relevant partners and to communicate success effectively; and
- the provision of tangible incentives for collaboration.

All this was reported to require quite complex and time-consuming steps (Section 4.4). These include an ongoing analysis of developments affecting the area and subsequent dialogue and co-operation with statutory agencies, local politicians, local partner organisations and the wider community. As a result of annual budgeting, APCs became subject to the same funding and budgetary constraints as government agencies. The research suggests that the shift to annual budgeting was expected to resolve what Minister Ó Cuiv, T.D. (FF) called 'a bonanza year' (Dáil Éireann 25/06/2003: no page numbers), but bears the potential of spending monies unwisely:

Last year we lost a fortune that we had held to carry over from the previous year. That will never happen again. But in doing so we probably end up buying

¹⁴⁵ Area Partnership Companies negotiated indicative multi-annual budgets with ADM for the remainder of the LDSIP: "This gave APCs a funding security for planning over a 3-year period" (Interview APC 11).

¹⁴⁶ In the meantime, reports and evaluations were published that refer to, and outline, successes of APCs in influencing mainstream policy and statutory service delivery in Ireland (Goodbody Economic Consultants 1999; NESF 1999; Turok 2001; Pobal 2006b; Eustace Patterson Limited 2006).

equipment and stuff you don't need because you are trying to get rid of the money (Interview APC 3b).

From the vantage point of funding projects based on a target-oriented and equality-based perspective (cf. Lloyd and Geraghty 2004), it is surprising that the decision-makers responsible for local development initiatives do not seem to take into account:

- international examples of efficiencies associated with successful mission-driven multi-annual funding in government (e.g. Osborne and Gaebler 1992);
- government statements concerning possibilities of introducing multi-annual budgeting into the sphere of local development such as in the 2000 *White Paper on a Framework for Supporting Voluntary Activity and for Developing the Relationship between the State and the Community and Voluntary Sector*:

The Government has decided that multi-annual funding commitments should, in appropriate cases, be made available by all funding agencies to organisations providing services or undertaking development activities that are agreed to be priorities, with the budget for each specific year to which the agreement applies to be reviewed in the light of the resources available and taking into account the legal position that the Dáil votes public monies on an annual basis (Government of Ireland 2000: 43);

- existing government practice in operating on multi-annual budgets in areas of capital funding such as transport infrastructure or the water services programme:

In the water services programme, DOE [Department of the Environment] will aim at a more devolved approach to the funding of projects, with local authorities being allocated block grants on a rolling three-year basis. This will give them greater discretion in setting priorities (DoELG 1996: 50, Section 5.17).

One of the chief concerns of APCs is to identify, jointly plan and source match-funding for actions meaningfully addressing symptoms of structural deficiencies that manifest in areas being recognised as poor or deprived. Respondents from APCs perceived the introduction of annual budgets in 2003 as highly disadvantageous because it was felt they could not limit their capacity in regard to the pursuit of their core objectives. Taking into consideration the identified target groups and variety of outreach activities addressed by APCs under the current local development programme¹⁴⁷, it is remarkable that arguments put forward in favour of the introduction of annual budgets for APCs do not take into consideration that:

- some statutory programmes and state-sponsored projects are allowed to operate on multi-annual funding; whereas
- under annualised budgets, targeted citizens and communities that are being labelled 'the most disadvantaged in the country' are being required to have the capacity to adjust their pace of development in accordance to what is the standard for professionals in public administration and the *established* corporatist community and voluntary sector.

¹⁴⁷ The LDSIP specifies measures and key groups that can be targeted by APCs using core funding allocated to them (ADM 2000). Some key target groups identified by APCs are travellers, ex-offenders, early school leavers, youth at risk, lone parents, the unemployed and the disabled.

6.3.3.3 The endorsement process

Since 2003, APC plans are required to be endorsed by the Dublin CDB before funding can be allocated from ADM (DoCRGA n.d.-a, 18/06/2003). The endorsement caused some confusion as to whom APCs are accountable. On the one hand, ADM is the national managing body administering the APC-type approach to local development on behalf of the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs. On the other hand, it is within the remit of the Dublin CDB to endorse APC plans. Policy directives are also influenced by the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (DoEHLG n.d.-a).

The basis for plan appraisal is the compliance with the 2002-2012 strategy of the Dublin CDB (see Section 6.2.2): *Dublin – a city of possibilities* (Dublin CDB 2002). APCs are obliged to comply with the endorsement process. There is little doubt that they have limited scope to resist endorsement (see Section 6.2.6). APCs are already accountable to target groups in their catchment area and a variety of statutory stakeholders, such as FÁS (one of the main funders of APCs through the Local Employment Service) for the delivery of contractually agreed bundles of customised services and initiatives. In addition, they had to get familiar with the changing situation of somehow being accountable to *two* masters: the CDB and – via ADM – the DoCRGA. Even though ADM sees themselves as the funding agency and, hence, the “ultimate master of Partnerships” (Interview ADM 5), the endorsement process delegates substantial decision-making capacity into the sphere of the CDB and local authorities. Policy documents reviewed and evidence gathered in the interviews manifest that changes in funding arrangements are part and parcel of integrative measures targeted at increasing control over funding and activities of state-funded APCs in Dublin with a view to aligning them closely with public administration via the CDB.

6.3.4 Summary

The provision of funding for APCs under the LDSIP was conditional on sufficient fiscal income of government and the compliance of APCs in regard to their incorporation into an overarching operational framework that put DCC-affiliated structures at its centre (see Section 6.2.3). APCs perceived the cutbacks that resulted from the change to an annual budgeting system in 2003 as a painful paradigmatic shift with profound implications for their future mode of operation. The new funding environment re-ordered the established practice of money management and made it compatible with budgeting practice in public administration. It was also established that reporting requirements stress the achievement of quantitative targets (cost-efficiency) and overly focuses on the financial management of funding received; efforts directed at capturing qualitative aspects of APC work are underdeveloped.

Especially after the phasing out of EU funding for APCs, the application of centrally-driven performance-oriented management principles into the mode of operation was

facilitated via a new funding dependency on the centre (Borscheid 2005). The change from multi-annual to annual budgeting made it more difficult for APCs to take risks, pursue innovative projects and tailor programmes and actions to meet the local realities that are characteristic of working with individuals and groups considered the most disadvantaged in Irish society. As a result APCs could fall into the trap of overly concentrating on delivering services – be it directly or through sub-contracting or brokerage – and becoming ‘procurement managers’ (cf. Oatley 1998b: 10).

Whilst state-funded APCs are contracted to ameliorate symptoms at local level of societal disintegration hand in hand with (or in partnership with) statutory service providers, no formal legislation, regulations or other incentives are in place that could foster a reciprocal working relationship. There is no enforceable arrangement in place that equally holds all relevant parties responsible for the success or failure of APCs. On the contrary, APCs are subject to a performance-oriented accountability and performance-monitoring system:

- that has been designed to measure success of individual APCs in achieving their targets in partnership with strategic partners from the public sector and civil society;
- that, in contrast, does not put into perspective the achievements of APCs (a) in comparison with (reciprocal) efforts, or commitments, made by relevant statutory stakeholders and strategic partners from civil society directed at collaborating with APCs or (b) in regard to different starting points such as quality of deprivation prevalent in the area, the availability of indigenous resources that can be utilised or the quality of the local networks and social infrastructure. (For example, the nature of deprivation and the scope to address certain issues considerably differs between inner-city areas, suburban neighbourhoods and rural areas.)

Contemporary monitoring and accountability practices struggle to mediate between promoting the ethos of social partnership and participative democracy, on the one hand, and the contemporary output-oriented contract culture with an emphasis on financial auditing and performance procedures, on the other. One example is the issue of double accountability of APCs. First, they are answerable to their funders. This is regulated through formal procedures that control the achievement of targets and assess the management of financial affairs. Second, they are accountable to the local community. The community, however, has relatively limited formal procedures at hand to hold APCs accountable, other than through board representation of elected representatives from the community. In relation to ensuring public accountability, the research findings suggest that little effort is directed at investigating how democratic representation ‘from below’ could be optimised in decision-making processes, whereas much attention is dedicated to service-delivery based output and financial accountability.

There is strong evidence that the design of accountability systems and reporting

requirements facilitates the institutionalisation of APCs. Tighter funding parameters limit the capacity of APCs to adjust their plans and operational model to the local realities and challenges within which they are situated. The analysis of the empirical data gathered for this study suggests that current funding arrangements and (political and financial) accountability criteria limit the capacity of APCs:

- to establish a local system that elevates accountability of the local community at a level that is on par with the of political sponsors of APCs;
- to prevent inverse-care scenarios and optimal use of scarce resources in accordance with their developmental brief and to promote local participatory democracy; and
- to play an innovative role in contributing to the creation of a more pluralistic model of governance.

The allocation of money to APCs is not mainly determined by the degree of deprivation of a particular area. Qualities like management skills, the capacity to produce good plans, a high profile and successful piloting of projects are additional key factors for the amount of resources allocated to localities 'managed' by APCs. Moreover, the indigenous assets in the form of social and economic capital that can be utilised by APCs are positively evaluated by ADM. This is not necessarily a bad thing because the consideration of those factors is likely to guarantee a better value for money; and the pool of resources for local development is limited. It cannot be denied, however, that people's need for support in different areas is independent of those factors. Therefore, the allocation of money according to informal 'extra-criteria' makes areas dependent on the quality of the APC as judged by the funding bodies. As a result, winning recognition is only marginally reliant on the demonstration of genuine and proactive input from individuals from the local community. It is rather dependent on the individual APC's professional capacity to adhere to reporting requirements, to highlight and market the level of disadvantage of 'their' area and, thereby, mobilise additional allies and resources.

6.4 Value for money and interpretations of success

The primary focus of traditional accountability and monitoring systems in public administration typically rested on preventing recipients of statutory funding from activities that might endanger the public purse or interest. The previous section illustrated accountability and monitoring framework for APCs. In the national context of governance restructuring, the review of government publications suggests that the focus on the efficient use of publicly funded programmes and activities must be seen in the context of public-sector modernisation and, more specifically, the objectives of the SMI and the rhetoric of value for money¹⁴⁸ (e.g. Clarke *et al.* 2000a; Boyle and Butler 2003; DoT 2004). Most respondents indicated that formal performance

¹⁴⁸ Throughout this study, Power's (1997) concept of value for money is deployed. In essence, according to Power, value for money consists of the triad of fiscal efficiency, outcome-oriented effectiveness and internal economies (see Chapter 1, Section 1.4.1, Table 1.1).

assessment of APCs under the LDSIP reflects the output-oriented ethos of public service delivery. When interviewed, public-sector officials and ADM professionals highlighted the contractual nature of funding allocated to APCs:

Partnerships should have a clear prescription of what has to be done and delivered. Partnerships should deliver a product, something that is tangible and that can be measured, and projects that can get mainstreamed (Interview DCC 3b).

In other words, funding for APCs is considered an investment into society that:

- has to be processed and allocated at minimal administrative or operational costs;
- has to yield measurable returns over a certain period of time; and
- has to demonstrate the capacity to impact positively on society (i.e. it pays a 'positive societal dividend').

The output-oriented focus for public expenditure is mirrored in the objectives of the Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General¹⁴⁹ whose mission is "to provide assurance that public money is properly administered and spent to good effect" (Comptroller and Auditor General n.d.-a: no page numbers). For this purpose, the Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General issues Value for Money Reports which:

[...] record the results of examinations into (a) the economy and efficiency with which State bodies acquire, use and dispose of resources (b) the systems, procedures and practices employed by State bodies for evaluating the effectiveness of their operations (Comptroller and Auditor General n.d.-b: no page numbers).

In the course of introducing these new managerial policies, the role of the citizen or, even more so, the 'taxpaying voter' as the end-user, client or customer of statutory services became re-defined. Government publications portray the taxpaying citizen as a stakeholder whose primary interest is to get better service delivery at lower costs (i.e. to minimise their tax burden) (DoT 2004). This interest is envisaged to be at least partly served by:

- creating a quality public service delivery that values a more approachable and receptive (or humane) relationship between the world of statutory administration and bureaucracy, on the one hand, and the citizen (often referred to as customer), on the other; and
- optimising the relationship between fiscal efficiency (output), effectiveness (outcomes) and good governance (economics) in the delivery of state-financed measures and services.

The introduction of business thinking into the public domain in Ireland has already been visible as an underlying theme in the re-structuring of the governance model in Dublin and its implications for funding arrangements for APCs (Section 6.3). Through the application of value-for-money principles, it is hoped to optimise the relationship

¹⁴⁹ The first VFM audit was published in 1994 on the EU-funded LEADER Programme in Ireland. The report already highlighted issue of duplication and institutional overlap in remit and activities (Comptroller and Auditor General 1994: 8, Point 10).

between input (money spent) and outcome (local impact assessment of services, programmes and/or actions implemented or initiated) of APC actions (see Chapter 1, Section 1.4.1).

Table 6.9: Value for Money indicators for APCs under the 1994-1999 OPLURD

Indicator	What it captures
Administrative Efficiency	If staffing levels, pay rates other administrative expenses are both reasonable and commensurate with the objectives and activities of a local development agency (Comptroller and Auditor General 2000: 8).
Co-ordination of Activities	If arrangements prevent the duplication of activities of different local development bodies in a geographic area.
Operational Efficiency	If the resources are appropriately used for the achievement of reported output levels (Comptroller and Auditor General 2000: 30).
Assessment of Impact made	If partnerships achieve their objectives and to what extent they make a wider contribution to local economic and social development (Comptroller and Auditor General 2000: 42); this is captured by means of qualitative (e.g. case studies) and quantitative (e.g. SCOPE) indicators.

Source: Comptroller and Auditor General (2000; cf. Comptroller and Auditor General 1994).

Table 6.9 above shows the principal value-for-money indicators the Comptroller and Auditor General applied for the assessment of state-funded local development initiatives under the OPLURD. It is argued that the concept of value for money increasingly governs the funding allocation to APCs that is mirrored in:

- the shift from multi-annual to annual budgeting in 2003 (Section 6.3.3);
- the promotion of competitive bidding processes for state-funding as practised for the selection process of new APCs under the (Chapter 2, Section 2.4) and the 2005 application process for cohesion funding provided by the Department for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs (Section 6.2.6);
- the focus on a minimisation of duplication and encouragement of efforts to increase the capacity for and the degree of collaboration with a variety of strategic partners (cf. Pobal, 2006):

The potential for duplication arises because the bodies commenced independently of each other and started at different times, have similar objectives and target overlapping populations, have separate local administrative structures, report to different Departments and are funded by different operational programmes (Comptroller and Auditor General 2000: 17);

- the call for improving output-oriented impact assessments as a tool for measuring social and economic change (e.g. Comptroller and Auditor General 2000);
- the introduction of audits that promote cost-efficient management of internal operations and compliance with good practice in company policies; and
- the language used, for example, when referring to beneficiaries of APC programmes as 'customers' (Ó Cuív 07/09/2006).

A new emphasis on value for money is illustrated by attempts to measure the success of APCs in achieving multi-agency collaboration (Pobal 2006a) (Section 6.4.1). Two additional phenomena could be identified that represent efforts to complement the traditionally efficiency-oriented performance monitoring: first, the launch of a value for money audit commissioned by the Department for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs (DoCRGA 2007) (Section 6.4.2). and, second, the promotion of good governance and accredited quality standards such as *Excellence Through People* and the *Q-mark* (Section 6.4.3).

6.4.1 From brokerage to collaboration

In February 2006, an ADM-initiated review was carried out. It was targeted at "examining the dynamics of partnership processes in local settings" (Pobal 2006a: 3) by means of eight case studies involving area-based and community partnerships¹⁵⁰. One looked at a project that aimed at developing agreeable guidelines of good practice between the state and the community sector with a view to facilitating collaboration. It concludes, however, "that the work has been hampered by key individuals. It would appear that this was due to people fearing the impact of such a process on relationships locally" (Pobal 2006a: 39). Another case study identified "a general lack of understanding and commitment to social-inclusion work amongst partner agencies" (*ibid.*: 38) as a blockage for an APC to establish a local employment services project.

The review identified good and bad practices that informed the development of three distinct models of collaboration: *the progressive, the co-operative and the conciliatory model*. The co-operative model represents the highest degree of collaboration, whereas the conciliatory model is ranked at the bottom of the scale (cf. Pobal 2006a: 26-27).

- the *progressive model* is considered the best because it indicates multi-stakeholder participation, concerted planning strategies and a shared responsibility for resourcing activities based on trust;
- the *co-operative model* stands for working arrangements where relations among stakeholders lead to mutually-agreed and jointly-planned actions but where levels of commitment and trust are less pronounced than in the progressive model;
- the *conciliatory model* describes a scenario with low levels of trust among stakeholders. They co-exist, share only few commonalities and only – if at all – interact sporadically and *ad hoc*.

Taking into account the variety of measures, activities and differences within designated areas and, furthermore, the variety of characteristics factored into the ranking of APC-type agencies, then it can be assumed that it is not likely that these distinct models do exist in their pure form (Pobal 2006a). Models that were developed

¹⁵⁰ The LDSIP provides core funding for 38 APCs, 2 Territorial Employment Pacts and 31 Community Partnerships (DoCRGA n.d.-c).

under previous local development programmes focus on the implementation-end of programmes (see Chapter 2, Section 2.3.2). The new models put much more emphasis on the capacity of state-funded APCs to build strong coalitions with partners with a view to encouraging institutional learning and joint planning. The models were developed within the framework of the Himmelman Model¹⁵¹:

The Himmelman Model [...] views collaboration as a process of exchanging information, altering activities, sharing resources, and enhancing the capacity of another for mutual benefit and to achieve a common purpose. It requires the application of sophisticated organisational linkages involving the sharing of risks, the development of shared visions, and the development of complex partnership relationships and processes (Pobal 2006a: 19).

The efficacy of strategic plans, operational procedures, policies and practices that mirror key principles of partnership, such as transparency in decision making, power-sharing and an outcome-orientation, are inextricably intertwined with the capacity of APCs to secure the involvement of committed senior (key) individuals and on other resource commitments from relevant stakeholders. The evidence from the empirical case study carried out in Dublin shows that the social capital of APCs (e.g. the degree of both seniority and commitment of their board members, the capacity of their staff and, more importantly, the skills of their CEO and chair person) plays a crucial role in determining the achievement of what McCarthy (1998: 46) described as one of the most important achievement of APCs: to exert "subtle influences on thinking and on the way in which mainstream programmes are delivered". McCarthy concludes, "We have to be fairly imaginative in finding ways of capturing that and a lot of effort has gone into defining indicators to help in evaluating the work of the Partnerships" (*ibid.*).

In this context, the new approach based on the Himmelman Model represents a timely effort to provide a qualitative performance-monitoring tool that supplements the existing evaluation systems in place¹⁵². Himmelman (2002: 1) explicitly highlights that achieving collaboration is based on "a common vision and purpose, meaningful power sharing, mutual learning, and mutual accountability for results". However, reflecting on the philosophy of the Himmelman Model, it seems somehow methodologically unsound to measure and rank the performance of APCs on a scale based on their capacity to forge collaborations without explicitly taking into account *and* accurately measuring the impact external variables have on success and failure. Changes in the local environment, at policy level, or within the institutional arrangements that are beyond the control of APC-type agencies are likely to impact on their capacity to adhere to what, according to the Himmelman Model, would be considered good practice.

¹⁵¹ The Himmelman Model is applied to measure the degree of collaboration between parties and stakeholders. It is based on a continuum indicating a growing intensity of working together beginning with networking, followed by co-ordination, co-operation and collaboration (Himmelman 2002).

¹⁵² ADM uses financial reports and case studies outlined in annual reports of APCs as well as a mechanism called SCOPE (quarterly throughput of achievements) to evaluate progress of APCs. Scope stands for Systems for Co-ordinated Programme Evaluation.

Moreover, the intricacies associated with the informal nature of building alliances among a variety of stakeholders makes it generally difficult for APCs to get to a stage of achieving meaningful participation and collaboration (see Section 6.3.2). The interviews generally indicated that collaboration usually overly depends on the ability of APCs to convince key individuals from relevant stakeholders to commit themselves to a collaborative relationship with the APC. As argued, the performance of statutory agencies and other groupings with a responsibility for either welfare-related service delivery or social-inclusion work needs to be equally encouraged and assessed to seek collaborative engagement with APCs at local level in a pro-active fashion. If not, it is highly unlikely that the proposed approach of measuring working in partnership will make a meaningful contribution in regard to ranking or assessing APCs based on the extent to which they succeed in establishing collaborative relationships.

6.4.2 Another value for money audit: assessing value added?

In early 2007, the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs invited tender documents with a view to carrying out a value for money review of the LDSIP. The review is part of the *Value for Money and Policy Review Process*, which “is one of a range of modernisation initiatives aimed at moving public-sector management away from the traditional focus on inputs to concentrate more on the achievement of results” (DoCRGA 2007: 2). A proposed *Expenditure Review Initiative* was introduced in 1997 and “has since undergone a number of reforms to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the process. Ongoing policy evaluation and value for money (VFM) assessment is essential to proper prioritisation of public resource allocations” (*ibid.*).

Expenditure reviews are enacted through legislation and focus on “the achievement of economy, efficiency and effectiveness” (*ibid.*). Interestingly – like other publications published following the ethos of the SMI – the terminology used in the document is not elucidated. For example, the term *efficiency* is not explicitly defined other than being somehow related to overall costs and staffing resources. In the terms of reference, *effectiveness* loosely refers to the way LDSIP objectives are achieved (cf. DoCRGA 2007: 6). Moreover, consultants are asked to ascertain “the outputs, outcomes and impacts of the LDSIP and assess their contribution to the achievements of the Department’s objectives in respect to the LDSIP” (*ibid.*). This is a difficult task since the tender document does not make any reference as to how the terms ‘outputs’, ‘outcomes’ and ‘impacts’ are defined. The language and terminology is reminiscent of Power’s (1997) concept of VFM but does not set clear parameters for classifying effectiveness, efficiency and economics (see Chapter 1, Section 1.4.1, Table 1.1).

Policy documents and guidelines that address issues related to *Better Local Government* (DoELG 1996) or *Regulating Better* (DoT 2004) are usually garnished with expressions borrowed from business jargon, such as ‘competitiveness’, ‘value for money’, ‘efficiency’, ‘effectiveness’, ‘innovation’, ‘quality services’, ‘customer’ or ‘client’, often without any further explanation of how these terms are actually defined in the

respective context. Furthermore, quite complex terms such as 'value for money', 'effectiveness' and 'efficiency' seem to be regularly used interchangeably, as if any differences in content and relationships between those terms could be rendered unnecessary (DoELG 1996, 1998, 1999a, 2000; ADM 2000; Dublin CDB 2002; NESG 2002a; DoT 2004; DoCRGA 2007).

Given the stated importance of VFM reviews it is surprising that the definition of concepts is not clarified in the terms and conditions outlining the task to consultants. In this light, the value of a VFM audit is questionable as the interpretation of terms and concepts appears to be left to the value system and/or imagination of the consultants. In other words, the evaluation as such will violate at least two criteria of empirical research (Diekmann 1995), namely:

- criteria of *objectivity* as different researchers will have different concepts of effectiveness, efficiency and economy; i.e. the evaluation cannot be validated by others as key indicators are open to interpretation;
- the principle of *content validity* because that, which is measured, is likely not to represent what is intended to be measured.

Therefore, the results of the VFM audit will not be *reliable* and, ironically, the audit will not represent value for money *per se*.

There seems to be a mismatch between the existing practice of measuring VFM according to pre-defined categories and individual perceptions concerning the activities that should be represented by, or included in, the former. For example, Table 6.9 (see further above) highlights findings of the *Value for Money Report 31: Local Development Initiatives* (Comptroller and Auditor General 2000). The report suggests that performance measures and indicators that had been applied to monitor efficiency and effectiveness during the 1994-1999 Local Development Programme (i.e. the OPLURD) could not fully measure impacts made by local development initiatives (*ibid.*: 3). Respondents' explanations as to what they consider 'added value' underscore the difficulties in designing performance indicators for measuring a complex concept. One of the national experts, when interviewed, summarised the concept of value for money as follows:

There are three principle sources of value added. First, they [APCs] need to offer local knowledge and insight. They need to offer a perspective that is intelligible to official actors and social partners looking from the outside in. So they need to offer a resource for understanding for what works and what doesn't. Second, they need to have local legitimacy; that is support from within the community. And finally, it is important to have synergy. Synergy is defined as the capacity to nominally or formally separate services and link them together at the point of delivery in a way that is almost impossible for external bodies to do. They need to have a proper impact that is holistic, that is responsive to local needs, and that is likely to be more effective and cost-effective as well (Interview NE 6).

It was acknowledged among respondents that the value of APCs lies in their competitive advantage over traditional statutory approaches to addressing local disadvantage and social exclusion. Their strength lies in "offering a unique perspective

or unique capacity that bureaucratic government bodies could not offer” (Interview NE 6) or “coming up with new ideas that are not in the thought processes of public servants” (Interview LV 3).

6.4.3 Internal Economies: the professionalisation of APCs

Under the 2000-2006 local development programme (i.e. the LDSIP) a stronger emphasis on the optimisation of the internal economies of APCs can be observed¹⁵³. In the context of this study the term ‘internal economies’ refers to operational mechanisms and procedures governing the work of an APC: to minimise bureaucracy and administrative deadweight and, ultimately, to avoid sub-optimal use of funding received.

The analysis of the interviews already pointed out that the performance evaluation of APCs by their political sponsors is based on two sets of indicators: a set of formal parameters and an additional set of extra-criteria, which, together, measure the capacity of an APC to implement their programme of activities against contractually-defined *ex-ante* targets (see Section 6.3.1, Table 6.7). The implicit categorisation of ‘good APCs’ as ‘high-profile’ organisations (see Section 6.3.2) indicates that it is increasingly important to funders that APCs not only comply with guidelines and reporting requirements (Interview ADM 3), but also professionalise their governance structures (Interview ADM 2; Interview DCC 7) and build up an image of reliability and social entrepreneurialism (Interview NE 6). More specifically, APC are required to optimise their practice in areas such as human resource management, recruitment of staff, administration and financial controlling, use of information technology and self-evaluation mechanisms (Interview NE 1a; Interview APC 11 and APC 12):

Now we spend more and more time in reporting to different people and there is more need for self-analysis to demonstrate that we have proper structures in place and so on (Interview APC 11).

APCs are cognisant that they are subject to a value system that assesses their operational capacity. One respondent from Ballyfermot Partnership referred to managerial problems in the past that illustrate that the professional running of the organisation is considered a precondition for being acknowledged as an eligible recipient of funding:

We had everything that you would expect from an unorganised voluntary group but nothing you would not expect from a Partnership – like our manager and the whole structure was reasonably well-paid and the people around the table were of reasonable seniority so that their time and their efforts was very valuable. And that valuable energy that they had was not being channelled into the right thing. It was all the time reaction, difficulties and problems as they arose and the difficulties arose from very, very poor management of the structure. You know, that couldn’t continue. You were on the slippery slope. People ain’t going to fund you then (Interview APC 3a).

¹⁵³ The guidelines for the OPLURD already outline a procedure for self-evaluation (ADM 1995) such as the performance measurement of staff.

When asked about the characteristics of what they would consider a successful APC, most respondents mentioned managerial competencies – such as money management, strategic organisational development and effective leadership – and a professional attitude towards their funders – such as compliance with contractual criteria. The new managerial ethos and its implications for the allocation of funding encourage APCs to acquire a business-like 'professional structure' and skills base, which should signal credence to potential funders. Acknowledging the importance of being perceived as 'high-profile' and, hence, professional organisation, APCs have started to undergo assessments that were initially developed for the private sector, such as the *Excellence Through People Award*, a national human resource management standard (see Table 6.10 below):

Excellence Through People is the national human resource management standard. It has been welcomed and supported by employers, their staff, trade unions and government. All types of organisations are eligible for Excellence Through People including manufacturing and service companies, the Voluntary Sector and the Public Sector. In response to feedback from existing customers we have reviewed and updated the standard to accommodate the increasing pace of change within the Human Resources and Business Environment (FÁS n.d.: no page numbers);

and the *Q-mark* (a management tool to facilitate best business practice):

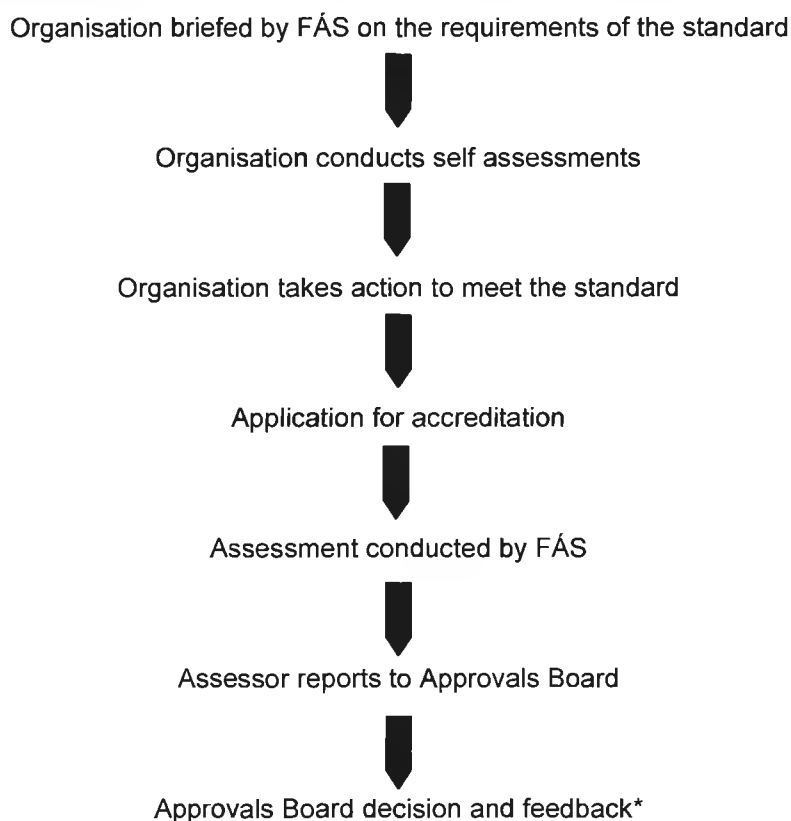
The Q-Mark is a well-known brand in Ireland, which shows both customers and suppliers that a business is serious about providing quality services and products. The Q-Mark not only sends out the right signals to your market (enabling you to attract more customers) – it also equips you with the skills, tools and management methodology to improve everything you do. The Q-Mark is a structured framework in management best practices relevant to all aspects of your business. From improving customer satisfaction levels, to setting and achieving goals and strategy, to managing your people – the Q-Mark provides a structured framework for ensuring that you are managing what matters, and that will ensure that your business succeeds (EIQA n.d.: no page numbers).

The objective of these assessments is to increase organisational competitiveness through promoting investments in people skills. For example, the key objectives of *Excellence Through People* (ETP) are to, first, "act as a business improvement tool as well as being a driver for change and innovation" and, second, "to promote employee learning, development and involvement in line with the organisation's goals" (FÁS n.d.: no page numbers). Table 6.10 outlines the application process. It is interesting to note that the community and voluntary sector is not represented on the Board (10 members) assessing the applications from APCs and other organisations from the sector (see Appendix 1, Table A-1.5).

These performance standards indicate a shift from external to internal audit practices and a culture of self-evaluation that are controlled by external 'independent' experts (both measures are FÁS-accredited). Organisational performance monitoring follows procedures that usually consists of the following main elements: first, a diagnosis of the *status quo* through external independent checks that are facilitated by self-monitoring; second, training in accordance with agreed standards to improve the performance in running the organisation; and, third, accreditation that signals a certain

quality of internal economies to public funders. The latter possibly encouraged some APCs to apply for new quality assessments and organisational performance audits under the LDSIP, even though the time and resource commitment of these measures are perceived to be quite demanding.

Table 6.10: Process of accreditation for *Excellence Through People*



Note: *There is no representation from the Community and Voluntary Sector on the Board (10 members) that assesses the applications (Appendix 1, Table A-1.5).

Source: Adapted from FÁS Website (accessed on 17/02/2007 at <http://www.fas.ie/etp/revise/index.html#whatis>).

The establishment of corporate structures in the local-development sector reflects wider trends of reforming public administration (see Chapter 1, Section 1.4). The analysis of the empirical material suggests that the focus on internal economies – as part of the triad making up the concept of value for money (Power 1997) – encourages the introduction of a new professional ethos that is penetrating the practice of APC-type agencies and that requires an inculcation in staff of intra-organisational core values. The current accreditation processes for *Excellence Through People* and the *Q-mark* indicate that this is facilitated by an emerging cadre of specialists who are contracted to administer and enforce standards of accountability and, ultimately, to step up the performance of APCs.

6.4.4 Measuring the measurable

Section 6.3 highlighted existing tensions and trade-offs between fiscal efficiency (output) and effectiveness (outcome) in monitoring performance of APCs. The interviews indicate that VFM-principles are increasingly relevant but do not seem to be optimally tailored to capture what they have been designed for (Section 4.4.2). APC professionals and local community workers felt that measurable outputs take priority over qualitative aspects of their work. Even though the latter are considered equally important, they are not necessarily captured by funders as value added and, therefore, are not treated on par with quantitative aspects of local development and community work. APC professionals would like to see more adequate measures of capturing their performance that take into account procedural activities in a methodological way (Interviews APC 2b and APC 11). Criticism of the existing accountability system in terms of measuring value added is not limited to local practitioners or APC professionals. One senior official interviewed got particularly upset about the existing way of measuring value for money:

Efficiency is a cakewalk. So you spent a million last year and your books are in order? So bloody what? But how much value did you add? What did you achieve? Who is better off? What was the impact of what you did? Negative, positive or neutral? Negative? OK. So what did we learn from that so we don't make same mistakes again? Positive? All right, so how can we add value to the success? We spend money with evaluations. All these bloody consultants spend huge money on evaluation. But we are ultimately failing to achieve proper, decent management systems whereby good decision making is achieved. We should put it all through the tests in advance, get it right as can be, implement it effectively, and then evaluate. All the financial indicators or the output indicators tell you nothing – I can double the output tomorrow morning but I will achieve that by reducing the quality. But it needs quality, quality, quality! (Interview NE 1b).

Irrespective of efforts to capture qualitative aspects of social-inclusion work (Pobal 2006a), performance monitoring is felt to be biased towards the measurement of short-term actions and fiscal efficiency; i.e. it puts much emphasis on the investment of resources into actions that can quickly produce tangible and measurable output. Those who are subject to monitoring feel that the focus on output-orientation limits the possibility of achieving intended long-term objectives of actions that are rather complex, multi-dimensional and, hence, may be considered less quantifiable or measurable.

So far, evidence presented in this study suggests that the amount of funding allocated to an APC is not only dependent on the population size, the quality of the action plan or the degree of deprivation of an area (as measured by common statistical indicators); it is equally influenced by the capacity of an APC to deliver on contractual agreements, and to meet extra-criteria, considered relevant by their funders (Section 4.3.2). As a result of being subject to an output-oriented accountability culture that primarily assesses performance against certain standards (e.g. *ex-ante* targets), APCs can be tempted to adapt to monitoring practices by tailoring actions to meet the prevailing logic of evaluation, which effectively is based on a philosophy of measuring the measurable. In short, the empirical data indicates that the new funding mechanism

for APCs bears the danger of risk-avoidance and playing it safe. As a result, APCs are in a dilemma. They are overly drawn into administrative procedures and auditing processes, thus undermining their capacity to experiment. As a result, APCs could adopt risk-averse strategies:

It's like quality control in a factory. Very often one is happy when there's no production going out the door because one knows there can be no faulty goods going out. The problem is that the production has stopped as well (Interview APC 7b).

One could imagine that despite efforts to capture qualitative work through case studies and annual reports, APCs could be easily seduced into developing a 'tunnel vision' of producing outputs for their paymasters because in managerial reporting requirements "less measurable qualitative objectives such as business confidence and community development are downgraded" (Hambleton 1998: 73). The information obtained in the course of the interviews confirms that the introduction of annual budgets for APCs – and the implicit threat of money being re-allocated if not spent in accordance with contractually agreed time frames and parameters – has a profound impact on local policy implementation. The funding mechanism for APCs is structured in a way that gives preferential treatment to projects that are likely to have a quick pay-off (Bartley and Borscheid 2003) and can result in the transformation of local measures into 'pet projects'¹⁵⁴. In both cases, genuine bottom-up participation from within communities is potentially undermined.

6.4.5 Value for Money: interpretations

The analysis of the empirical material suggests that the value for money added by APCs is – to a varying degree – dependent on:

- their capacity to target what, according to the guidelines, are considered the most disadvantaged members of society (i.e. to ameliorate poverty – mainly through facilitating the transition of individuals into work or training);
- their potential to be innovative and flexible in addressing issues. This implies a capacity to take risks (i.e. produce both success and failures and demonstrate reasons for why things worked and some did not);
- their ability to deliver tangible outputs in a cost-effective way (e.g. facilitate the progression of individuals into training, education or employment);
- the provision of a space for dialogue that encourages working in partnership with key stakeholders (facilitate co-operation and collaboration);
- their management capacity, first, to administer funding received according to the contractual agreement and, second, to comply with procedural monitoring and evaluation arrangements;
- the 'calibre' of their CEO, their staff and their chair person;

¹⁵⁴ One respondent defined pet projects as projects that are both funded and entirely led by the local APC with little involvement from the community so they achieve the objectives originally set (Borscheid 2001, interview with APC Board Member on 26/07/2000).

- the amount of matching funding levered (e.g. getting mainly statutory bodies to bring additional resources to the table that would have been invested elsewhere without the intervention of a Partnership); and
- the degree to which structures in place allow for genuine grassroots participation from the community.

The interviews also pointed out cross-sectoral variations in relation to the perception of success and the interpretation of the concept of VFM. The following sections serve to illustrate different viewpoints in relation to what respondents from different institutional and professional backgrounds consider a successful APC:

- Section 6.4.5.1 Expectations to become an agent of the state focuses on views of government officials and senior civil servants;
- Section 6.4.5.2 Expectations to be a 'rebellious servant' outlines priorities of ADM professionals;
- Section 6.4.5.3 Expectations to become a catalyst for change focuses on reflections of APC professionals and board members on their role and potential; and
- Section 6.4.5.4 Expectations to be listened to addresses observations made by local activists and community workers.

6.4.5.1 Expectations to be an agent of the state

National experts (i.e. interviewees that are or have been involved in policy-making at central level) and some respondents from Dublin City Council (DCC) stress that APCs need to primarily remain meaningful to the political sponsors. A view frequently expressed within this group is that APCs should focus on their strengths of being flexible, innovative and creative. The key role for APCs is seen in:

- promoting economic development opportunities, progressing individuals into work and encouraging enterprise set-ups;
- the identification of gaps in statutory service delivery and their ability to develop innovative models for addressing those gaps;
- “empowering communities to engage in dialogue with local authorities and to build the capacity of people to help themselves getting back into the mainstream” (Interview DCC 8)¹⁵⁵;
- being a hub between communities and local government:
 - Communities are quite uncomfortable in cooperating with formal local government institutions whereas they work with Partnerships. And that's added value (Interview NE 6);
- credible commitment from relevant statutory bodies and/or interest groups that, had it not been for the role of the APCs, would neither have channelled funding into designated disadvantaged areas nor agreed on co-operating with one another;

¹⁵⁵ This implies that the lack of communication between the local authorities and the community and, moreover, it is the community that is somehow dysfunctional and needs to be facilitated to engage with local authorities and the Dublin CDB and not vice versa.

- creating synergies between local stakeholders with a view to eliminating perceived duplication among state-funded local development programmes; and
- stimulating a professionalisation of state-funded local social-inclusion services provided by a variety of local groups.

Creativity and innovation in devising local interventions that address issues related to social exclusion and poverty is regarded as the foundation stone for building working relationships with both statutory funding partners and for mobilising support locally. One respondent explained that APCs are expected to have "a strong entrepreneurial dimension of social service provision [...] but not in a sense of greater viability or financial security. It's about being creative in addressing needs of communities across the full circumference" (Interview NE 6). It was also acknowledged that APC's potential for success is dependent on their capacity to form an alliance with both stakeholders from the community and with relevant statutory agencies:

You need the local individuals on board but if you do not have the government departments and agencies committed to it, then it's an uphill struggle (Interview NE 5a).

The scope of APCs for developing innovative actions on the ground is largely perceived to be dependent on the support from statutory bodies with a stake in local development issues. Therefore, APCs are advised to 'be smart' (Interview NE 6; also Interview ADM 1). Since government departments and agencies are not mandated to collaborate with and/or financially support APCs, the latter are advised not to 'rub them up the wrong way' and, instead, to develop a diplomatic strategy towards engaging with their potential funders that facilitates the establishment of reciprocal relationships. For example, it transpired that government departments do not accept criticism from APCs directed at operational practices of the state. APCs that blame systemic blockages or government practice for preventing the timely implementation of projects are frowned upon and likely to get into the 'black book' of their funders.

Interviews with government officials revealed that APCs that do not meet the expectations of their funders usually are those considered lacking the management capacity for strategic planning. Effective management structures are considered a prerequisite for maximising the impact of resources in terms of "concentrating more on output in terms of getting the services delivered to the socially excluded" (Interview NE 2). One government official argued that all APCs face similar challenges because they operate under the same administration and the same legal framework but that "some Partnerships are successful, some are not" (Interview NE 6). This implies that it is the limited capacity of individual APCs, rather than systemic blockages, that decide over success or failure in achieving objectives.

In the grand scheme of governance, public officials and senior civil servants see APCs as an instrument that should facilitate the government policy directed at improving efficient service delivery into designated disadvantaged areas. In this context,

additional value of APCs is seen in their potential to act as an institutional vehicle that provides an acceptable local platform for addressing centrally-identified societal problems through interagency collaboration between statutory agencies, social partners, local public representatives and interest groups from the local community. So, besides playing a role in supplementing statutory efforts to deliver services into disadvantaged neighbourhoods, APCs also fulfil the function of providing a tolerable interface for dialogue between civil society and the state.

6.4.5.2 Expectations to be a 'rebellious servant'

ADM professionals acknowledge that compliance with existing accountability and monitoring procedures requires substantial efforts from APCs. It was remarked that "we increasingly live in a compliance culture where audits and reporting is big time" (Interview ADM 5). Compliance with obligatory reporting and monitoring mechanisms and is positively acknowledged in future funding allocations (or cutbacks):

Because the overall budget was decreased substantially, it meant that the question was not, "Are we going to give more money to the good ones and less to the bad ones?" The question was, "Are we going to give less money of that cut to the good ones and more of the cut to the less successful ones?" And that's what ADM did this year. So we took that into account where projects had performed very well. And they related the Partnerships and Community Groups on a scale. And those who did better got less of a cut than those who did not perform very well (Interview ADM 3).

From a procedural perspective, interview responses from ADM staff highlight that successful APCs must be first and foremost compliant with accountability criteria and, furthermore, demonstrate their achievements against the objectives outlined in their programme of activities:

Partnerships are good Partnerships if they can demonstrate the ability to co-operate with us, to meet the needs of the funding body and deliver on the project so that it is a trouble-free and pleasant experience (Interview ADM 2).

APCs are expected to use the funding for intended purposes, to meet *ex ante* targets of submitted action plans, to comply with contractual agreements in terms of reporting and accountability processes and to develop projects that could improve the delivery of statutory services in their area (see Section 6.3). At the same time ADM professionals equally stress that reporting requirements must not prevent APCs (a) from flexibly responding to opportunities and obstacles arising at different stages of project development, (b) from focussing on their work with identified target groups and (c) from taking risks:

If Partnerships become risk-adverse and make safe decisions the programme ceases to meet the objectives it was set up for and becomes less effective (Interview ADM 5).

Interviews with ADM professionals suggested that APCs tend to copy one another's approaches rather than investing efforts directed at developing their potential as advocates for social change. They suggested that ADM perceives a lack of innovation as a failure of APCs in fulfilling their role as catalysts for change. In this context, one

respondent also critically reflected on the role and responsibility of ADM and acknowledged that the focus of ADM had long been on monitoring expenditure of APCs and on ensuring their compliance with the contractual agreements in place but remarked that “ADM actually never went in and said, ‘Could we provide you with some additional skills training because you might be able to think more strategically?’” (Interview ADM 1). This excerpt from the interview material indicates that the reason for failure of APCs is assumed to be rooted in lacking managerial capacity rather than in the nature of the institutional environment within which APCs operate. In the course of the LDSIP, ADM planned to adopt a more enabling role to facilitate the work of APCs and focused on the development of strategic supports for APCs. For example, ADM professionals¹⁵⁶ pointed out that it is crucially important for APCs to have good governance structures in place. Accordingly, the role of the liaison officer became re-defined towards facilitating ‘good governance’ within APCs so as to ensure that the costs of intra-institutional ‘frictional loss’, which might negatively impact on the APC’s delivery of agreed programmes, is minimised (Lloyd and Kennedy 2003).

Another aspect that was regarded a crucially important determinant for recognition of APCs as a ‘good organisation’ is their awareness of the following tacit agreement: that they are well-advised to remain moderate in claiming responsibility for any successful project. Even though it was reported that APCs are often instrumental in creating reciprocal relationships with local statutory agencies, they are expected to be extremely diplomatic. For example, APCs should not to claim responsibility for local successes (no matter how important their input might have been) if that takes kudos from the main financial sponsor of the initiative (no matter how little input – apart from funding – the latter might have contributed to the project):

Partnerships need to give the credit to the funder, which is a very amenable and collaborative way of doing the business. So they have to be collaborative and meet the needs of the funding body and deliver on the project. FÁS, for example, would be more interested in interacting with organisations – and I’m a bit cynical now – who are able to deliver projects for them in such a way that they are FÁS projects (Interview ADM 3).

As a result, APCs are in a dilemma. On the one hand, they are required to promote their achievements in order to build up a good reputation and, thereby, maximise the potential for utilisation of core funding to lever additional resources into the area and work through a multi-stakeholder model based on the principles of partnership and collaboration. On the other hand, they are in a difficult situation because they cannot openly claim due credit for achievements and actions. However, success could still be favourably registered as ‘value added’ – even if it might not be appropriately captured by existing *formal* performance-monitoring systems. Following an analysis of the interviews conducted with ADM staff, successful APCs are required to:

- be diplomatic and strategic because APCs are expected constructively to challenge potential funders, whilst retaining a good working relationship;

¹⁵⁶ See Table 6.7 and Table 6.8.

- be able to get 'buy in' from local politicians and government on behalf of the local community in a way that balances interests and retains relationships;
- meet *ex ante* targets and ensure timely project delivery that ADM expects of APCs;
- free extra resources to match core funding received; and
- retain a risk-friendly approach to project development, which is rooted in genuine grassroots involvement.

6.4.5.3 Expectations to become a catalyst for change

When interviewed, ADM professionals criticised the performance of Ballyfermot Partnership on the grounds of a perceived lack of a methodological approach in regard to (a) plan implementation and (b) the absence of collaboration in their relationships with other local agencies. Also, the core funding was not thought to be strategically used to lever additional funding from other sources. Respondents from ADM and the local community workers felt that the local APC largely acted as disbursement agency that donated funding to small projects. Community workers claimed that the APC does not focus on most disadvantaged areas and, instead, engaged with "people who knew about Partnership and who had capacity to benefit from Partnership funding [...]" and that it was perceived as a 'closed shop' of insiders because "[...] it's so hard for other people to get" in (Interview LV 2). In other words, particular interest from well-informed individuals and *established* groups from the community took precedence over wider developmental aspects. Ballyfermot Partnership was aware of its role as a local grant-giving body and implicit adverse outcomes:

The Partnership is perceived as funding mechanism by community groups. At first we spent money as an extension of the dole. We handed out money to the groups. People who knew what was going on came for funding with a big spoon and the same people would be getting assistance all the time. People at the bottom of the pile who needed support more than anybody else were left behind. This has changed. We are not handing money out anymore. So we have more control and can make investments into capacity building of community groups to overcome the dependency culture. We are leaving skills behind (Interview APC 6).

In 2002, Ballyfermot Partnership, under a new leadership, initiated a review process with a view to strengthening the company's "overall capacity and effectiveness" (Ballyfermot Partnership 2004: 2). APCs generally recognise the obligation of meeting expectations in regard to their legal responsibilities that are associated with being recipients of state funding for earmarked purposes. Issues concerning the administration of the budget, staff management and the compliance with financial control and reporting requirements are high on the agenda (see Section 6.4.3, quotation from Interview APC 3a). Ballyfermot Partnership was also cognisant that leveraging extra funding is pivotal in being perceived as successful and relevant organisation by their funders:

Core funding must be matched. Some Partnerships can even get up to two to three times of the LDSIP core funding they get. And those would be considered good Partnerships (Interview APC 9b).

The review that was carried out in response to perceived organisational weaknesses, stresses the company's focus on keeping records of progress made through internal performance-monitoring procedures and was meant to "get the house in order" (APC Interview 4a):

This review culminated in a report by our current chairperson and has led subsequently to the establishment of new committees to review our strategies and programmes of activity, the development of new reporting procedures for recipients of funds from the Partnership, and the strengthening of our capacity to engage in monitoring and evaluation through the engagement of a monitoring and evaluation officer (Ballyfermot Partnership 2004: 2)

The implementation of changes towards a more strategic and concerted approach is largely attributed to the new leadership of the company. Respondents from ADM, local community workers and board members of the Ballyfermot Partnership praised the achievements of the new chair person and the new manager that came on board early into the LDSIP. Following the internal review of the organisational governance model, Ballyfermot Partnership started focusing on a more strategic, effective and needs-centred approach to addressing disadvantage in Ballyfermot.

The issue of directly funding third parties was re-assessed and a decision was made that core funding would not be utilised to core-fund established projects that "are actually seeking funding to maintain themselves rather than to develop new ideas" (Interview APC 2a). Under the new strategy, the provision of developmental support and a focus on assessing the potential for new ideas and projects became central to the work of the APC. During a focus group meeting with APC staff, it was reported that the development of closer relationships with statutory players and actors from the local community and voluntary sector is high on the agenda of the Ballyfermot Partnership. At the time of the empirical research, the Ballyfermot Partnership planned to set up an independent co-ordinating body. This community platform was envisaged to act on behalf of local organisations, groups and residents and to meet regularly and discuss developments and project ideas with a view to mediating between conflicting interests, encourage co-operation on mutual interests and identify development opportunities (Interview APC 8). This was considered a leap forward in relation to the potential for creating inter-agency synergies: it was hoped that a multi-stakeholder platform with an interest in the development of the community in Ballyfermot¹⁵⁷ would induce collaborative work relationships and possibilities for a more effective use of resources (Interview APC 8).

¹⁵⁷ The new strategic objectives were couched in the same language used in public-sector publications without elaborating on or clarifying on the jargon; for example the text makes reference to the company's objective (Ballyfermot Partnership 2004):

- "to strengthen our overall capacity and effectiveness" (3);
- to develop more "collaborative working arrangements" (4);
- to move from "a funding and brokerage role to a more developmental role based on facilitating the emergence and consolidation of inter-organisational structures in the form of networks and task forces that have the capacity to more strategically address each of these issues and to facilitate and support the sustainability of these structures" (16);
- to put a "greater emphasis on facilitating the development of effective local structures and processes to address the key priority issues" (17).

Ballyfermot Partnership also focused on the co-operation between other APCs in Dublin South Central and the key agencies resourcing community initiatives. Interviews with APC professionals and local DCC professionals revealed that a variety of local agencies such as the Ballyfermot Partnership, the Drugs Task Force, Dublin City Council, URBAN 2 and Community Development Projects had established co-operative relationships among one another with a view to creating local efficiencies in allocating funding into the community¹⁵⁸. In addition, it was highlighted that good working relationship with key statutory agencies operating in Ballyfermot such as FÁS, the Health Service Executive, the Department of Social and Family Affairs, the Department of Education and Children and – at a different level – the CDB already existed. Finally, the Ballyfermot Partnership had plans to invite four new community members from LDSIP target groups on their board, increasing the number of community representatives to 12¹⁵⁹.

Generally, APC Ballyfermot was aware of the importance of delivering tangible results as it signals value to both political funders and the community. For example, when interviewed, professionals and board members of Ballyfermot Partnership stress that their task is to develop and test the waters for new groups, projects and policies with a view “to creating better services” (Interview APC 7a), “leaving good structures behind” (Interview APC 8)”, and “to prevent duplicating of what others are doing” (Interview APC 6). According to APC professionals, the change in strategy was considered pivotal in terms of:

- encouraging co-operation between schools to develop a coordinated approach to addressing educational underachievement;
- promoting a joint strategy on childcare involving neighbouring APCs;
- offering a more inclusive approach to community involvement in decision-making procedures; and
- developing a reporting system that captures the work of the APC and that is complementary to the monitoring requirements of ADM (which was perceived as prioritised reporting on numbers and, consequently, not considered capable of adequately accounting for efforts invested into building coalitions with partners).

Against the backdrop of a new strategic agenda, professionals from Ballyfermot Partnership and affiliated respondents see the biggest value of their work in creating informal relationships with various stakeholders that can bring ‘enabling’ resources to the table. The interview material underscores that the reporting system which is meant to capture ‘value added’ of APCs is geared towards measuring facts and figures (see Section 6.3.1, Table 6.7). It is criticised that value for money criteria completely ignore

¹⁵⁸ The availability of URBAN 2 funding of € 11.42 million was reported a major incentive for the collaboration between the Ballyfermot Partnership and the URBAN 2 initiative (Interviews APC 4a and APC 3b; Interview DCC 6).

¹⁵⁹ The Ballyfermot Area Action Co-op, a local community organisation that has been instrumental in establishing the Ballyfermot Partnership in the mid-1990, is allocated 8 seats (community representatives) on the APC board (2 for each of the 4 neighbourhoods: Lower Ballyfermot, Middle Ballyfermot, Upper Ballyfermot, Cherry Orchard).

realities within which APCs have to operate. The Ballyfermot Partnership stated that they invest considerable time and resources into nurturing informal relationships with key individuals, without which certain projects would not be realisable. In the absence of a workable formal mechanism to get 'buy in' from what are considered key players, the success of lobbying and networking is entirely dependent on the personal capacity of APC professionals and board members to identify and convince allies, mostly within statutory agencies, to engage with them at a strategic level.

This experience is reflected and confirmed by professionals' views from other APCs in Dublin. In regard to recruiting board members, for example, APC professionals felt that board members from statutory agencies are often of low rank and, hence, not equipped with decision-making capacity to sign off on proposals discussed at board meetings. Even if there are individuals that could take decisions at board level, it is reported that time and again limited commitment and/or understanding of the local partnership process impedes further action on issues discussed at board level. APC respondents (both professionals and board members) referred to those individuals as 'Bums on seats' or 'Passengers' to indicate low levels of commitment. Therefore, the degree to which meaningful feedback between appointed representatives and their parent organisations can be practised is not necessarily optimal. Respondents working for APCs report that relationships take priority over structure:

Actually relationships are the key of everything. You can make the most incredible, get the most incredible achievements working with an organisation if you've a good relationship with the key person in that organisation, or key people – anything is possible (Interview APC 12).

The reliance on individual good will was identified as a dilemma preventing proactive collaboration at the interface between APCs and their strategic partners (e.g. community representatives, local politicians, social partners and statutory agencies). Furthermore, since participation from statutory agencies on APC boards is not mandatory, only the provision of considerable incentives by APCs seem to be able to foster the creation of constructive mechanisms that support communication, interaction and, finally, mainstreaming of innovative projects (Interview APC 11). Even though ADM considers networking and reeling in allies as crucially important for attributing success to APCs (see previous section), it is not perceived to be appropriately captured by their reporting system:

The facilitation of processes and activities enabling things to happen through bringing actors together are not captured by ADM. The system measures output. Bringing relevant bodies together, draft position papers and respond to and create opportunities is time-consuming – but this is not measured. Who you work and consult with, for example, would be more appropriate as a performance indicator (Interview APC 12).

Under the current system, the reliance on cultivation and maintenance of informal networks and personal contacts seem to result in a support structure that is fragile because it is based on good will rather than on mandate or legislation. This dependency puts APCs in a position that complicates the concerted achievement of

outcomes in partnership with other stakeholders because it overly depends on informal networking capacity as well as 'the chemistry' between individuals. This is especially relevant in forming alliances with statutory agencies as the latter provide the resources required to fund locally-developed programmes and initiatives. Conscious of the complexities that come with business-like funding arrangements, APC professionals and board members expressed strong views that APCs are obliged to deliver results but that the system for assessing the success in terms of value for money needs to be re-visited and tailored to account for systemic realities. Otherwise, APCs feel that engaging in activities that satisfy the monitoring mechanism might fall into the trap of playing it safe at the expense of missing out on opportunities to innovate, which would defeat their *raison d'être*.

The output-orientation of measuring success or failure is not optimally tailored to promote capacity-building and reach out to those groups that – according to centrally-devised guidelines of the LDSIP – are considered the key beneficiaries of APC activities. APC professionals feel that the output-oriented nature of the performance-monitoring and funding system makes it increasingly difficult to retain a practical-oriented, collaborative, local development approach that allows for involvement 'from below':

People forget that Partnerships are supposed to be innovative and hence produce quality and failure [...] But the current system of monitoring bears the danger of Partnerships getting caught in delivering services that are something tangible such as people trained et cetera (Interview APC 11).

Respondents from APCs generally acknowledge the role of APCs in identifying gaps in public service provision and in running services addressing the issue, but ideally only for a period of time. They maintain that APCs are not meant to be service providers *per se* and argue that it is within the responsibility of the government to pick up and integrate locally piloted models that create synergies and efficiencies into the statutory apparatus of public service provision. This perspective contrasts with views expressed by government officials and, to a greater degree, DCC professionals who see the greatest potential for APCs in facilitating the delivery of welfare-related core services to disadvantaged target groups and individuals. When asked about their experience in collaborating with statutory bodies, APC professionals indicated that the commitment of central government to bottom-up approaches, vertical learning and mainstreaming – with the latter being based on innovative development of successful local models – is more rhetoric than reality. The NESc's (2005) recommendation for a continuation of APC-type research and development activities stands in stark contrast to the systemic blockages in the governance system that impede outcome-oriented partnership and collaboration between state-funded activist measures and government institutions. It was highlighted by APC professionals that the best way (i.e. the most promising approach) to circumnavigate perceived bureaucratic constraints is through informal networking, which brings its own challenges.

6.4.5.4 Expectations to be listened to

Local community workers in Ballyfermot acknowledged the inefficiencies that come with working in a diverse and multi-layered local-development sector. They reported that the number of state-funded agencies promoting local development confuses residents and, in particular, people they work with. One respondent from this group of professionals expressed frustration in regard to the time spent in different meetings involving the same individuals:

It's crazy. It's absolutely daft. Sometimes we get in our cars and drive to the civic centre and go to a meeting. Then we all get into our cars again and drive up the road to the local resource centre to go to another meeting (Interview LV 5).

Community workers interviewed are in favour of the idea to create a local community network promoting interagency communication and the pooling of resources where feasible¹⁶⁰. One respondent gave an example to illustrate how local groups started working together with a view to addressing a fragmentation of locally-provided services:

There is no good communication network between local groups and agencies. The same families are served by more than one group. So we set up a project as a link body involving relevant agencies and politicians – and they initiated a Community Development Project (Interview LV 2).

This is in line with observations (a) that were made by professionals from DCC and those that are/have been involved in decision-making processes at government level and (b) that fuelled the 'narrative of duplication' (see Section 6.2.6). There is a difference, however, in explaining duplication and lack of collaboration among local organisations. Respondents from the local authorities, CDBs and government departments claim that the plethora of local organisations leads to the duplication of local services, which results in increasing costs for administration and overheads and, hence, effectively reduces value added by state-funded community-based organisations and groups.

Local community workers and APC professionals interviewed, however, maintain that:

- the state is responsible for the creation of a complex formalised local-development sector, in the first instance;
- second, a lack of interdepartmental coordination is leading to local families and disadvantaged individuals being served by a multitude of statutory agencies (e.g. Interview APC 11; Interview LV 1); and
- third, that the existing government policy of allocating funding through competitive bidding and related performance-monitoring system prevents coordination and leads to safe-guarding territories (e.g. Interviews APC 3 and APC 5; Interview LV 5).

¹⁶⁰ The main state-funded players in Ballyfermot (i.e. the URBAN Programme, Dublin City Council, the Drugs Task Force and the local APC) started working together. In addition, the local APC pursued the establishment of a local community platform with a view to increasing the scope for interaction and collaborative planning among local groups in the area (see Section 6.4.5.3 above).

In the local area, one respondent felt that the competition culture for accessing statutory funding, inappropriate time frames for implementing actions and, finally, the measurement of success as quantifiable output are key obstacles that prevent more effective collaboration among state-funded projects at the grassroots level:

Integration has become a buzzword in the last two years. The agencies get, as you would be aware of, they now get very territorial around funding and around centres and around possession and around having to tick boxes as to how many people between the agencies are using your service. Because for funding again, how do you quantify for really good community development? How do you quantify success in terms of developing an area? And I think the difficulty then around when you become funding orientated, you have to possess things because you have to spend your money within a certain time frame or you lose it (Interview LV 5).

Local organisations consider themselves trapped in a scenario that is dictated by the bureaucratic logic that drives funding arrangements. When asked about the achievements of Ballyfermot Partnership, local community workers felt that Ballyfermot Partnership does not pro-actively engage with local groups. They consider the Partnership as a funder of people-centred initiatives, actions that are a response to problems experienced by the socially excluded such as capacity building and other services linked to increasing labour-market participation. They also remarked that most of those initiatives only partly reflect local issues and often ignore structural causes for social exclusion. Local community workers maintain that people-centred activities need to be matched with investments into the built environment and basic infrastructure because in some neighbourhoods in Ballyfermot “people are waiting for a shop, a post office and a bus stop” (Interview LV 5). Generally, this group of respondents strongly felt that the structural framework of statutory-led local development initiatives has been landed on communities ‘from above’ and was superimposed on existing ‘organic’ community networks. One respondent explained that local community activists and residents often withdraw from formal processes if they do not feel included and pursue own agendas:

The URBAN programme brought extra funding into Ballyfermot. And URBAN is obsessively controlled by Dublin City Council. They are obsessed with controlling the money and using it for what they want to do. Locals can see through that. They know they’re not allowed to participate in a meaningful way and they don’t engage if nothing is going to be delivered that interests them. But Dublin City Council then thinks there is no active community sector in place (Interview LV 1).

In this context, professionals working for APCs and other state-funded local development projects and initiatives admit that local views “are often ignored and sacrificed to an approach informed by a bureaucratic agenda” (Interview LV 1; also Interviews APC 5 and APC 6). Local workers from Ballyfermot are cautious when engaging with ‘bigger’ state-funded interventionist measures (such as Ballyfermot Partnership or the Urban 2 Initiative) because they are perceived as top-down organised local development initiatives that fail to connect and consult with the community and, hence, underutilise local knowledge.

6.4.6 A synopsis of views

The views on value for money (VFM) that were expressed in the interviews differ considerably. The analysis of the interview material suggests that perceptions and standpoints of respondents are dependent on their organisational affiliation, their professional background and their hierarchical position in the governance network (see Chapter 4, Section 4.4.2, Figure 4). Respondents from different organisational, professional and operational backgrounds pointed out that a number of systemic obstacles prevent APCs from achieving their full potential, such as:

- the lack of a central interdepartmental coordination mechanism that gives directions and incentivises joined-up thinking among statutory service providers;
- the absence of a reporting system that adequately captures qualitative aspects of 'social-inclusion work';
- the competitive bidding for resources, which fosters turf protection and, hence, torpedoes resource sharing and collaboration at local level;
- the tendency to emulate projects rather than encouraging the development of new initiatives and
- the focus of measures on welfare-related service-delivery;
- few activities promoting vertical institutional learning through constructively challenging relevant statutory agencies;
- the nature of contemporary funding arrangements that encourage short-term thinking and that potentially inhibit the full utilisation of local knowledge and development potential to achieve genuinely participatory models of community involvement;
- the absence of an incentive/sanction system that promotes partnership principles, interagency co-operation and constructive dialogue at board level of APCs:
 - State agencies do not take Partnerships seriously because there is no imperative on these agencies to take them seriously (Interview NE 1b);
- the government-orchestrated, highly institutionalised and professionalised nature of local development with little delegated decision-making capacity and accountability—checks in the hands of the designated beneficiaries of local development programmes;
- intra-organisational 'cumbersome' governance structures and practices that prevent running the organisation in a professional manner (e.g. poor money management system, weak decision-making structures, questionable use of funding); and
- low levels of trust between government and communities.

Local professionals from APCs and local community workers and – to a lesser extent – government officials and professionals from both ADM and DCC consider the current model of performance assessment and the application of value for money criteria as not optimally tailored to meet the realities within which APCs operate. However, the views expressed by government officials, senior civil servants from Dublin City Council

and ADM professionals illustrate that APCs are expected to adapt to institutional restructuring in a way that retains their capacity to:

- address strategically relevant local issues that were identified by the local community;
- promote multi-stakeholder involvement with a view either to generate or channel resources into their area (with a focus on improving welfare-related service delivery and encourage labour-market participation) ; and
- pursue and establish pluralist and collaborative modes for decision making and promote democratic experimentalism (OECD 1996).

National experts and professionals from the local-development sector emphasise that formal inter-agency dialogue and collaboration are not part of the organisational culture of statutory organisations. The degree to which APCs achieve their objectives is largely dependent on their informal networking capacity, i.e. on qualities that cannot be accounted for by formal auditing procedures and VFM criteria. Irrespective of formal indicators employed by political funders of APCs, the key characteristic for successful APCs is their ability to forge relationships with key stakeholders. The networking potential of APCs can be defined as their capacity to provide incentives that can convince or otherwise motivate strategically relevant and/or resourceful allies and key individuals of a 'high calibre' to support their cause. There is general agreement that good intra-organisational governance structures, the availability of indigenous resources and the set of skills of APC professionals determine the capacity to win influential allies from different quarters and, hence, are essentially important as they indicate a 'high-profile' status to political sponsors of APCs (see also Section 6.3.2).

The degree of perceived and accredited professionalism of the local APC is a key marker for funders as to how likely they are going to see returns for resources invested, that outweighs the importance of formal VFM criteria. Here, professionalism can be understood as the capacity of the APC to (a) utilise core funding and lever additional resources, (b) manage organisational processes and administrative procedures and (c) generate local outcomes that are in line with the objectives of the LDSIP. According to the empirical evidence, APCs can be considered successful if they are professional and, moreover, can present themselves as an organisation that:

- provides a neutral space for bringing actors with different interests and agendas together and encourage multilateral collaboration among different stakeholders;
- has credibility within the local area and can mobilise local communities to participate within the operational framework provided by the APC;
- has the capacity to develop new ideas and create opportunities that cannot be provided from within the statutory apparatus; i.e. APCs must be considered relevant by potential partners that are expected to contribute resources (e.g. local knowledge, funding, know-how, political or economic influence) for the planning

- and implementation of local projects geared at ameliorating local symptoms of socio-economic disadvantage and poverty; and
- that can deliver a social dividend for funding received.

The concept of VFM adds another dimension to governance restructuring and related changes that have an impact on funding arrangements for APCs. Following Power's definition of VFM (Chapter 1, Section 1.4.1, Table 1.1), the case study reveals that contemporary performance-oriented monitoring and evaluation practices cannot adequately measure impacts of APC actions that are directed at the achievement of outcomes (Chapter 1, Section 1.4.3, Table 1.2). The research findings suggest that the concept of VFM, which has been informed by the output-oriented ethos of the private sector, is only partially suitable for assessing the performance of APCs.

Extracts from the interviews illustrated that the funding arrangements have been influenced by VFM principles. The empirical analysis pointed out that *overly* output-oriented funding arrangements impact on plans and activities of APC. The deployment of a plethora of relatively sophisticated accountability and performance measures such as SCOPE, the Himmelman Model, the *Excellence Through People Award*, VFM audits and case studies can only partially assess the capacity and success of APCs. It was found that the monitoring system does not adequately reflect that APCs largely rely on the informal and interpersonal world of networking, clientelism and tactical manoeuvring and, second, does not equally consider measuring the efforts made by relevant third parties that have a role to play in addressing local development issues in disadvantaged neighbourhoods. Another difficulty that was reported in this context is that the credit of successful projects always goes to the statutory (co-)funders whereas the responsibility for failures stays within the realm of APCs (Interview NE 3 and NE 6; Interview APC 12; Interview ADM 1). The findings of this study suggest that observed phenomena like risk-avoidance, inverse-care laws and project emulation among APCs are a direct result of poorly designed funding arrangements and an associated support framework that is not optimally tailored to address systemic obstacles preventing developmental work in severely disadvantaged neighbourhoods.

6.5 Conclusion

The evidence presented here illustrates how core principles embedded in the Strategic Management Initiative (SMI) and related policy documents informed and shaped contemporary governance restructuring in Dublin and associated funding (including performance-monitoring and auditing) arrangements for Area Partnership Companies (APCs) (Tables 6.7, 6.8, 6.9 and 6.10). The documents reviewed and the interview material analysed reveal that a succession of steps have been undertaken to create conditions that facilitated the incorporation of APCs into a new governance model in the area of local social and economic regeneration (see Section 6.2). The empirical material was analysed from the perspective of three sets of key indicators that were

developed as surrogate measures to explore in a methodological way the following funding aspects of APCs:

- processes related to institutional change;
- accountability, monitoring and performance mechanism; and
- notions of value for money and interpretations of success.

The analysis of the interview material confirmed previous research findings that the import of ideas from reform-minded countries such as New Zealand, the US, the UK and the EU has been instrumental in promoting public-sector reform and governance change in Ireland from the early-1990s. Bartley *et al.* (1999) consider the New Zealand model as key influence for public-sector modernisation in Ireland (see Chapter 1, Section 1.4.2). As a result of the introduction of ideas and models from abroad, local-governance and public-service delivery systems became subject to a new managerial or business-like rhetoric and practice, which has been working towards the achievement of a systemic harmonisation between local development and local government systems. It could be demonstrated that APCs were also made subject to reformatory priorities that had substantial consequences for their remit and *modus operandi*.

For APCs, the ongoing rationalisation and streamlining of local development structures finds expression in a growing emphasis on funding arrangements, performance-oriented evaluation and monitoring procedures and self-monitoring practices. Traditional bureaucratic styles of monitoring and evaluating public-sector performance overly focused on channelling funding into disadvantaged communities and checks if 'the books are in order'. In contrast, the new performance-oriented accountability system is associated with the public-sector modernisation, which has been promoted through the SMI and *Regulating Better* (cf. DoT 2004).

The existing accountability framework consists of a plethora of auditing tools available to funders to assess progress made based on a reporting system that highlights quantitative data, written reports and financial reporting (see Section 6.3.2, Table. 6.8). As a result, achievements of APCs in promoting local participation and capacity building are now increasingly evaluated against command economy-type targeting practices that, according to the interview material, are perceived as overly paper-oriented, focusing on short-term achievements and only marginally capturing value added in qualitative terms.

ADM-published guidelines stress the importance of equality objectives in developing strategies for participatory local development. APCs are advised to pursue activities that, first, enable the participation of disadvantaged communities and the community sector in decision making and that, second, address those individuals and groups most affected by social exclusion. The analysis of the empirical material, however, shows that the annual budgeting system and the emphasis on performance-based

reporting torpedo the developmental role of APCs, as more qualitative aspects of their programme of activities take second place vis-à-vis the pursuit of output-oriented actions. Despite detailed indicators designed to assess the degree to which APCs' programmes, for example, can tackle "the 'participation deficit' and build the skills and organisational capacity of the community sector for a full partnership role" (Harvey 2002: 1), the evaluation of success clearly focuses on quantitative achievements of APCs. Systematic procedures targeted at monitoring the quality of the APCs' participatory inclusiveness and democratic accountability towards the community interest are in place (cf. ADM 2000), but are not being pursued with similar vigour as reporting requirements to the political funders. Output-focused funding guidelines, performance-monitoring criteria and value-for-money audits represent a process of state-initiated systemic standardisation at work (with a view to co-opting APCs into the apparatus of the state) that:

- does not appropriately accommodate for the social-inclusion work of APCs; and
- determines, to a considerable degree, how, and with whom, APCs engage in local disadvantaged neighbourhoods.

The comparison of interview material suggests that the single most divisive factor among respondents' views on value for money-related issues and the restructuring of local governance in Dublin is their professional position and related experience within the governance network. The following clusters could be identified:

- *National Experts (NE)*: individuals who are or have been involved at national, government and/or interdepartmental level in decision-making procedures shaping the design and implementation of the Area Partnership Company-based approach to local development.
- *Dublin City Council (DCC)*: employees who are or have been involved in either management decisions concerning the city council approach to local development or implementing local development strategies on behalf of DCC or the Dublin CDB.
- *Area Development Management (ADM)*: employees from different sections (senior management, liaison officers, programme co-ordinators) involved in programmes targeting designated disadvantaged areas.
- *Area Partnership Company (APC)*: professionals and board members from the Area Partnership Company operating in the case-study area as well as (a) managers from other Dublin-based APCs and (b) PLANET.
- *Local View (LV)*: one local employer, three community workers and one resident involved in state or EU-funded local development programmes in the case-study area.

In particular, interviews illustrate that respondents from APCs and local community workers felt that:

- the reconfiguration of funding arrangements under the LDSIP has been strongly biased towards emphasising the need for accountability to funders (at the expense of time available for the pursuit of local development measures);

- changes concerning funding and operational arrangements of APCs are dictated top-down with little consultation (which, for example, stands in contrast to the regulatory principle of transparency outlined in *Regulating Better* (DoT 2004: 10) and the partnership ethos that had been promoted by the CDB);
- that local 'professional' organisations (e.g. local state-funded groups), and well-organised groups and individuals who are close to the local APC – i.e. groups that know how the system works – have been more likely to benefit from engaging with the local APC than those who mainly work on a voluntary basis or do not have the knowledge or capacity to become involved; and
- the independent grassroots sector withdraws if opportunities provided within the state-funded sector are not compatible with their agenda or if collaboration is perceived too bureaucratic (e.g. Interview APC 10; Interview LV 5).

Contemporary funding arrangements and performance-monitoring criteria do not necessarily encourage APCs to provide services and developmental support to those that are considered 'hard to reach' and pursue a strategy of targeted enrolment; i.e. *de facto* they are rewarded if they work with groups that show an interest in collaboration and that can contribute to making APC programmes succeed in the short run. The data gathered reveals that the dilemma with the contemporary reporting system: it is overly bureaucratic and geared towards measuring tangible outputs considered relevant by the engineers of contemporary auditing mechanisms, rather than being tailored to meet local realities faced by APCs and their 'constituents'.

In the light of reporting requirements – notwithstanding some room for capturing qualitative aspects of partnership work through case studies and review reports drafted by the ADM liaison officer (see Section 6.3.1, Table 6.7) – respondents from APCs feel that monitoring overly focuses on countable outcomes of their work. They express concerns that, notwithstanding the officially propagated rhetoric of participatory democracy, monitoring and reporting mechanisms are indicative of the political will to focus on the production of numerical data and direct service delivery to the citizen instead of allowing for qualitative outcomes via developmental work, capacity building and participatory engagement in the communities. To put it bluntly, meeting the requirements of the funders is guaranteed by a sophisticated and complex accountability system, whereas local communities have limited means to hold APCs accountable.

Previous research (see Chapter 4, Section 4.2.2) and the interviews carried out for this case study show that those APCs that can maximise the use of resources, as defined by the criteria laid down by the political funders of APCs, are more likely to be among the winners in future rounds of funding allocation than those who are less successful in attracting additional resources into their area (be it in form of money or another type of support). The inclination of funders to support 'high-profile' APCs (see Section 6.3.2, Table 6.8), which are identified by a mix of formal and informal assessment criteria,

illustrates that the funding arrangements reward (a) APCs toeing the line and (b) those with the social capital and/or power to reel in allies considered relevant by the political funders of APCs.

The competitive nature of contemporary funding practices and the reported positive correlation between financial rewards and success as measured by formal reporting requirements have implications for planning local actions in a way that is feared to run counter to the 'developmental' agenda of APCs. Obvious concerns are that the prevalence of an inverse-care principle that rewards 'high-profile' APCs based on their perceived success (a) would militate against the time-consuming promotion of participation in planning and decision making from the bottom up and (b) would minimise the incentives for the pursuit of process-oriented innovative strategies (risk-avoidance). Even though the capacity of an APC to mobilise local resources and key individuals adds kudos to their activities from the point of view of political sponsors and 'their' constituents, it illustrates that local communities targeted by the LDSIP are reliant on local resources and APC's professionals to make the best use of those.

Responses from government officials and senior civil servants point out that 'good APCs' act as social entrepreneurs and that there is evidence where APCs demonstrated that perceived limitations within the funding framework can be successfully circumnavigated. Taking also into account (a) the degree of (technical) assistance and support available through ADM, (b) the establishment of PLANET and (c) the experience of the older pilot-APCs (set up under the 1991-1993 PESP), it could be argued that APCs should be adequately prepared for and adapt to the realities concerning both the funding arrangements and processes of institutional restructuring. At the same time, one has to bear in mind that, from the outset, designated areas are not at all supplied equally with the indigenous endowments and know-how necessary to successfully participate in the area-based approach. Besides, evidence suggests that changes in governance and its effects on the budgeting system and funding arrangements, the calibre of key individuals that can be accessed and mobilised and the quality of indigenous resources of the area play a big role in determining the scope of the APC to operate within flexible boundaries provided by the institutional rules and regulations in place.

The contemporary power configuration within governance structures prohibits mutual accountability and responsibility for effective collaboration between APCs and the state, on the one hand, and between APCs and a variety of local stakeholders from civil society, on the other. The dependency of APCs on multiple informal relationships with various statutory agencies and government departments has been identified as a key theme (e.g. Chapter 6, Section 6.4.5): engaging in time-consuming lobbying processes has frequently been mentioned throughout the interviews as a major obstacle for APCs. In particular, APC professionals did not perceive formal mechanisms as optimally tailored to ensure an efficient coordination between the work

of APCs and established public bodies. As a result, the world of informal criteria and interpersonal networking across sectoral boundaries appears to be considered a suitable retreat or parallel mechanism to circumnavigate perceived systemic inadequacies for pursuing own objectives. This happens, for example, through bi- or multilateral informal (re)-negotiations involving senior individuals from APCs and (mostly) public bodies that often lead to fruitful forms of collaboration that are not – or only partially – captured by performance and auditing systems in place (for examples see Pobal 2006a, 2006b).

More often than not, the success of locally-developed projects was reported to be overly dependent on the capacity of the APC to get access to, and convince, senior individuals from within the statutory apparatus to commit resources to, or alternatively support, locally developed projects aimed at improving symptoms of structural disadvantage. It appears that, so far, SMI-related measures introduced under the LDSIP have not benefited APCs in developing a more cost-efficient and outcome-oriented *modus operandi* that facilitates their envisaged role as catalysts for positive change in designated disadvantaged areas. The empirical findings presented in this chapter suggest that under the LDSIP three basic – and partly overlapping – components are instrumental in determining the potential of the individual APC's capacity to be considered a 'good' organisation by their political sponsors:

- *Partnership based on principles of bottom-up, collaboration and innovation*: Are the priorities set consensus-based? Is the decision-making process democratic? Is the approach based on agreed community development concepts? Is the work highlighting equality and an anti-poverty agenda? Is the APC prepared to take risks, to avoid 'backing winners'¹⁶¹, and to promote innovative principles?
- *Social Capital* (e.g. Grootaert 1998; Fukuyama 1999) *and Professionalism*: How is the APC informed about possible sources of funding? Is the local development approach taken based on a strategic plan informed by consultation? Are projects and actions tailored to the local situation? Can the APC win allies and exert influence on key decision-makers? (Can the community 'punch above its weight'?) Do they make use of their potential to act as an innovative company? Can the catchment area be well-presented as a deprived community deserving further financial support? Are the internal governance structures of the company considered efficient? Can the APC effectively market and communicate its success as to create awareness about their activities?
- *Indigenous assets*: Is there already any social or economic potential that can be tapped into? Are there strong leader personalities that can facilitate the implementation of strategic action and local planning? Is there a strong feeling of community? Is the level of participation sufficient so that a burn-out syndrome among those actively involved can be avoided?

¹⁶¹ Another expression for avoiding challenging projects that on the one hand are addressing identified issues but that may not yield the expected outcomes on the other hand – it is a form of 'playing it safe' (cf. Elliott 2002)

APCs that enjoy a good reputation because they either followed recommendations of the Minister and “did go about their business” (Dáil Éireann 25/06/2003: no page numbers), or the advice of their monitoring and support agency and “deliver on the project so that it is a trouble-free and pleasant experience” (Interview ADM 2; see also Section 6.4.5.2), are likely to be favourably considered in terms of the allocation of resources than less skilful APCs – irrespective of the factual degree of deprivation prevalent within their area.

7. REVIEW OF EMPIRICAL FINDINGS: ANT, URT OR THE RA?

7.1 Introduction

Previous chapters illustrated that perceived pressures associated with the concept of economic globalisation facilitated the communication of ideas that culminated into dominant narratives of duplication and the formulation of strategies for public-sector modernisation and local-governance restructuring in Dublin (see, for example, Chapter 6, Section 6.2.4.3). The pursuit of better local governance under the 2000-2006 Local Development and Social Inclusion Programme (LDSIP) aims at co-opting Area Partnership Companies (APCs) into the public sector-administered governance network. This thesis seeks to identify an explanation for the contemporary design of existing funding arrangements for APCs in the context of governance restructuring. The pursuit of the research question led to the identification of key themes and procedures that are closely associated with funding arrangements for APCs (see Chapter 4, Section 4.3). This study has thus far:

- highlighted the role of key actors and processes that have been instrumental in shaping Dublin's governance landscape (Chapter 6, Section 6.2);
- revealed insights into the workings of the accountability and reporting arrangements (as part and parcel of funding arrangements) for APCs (Chapter 6, Section 6.3);
- analysed changing priorities in performance monitoring for APCs (Chapter 6, Section 6.4) and potential impacts for programme development and implementation; and
- provided an insight into perceived success criteria for APCs as indicated by interview responses (Chapter 6, Section 6.4).

The interviews with individuals from different institutional and professional backgrounds brought to light a variety of insights concerning the reconfiguration of institutional power and its impact on the strategic role of APCs within Dublin's governance framework. Changes in funding arrangements for APCs facilitated the re-positioning of APCs within local governance, and, moreover, their co-option into the apparatus of the state. The analysis of the interview material illustrates that the citywide decentralisation of functions and services provided by Dublin City Council (DCC) – in tandem with legislative changes, the establishment of new structures and the cohesion strategy – led to an increasing influence for DCC in local development issues. When interviewed, respondents from APCs frequently mentioned that the alignment of APCs with, and involvement in, DCC-affiliated structures is burdensome and curbed their ability to deliver on their own remit.

This study argues that actor-network theory (ANT), urban regime theory (URT) and the regulation approach (RA) offer useful strategic approaches to explain local-governance restructuring and associated impacts on funding arrangements for APCs. Each theoretical approach has different assumptions about influences that have a

bearing on shaping urban governance and its underlying socio-institutional and politico-economic structures within which funding arrangements of APCs are embedded (see Chapter 3, Section 3.3). Therefore, they provide distinctly different perspectives for the analysis of interview data and published material (Chapter 4)¹⁶².

According to Murdoch and Marsden (1995: 372), a primary concern of studies addressing the relationship between causal forces that lead to place-specific social and economic features is “to understand how structures are continually reproduced through the process of interaction”. They conclude, “we must, therefore, look carefully at the processes that give rise to power as an *effect*” (*ibid.*, original emphasis) (cf. Lauria 1997b). Drawing on a Latourian concept of power, Murdoch and Marsden elicit the potential of ANT to assess components of structures and explain how structures emerge and are being held in shape by “those who are able to enrol, convince and enlist others into associations on terms which allow these initial actors to ‘represent’ all the others” (*ibid.*). Critics maintain, however, that ANT can map power relations but does not sufficiently account for the role played by human agency (see Chapter 3, Section 3.2.1.2). Within limitations and based on conceptual ‘tweaking’, ANT, however, was shown to be a useful strategic tool for shedding light on interactions between networked heterogeneous entities (i.e. ‘things’, technologies or/and humans) (e.g. Pickering 1993).

Stone’s (1989) study of urban regimes is concerned with the question of how the capacity to govern a city can be achieved through local coalition-building activities in a scenario that is characterised by a fragmented disbursement of power among a variety of groupings with different (and at times diametrically opposed) vested interests. URT highlights the role of business involvement in the formation of a governing regime. The key ingredient for the capacity to govern is the ability to combine a critical mass of resources, mainly through informal networking activities among politicians, the business sector and other key interest groups from civil society.

The RA explores the relationship between the state, the sphere of production (as the basis for societal wealth creation) and labour. From the viewpoint of the RA, the promotion of governance modernisation, welfare restructuring and entrepreneurial urban policies are regulatory efforts of the state to impact on, respond to or overcome crises of capitalist modes of accumulation and, thereby, secure societal cohesion¹⁶³.

¹⁶² However, some common ground could also be identified: in the context of local case studies, the commonality among ANT, URT and the neo-Gramscian interpretation of the RA lies in their ‘desire’ to explain the emergence and nature of durable power configurations (see also Chapter 3, Section 3.1, Table 3.1).

¹⁶³ This aspect is captured in the definition of the mode of social regulation provide by Tickell and Peck (Chapter 3, Section 3.2.3.1). Tickell and Peck (1992: 201), however, argue that the influence of the mode of social regulation (MSR) on the sphere of economic activities and the sphere of capitalist production had been neglected in empirical work because of “a deep-stated but unacknowledged, *theoretical subordination*, of the MSR to the accumulation system” (original emphasis). This one-sided perspective, i.e. the assumption that the characteristics of the MSR are tailored to meet the needs of capitalist accumulation, can be re-dressed through also focusing on the potential of socially constructed power – for example in urban growth poles as sub-sections of “wider networks of capital

According to Jessop (1990; 1997a; 1997b), concepts rooted in Gramscian thinking can facilitate an analysis of the interplay between local governance arrangements and societal modes of accumulation.

Against this backdrop, the following sections of this chapter reflect on observations discussed in Chapter 6: first, from the viewpoint of ANT; second, from the perspective of URT; finally, using ideas rooted in Gramscian thinking. This thesis posits that governance modernisation, which is reflected in reconfigurations of the institutional landscape in Dublin, the intensification of centrally-devised accountability and monitoring procedures and VFM-guided approaches to performance measurement (see Chapter 6, Section 6.3), is a complex system whose workings can be explored from the vantage point of all three theoretical frameworks: actor-network theory (ANT), urban regime theory (URT) and ideas associated with the regulation approach (RA).

The case-study approach provides a useful platform for a theory-guided analysis of forces and actors involved in re-positioning APCs in Dublin's governance landscape. The empirical material indicates that social agency plays a crucial role in the re-configuration of Dublin's governance framework. The analysis of the interviews (see Chapter 6) identified a variety of core issues such as:

- the spreading of narratives that raised issues of duplication and institutional deadweight;
- the placement of human agents into strategic positions overseeing APC structures;
- the establishment of the DoCRGA as a vehicle tasked to co-ordinate streamlining state-funded local development initiatives at the national level;
- the formation of DCC-administered parallel institutional structures that operate in the same geographic area as APCs (see Chapter 6, Section 6.2, Figure 5) and, moreover, that have a similar remit. This reduces the relative importance and power of APCs;
- the adept utilisation of policy papers, consultancy reports and legislation;
- the approach of DCC to include only selected allies from local communities in decision-making fora who will not pose a risk to centrally-devised plans and strategies;
- the navigational capacity of senior officials of DCC to influence and bypass democratic processes;
- propositions to create dependencies through service-level agreements that legally bind APCs as contractors into the local government system;
- an increasing emphasis on VFM and the introduction of related monitoring and performance measures.

The following sections seek ultimately to ascertain which theoretical approach is suited best to explain the characteristic features of contemporary funding arrangements for

accumulation" (Amin and Thrift 1995: 91) – to impact on the accumulation system.

APCs against the backdrop of governance restructuring in Dublin: ANT, URT or the RA? In the context of this study, previous research findings and an analysis of the literature reviewed led to the assumption that ideas associated with the RA provide a superior theoretical framework to ANT. Following the falsification principle outlined in the methodology chapter (Chapter 4; see also Introduction), the key priority is to test if either ANT or URT provides a more powerful strategic approach to explain the characteristics of funding arrangements for APCs than the RA.

7.2 ANT

7.2.1 Introduction

ANT is conceptual approach that analyses the role of both humans and 'things' within power configurations or networks. Through the lens of ANT, the gradual progression of APCs into a city-wide, local-authority managed governance network under the cohesion process can be interpreted as a process of translation¹⁶⁴: i.e. the controlled alignment of plans and activities of APCs into a city-wide governance network in a way that ensures that APCs retain the capacity to deliver locally what is wanted by the state (i.e. the main funder of APCs).

However, the existence of other competitive forces at work – either from within or from outside the relevant network space – could deflect, absorb or even hi-jack the performative power of APCs and, thereby, jeopardise successful translation. Therefore, it is fundamental that centrally placed network builders, operating from within government buildings, have the capacity to effectively utilise resources that 'cement the links' between the state (the *enroller*) and APCs (the *enrollee*). Law (1986) demonstrates that such power requires the ability of the enroller to act at a distance through the circulation of immutable mobiles. Immutable mobiles can consist of all sorts of technologies, inanimate objects and humans (see Table 7.1. below). This study made reference to a wide variety of immutable mobiles such as:

- texts (e.g. legislation and directives shaping the institutional landscape, funding guidelines or contracts outlining an agreed programme of activities) and the semantic use of jargon therein (e.g. parameters couched in the language of value for money);
- monitoring and performance procedures (e.g. the submission of quarterly SCOPE reports, quarterly financial returns or case studies);
- money (e.g. core funding received under the LDSIP);
- drilled or 'cyborged' staff¹⁶⁵ (e.g. the developmental role of ADM liaison officers on APC boards or the necessity of APC staff to work towards the implementation of

¹⁶⁴ The key concepts of ANT are summarised in Table 7.1 below; see also Chapter 3, Section 3.1, Table 3.1).

¹⁶⁵ A cyborg is defined as a cybernetic organism which adds to or enhances its abilities by using technology (Haraway 1991; Thrift 2000b). Cybernetics is the "Science of regulation and control in animals (including humans), organizations, and machines when they are viewed as self-governing whole entities consisting of parts and their organization" (Encyclopaedia Britannica n.d.: no page numbers).

new management standards such as the *Q-Mark* and the *Excellence Through People Award*; see Table 7.1 below); and

- stories (e.g. the creation and communication of narratives of duplication; see Chapter 6, Section 6.2.6).

According to ANT, immutable mobiles (i.e. both things and humans) have the capacity to act; i.e. they do more than simple carrying “the force that comes through them” (Latour 2004: no page numbers). Immutable mobiles are typically circulated from a privileged place within ‘the centre’ (what Callon (1986) calls an obligatory point of passage); i.e. usually from actors situated within government buildings who are tasked to hold in check the behaviour of distant agents on ‘the periphery’ (i.e. APCs) (cf. Law and Hetherington 1999: 7). According to Law (1986: 1), “long-distance control depends on the creation of a network of *passive agents* (both human and non-human) which makes it possible for emissaries to circulate from the centre to the periphery in a way that maintains their *durability, forcefulness and fidelity*” (emphasis added). For effective remote control to take place, immutable mobiles must have the capacity to relay back information to the centre. Mobility, durability, the capacity to exert force and the ability to return are indispensable characteristics associated with the concept of remote control. Immutable mobiles can even be seen as specifications of a yet more general requirement: that there is no degeneration in communication between the centre and periphery. No ‘noise’ must be introduced into the circuit (cf. Law 1986: 5).

ANT emphasises that the planning for the enrolment of APCs is likely to be a dialectic process because the interaction between immutable mobile and the object targeted for enrolment (i.e. APCs) causes “a play of resistance and accommodation” (Pickering 1993: 567). As a consequence – irrespective of a power balance that is biased against the state-funded local-development sector and APCs – the outcome of (a) the intentional creation of new institutional players that are affiliated with local authorities and (b) the sending out of agents to monitor, hold in place and, eventually, facilitate the repositioning of APCs within Dublin’s governance system, is *theoretically* open-ended (i.e. not predictable).

This implies that the reaction of APCs (a) to proposed and initiated changes concerning institutionalisation, (b) to accountability and monitoring requirements and (c) to the introduction of value-for-money principles, can potentially alter the dynamic of future actions initiated from the centre in a way that deviates from the outcomes that originally had been expected by policy makers. The perceived failure of RAPID is a prime example for the formation of resistance from powerful agents within the governance network that had not been anticipated by network builders (see Chapter 6, Section 6.2.5.1).

Table 7.1: Entities networked in funding arrangements of APCs

Intermediaries:	“Anything passing between actors, which defines the relationship between them” (Callon 1991).
Texts and images:	Guidelines, policy documents, case studies, annual reports, area action plans, research reports, forms of media coverage, information material and websites.
Technical artefacts:	Performance and evaluation systems (e.g. SCOPE), organisational quality assessments models/surveys/awards, consultation processes and other technology applied, funding arrangements (contracts).
Skills:	staff management, report writing, research skills, administration, human resource management, writing of documents (e.g. minutes, reports, business plans, strategy papers), communication and negotiation skills, facilitation, mediation, decision making, coalition-building, social skills, parenting, learning, problem-solving, discipline, lateral thinking, financial controlling, IT skills etc.
Money:	EU monies, LDSIP funding, matching funding from strategic (statutory and civil) partners, dormant accounts and once-off opportunities.
Actors:	Entity able to (a) “associate texts, humans, non-humans and money” and (b) “put other intermediaries into circulation” (Callon 1991)¹⁶⁶.
Intermediaries:	Texts and images, technical artefacts, skills, money (see above).
Individuals:	Professionals and board members (statutory agencies, community representatives, social partners public representatives) of APCs, beneficiaries of programmes (eligible individuals and target groups), consultants, civil servants, politicians, community workers, local activists/residents.
Organisations:	Area Partnership Companies, PLANET, Pobal, City Development Board, Dublin City Council, statutory agencies (e.g. FÁS, HSE, VEC), government departments (e.g. DoCRGA, DoEHLG, DoJELR, DoF, DoT), political parties, not-for-profit organisations, community groups, trade unions and employer organisations, consultancy firms, universities, research bodies and think-tanks (e.g. OPEN, SIPTU, IBEC, NESF, NESF, CPA, NorDubCo, NIRSA etc.).
Networks:	All the above listed organisations, actors and intermediaries as they “identify and define other groups, actors, and intermediaries, together with the relationships that bring these together” (Callon 1991).
Translation:	Inscription of a meaning into an entity as it is negotiated into the network.
Convergence:	Degree to which processes of alignment and co-ordination of intermediaries work towards/impede consensus. - Alignment: generation of a shared space, equivalence and commensurability. - Co-ordination: rules and conventions concerning translation and alignment.
Boundaries:	Decisions as to whether or not and under what conditions entities shall or can be excluded from/included in the network.
Irreversibilisation:	Degree to which translation can be challenged, negotiated or reversed.

Source: Adapted from Callon (1991).

¹⁶⁶ According to Callon (1991: 135) “an actor is an entity that takes the last generation of intermediaries and transforms (combines, mixes, concatenates, degrades, computes, anticipates) these to create the next generation”.

Following Murdoch's (1998) reflections on 'spaces of negotiation' and 'spaces of prescription', the empirical evidence suggests that the envisaged integration of APCs and other local development agencies and local government largely occurs in the latter setting. This is because the potential for APCs to negotiate their position within the governance system appears to be delimited by immutable mobiles that have been recruited by network-builders to hold APCs in check (see Chapter 6, Section 6.2.7).

The analysis of the interview material illustrated that both human *and* non-human agents – such as professionals (see Chapter 6, Section 6.2.1), review reports and accounting techniques (see Chapter 6, Section 6.3.1) or administrative areas (see Chapter 6, Section 6.2.6) – capture and carry past experiences and intentions across time and space. Furthermore, these agents facilitate the stitching together of *heterogeneous entities* (see Chapter 3, Section 3.2.1.1) into a new local governance system in Dublin. The control over the creation and circulation of immutable mobiles and agents enables network builders to enrol desired objects, place them strategically within the network and act or perform *through* them. For example, it could be shown that funding arrangements for APCs have the status of immutable mobiles because they reliably communicate centrally-devised objectives to APCs. The analysis of the empirical data illustrates that systemic compatibility between APCs, as one of the key players of state-funded local development bodies (Walsh 1998), and local government was hoped to be facilitated through:

- the introduction of new government-affiliated institutions (Chapter 6, Section 6.2.5);
- a tightening of guidelines and parameters prescribing output-oriented performance-monitoring and accountability systems (Chapter 6, Section 6.3.1); and
- the pursuit of business-inspired governance practices (Chapter 6, Section 6.4).

This study, however, reveals a dilemma endemic to the contemporary re-configuration of the governance system in Dublin: on the one hand, long-term objectives and developmental aspects of APC-work are acknowledged as something that is valuable to network-builders and, therefore, need to be translated into the system with a view to creating cohesion and cost-effectiveness; on the other hand, the contemporary mechanism created to facilitate the alignment of APCs into the governance system bears the risk that APCs, in the process of translation, lose those characteristics considered most relevant by their political funders as outlined in *The Developmental Welfare State* (NESC 2005) and portrayed by means of excerpts from the interview material in Chapter 6 (see, for example, quotes from interviews in Sections 6.4.5.1 and 6.4.5.2). The empirical data also indicates that the alignment of APCs under the cohesion process comes at the cost of *incomplete translation*. In short, some characteristic elements of APCs will be transformed, some will be enhanced and some will be lost. Viewpoints expressed by government officials and DCC professionals suggest that a loss of certain local development features of APCs, for example as a result of the cohesion process, is expected to be compensated by an increasing capacity of APCs in complementing statutory service-delivery functions (see Chapter

6, Section 6.2.7). The following sections more specifically examine the potential of ANT to explain: first, the alignment of APCs with local government structures (Section 7.2.2); second, the accountability and monitoring requirements for APCs (Section 7.2.3); third, the role of value-for-money principles (Section 7.2.4).

7.2.2 Institutionalisation

A multiplicity of processes has contributed to what, in ANT-terms, can be described as *domestication* of APCs: the incorporation of APCs into the apparatus of the state. This decision was informed by the government-initiated review of local development structures (see Chapter 6, Section 6.2.4). Before domestication happens though, the compatibility of APC structures with the governance system needs to be developed through processes of inscription or translation (see Table 7.1 further above). This means that APCs have been made part of the extended DCC-administered governance network in a way “that some of their key properties remain intact” (Murdoch 1997: 741). These domesticated key properties are those features that are considered relevant by the actors who propel forward the governance restructuring, in general, and the cohesion process, in particular (see also Chapter 6, Section 6.2.6). A combination of policies resulted in the creation and circulation of immutable mobiles e.g.: the introduction of business-like terminology; new funding criteria; output-oriented performance measures; and new local development structures such as the CDB or RAPID (see Chapter 6, Sections 6.2.2 and 6.2.5.1 respectively).

In this context, it needs mentioning that the circulation of ‘narratives of duplication’ and perceptions of “local organisations tripping over themselves” (Interview DCC 8) played the role of immutable mobiles as these perceptions became manifest in documents that were used for propagating the cohesion process (see Chapter 6, Section 6.2.6). The analysis of the empirical data suggests that it is within the power of key individuals in government departments to communicate their political ideas through powerful narratives that not necessarily reflect the real situation on the ground¹⁶⁷ (cf. NDP/CSF Evaluation Unit 2003). Nevertheless, key individuals still influence and shape the definition of core principles and priorities that, in turn, result in the circulation of intermediaries that impact on the local-governance system¹⁶⁸.

ANT facilitates the de-construction of institutional restructuring in Dublin into a succession of inter-related steps of network-building. It was found that the re-positioning of APCs within the governance system is controlled from within the sphere of governmental decision making. Central network builders utilise their power through the strategic circulation of intermediaries and immutable mobiles – such as new agencies, legislation, review reports and individuals – within the governance framework. A new legislative framework (e.g. *Public Services Management Act, 1997*; *Local Government Act 2001*) and related government programmes initiated the

¹⁶⁷ This relates to Gramsci’s thoughts on the role of the *organic intellectual*.

¹⁶⁸ These processes are reminiscent of Althusser’s concept of *overdetermination* (see Chapter 3, Section 3.3.4.2).

establishment of a parallel local development network within the public sector that consisted of DCC-associated (LACs, RAPID) and -affiliated (the CDB and its sub structures) fora and structures (see Chapter 6, Section 6.2, Figure 5).

The decisions for the establishment of the Dublin CDB, SITFs, LACs and RAPID meant that Dublin City Council was allowed to gain a foothold in a domain that had previously been managed by APCs. Tables 6.2 and 6.5 and 6.6 in Chapter 6 illustrate the organisational representation on these new structures. From the perspective of ANT, the staffing of these new structures – and in particular the Dublin CDB – with civil servants that are on the payroll of local authorities is a means to secure 'remote control' from headquarters through the circulation of reliable agents (cf. Law 1986). All these committees, task forces and initiatives were positioned under the umbrella of the local authorities. They were expected (a) that they 'can do things' on the behalf of network builders and (b) not to turn into 'double agents'. The appointment of DCC staff of a certain grade or level of seniority onto the board of APCs signals a political aspiration of the local authority to increase its influence in local development agencies operating in 'their' territory (see Chapter 6, Section 6.2.1).

Another aspect of the institutionalisation of APCs is the re-alignment of their operational boundaries with DCC's administrative districts. It is directed at increasing the systemic compatibility and, hence, the potential for co-operation between local-development sector and the local government system. Looking at the current restructuring of local governance, it is argued that the processes of institutionalisation, accountability and value for money work hand in hand with a more specific goal in mind: to facilitate the harmonisation between local development and local government systems through the cohesion process, which, from the viewpoint of ANT, serves as 'a technology of ordering' (Law 1994). The cohesion process illustrates that the approximation between APCs and public administration is not limited to physical changes concerning the institutional landscape and administrative boundaries.

Guidelines circulated to APCs make explicit and detailed recommendations for the operational restructuring of APCs (DoCRGA 04/04/2007, 31/07/2007a). The departmental guidelines that were circulated to APCs propose to change the composition of their board structure and, moreover, make a case for the appointment of a government-approved chair. These proposals are emblematic of government efforts to facilitate the integration of APCs into a governance system through measures dictated by priorities of those individuals responsible for the authorship of the guidelines. The following aspects were extracted from the guidelines. They serve to illustrate efforts to end the parity of esteem in terms of sectoral representation on APC boards (DoCRGA 04/04/2007). The guidelines propose:

- to increase local-authority representation on the APC board;
- to reduce membership from the social partners;
- to terminate board membership of T.D.s and Senators;

- to appoint the chair person under supervision of the Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs and/or the Director of the Dublin CDB;
- to prioritise the CDB over APCs in regard to the appointment of 'high profile' (i.e. senior) representatives from statutory bodies onto their board; and
- to increase the number of community representatives on the APC board¹⁶⁹.

Plans to implement the proposed guidelines, understood as the *embodiment of intentional action*, are another example to illustrate the power of 'things' to act: i.e. to increase the bargaining power of local authority-affiliated individuals at board level, to prevent Oireachtas members from formal participation in APCs and to reduce the influence of the social partners. The DoCRGA-issued recommendations concerning the board composition of APCs curtail the action ability of APCs because their boards will effectively be less balanced in terms of sectoral composition.

In regard to the analysis of contemporary governance restructuring based on the empirical material, ANT is a particularly useful framework for:

- 'thin-slicing' complex processes into their constituent elements and scrutinise the role played by each of the elements;
- identifying nodal points of power relevant to the creation of immutable mobiles;
- following actors and entities as they move and interact within the governance network;
- a detailed description of 'networked' interactions, which contributes to an understanding of how things and technologies can be mobilised as remote-controlled carriers of centrally-devised priorities.

7.2.3 Accountability and monitoring arrangements

The funding dependency of APCs on the state in the aftermath of the 1994-1999 OPLURD is another pivotal element that facilitates the domestication of APCs (see Chapter 6, Section 6.3.3.1): it limits the capacity of formerly quasi-autonomous APCs to negotiate their position vis-à-vis new government-initiated local development structures. APCs might be in a position marginally to influence the quality of their relationship with the state, but they cannot simply resist government plans of aligning state-funded APCs with local government systems or, in other words, to 'bring them home'.

A typical example that illustrates ANT's concept of general symmetry¹⁷⁰ is the argument for the introduction of annual budgets advanced by Minister Ó Cuiv, T.D. (FF) (see Section 6.3.3.2). The annual budgeting system that was introduced after the end of EU funding facilitated the governmental control over APCs (see Chapter 6,

¹⁶⁹ Arrangements, however, are suggested to be open to accept nominations from members of the CBD-led (and hence DCC-affiliated) city-wide Community Forum.

¹⁷⁰ Principle of general symmetry: ANT attributes the ability to exert agency to both humans and things. General symmetry also means that what appear to be fix structures are, in fact, outcomes of interactions between networked entities (see Chapter 3, Section 3.1, Table 3.1).

Section 6.3.3.1). Irrespective of stated commitments to consider the introduction of multi-annual budgeting as a basis for long-term planning in the community and voluntary sector (Government of Ireland 2000), existing budgeting practice in the public sector was depicted as 'an immutable mobile' that would prevent the continuation of multi-annual budgets for APCs: in 2003, responding to a parliamentary question, the Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs argued that "money cannot be carried forward *because the financing system does not allow for it*" (Dáil Éireann 25/06/2003: no page numbers, emphasis added) and that no exception was to be made for APCs. This line of argument illustrates the role of things as actants:

If I want to have actors in my account, they have to do things, not to be place-holders; if they do something they have to make a difference (Latour 2004).

The funding mechanism is either perceived or deliberately portrayed as something that broke free from its political creators and became an independent source of power that influences decisions within government circles. Formal reporting requirements and other composite elements of the funding mechanism are summarised in Table 6.7 (see Chapter 6, Section 6.3.1). Other key actants that determine the characteristics of funding arrangements and associated reporting requirements are:

- the output-oriented nature of the SCOPE system, which has not undergone significant changes over the last few years;
- the authoritative nature of the endorsement process of APC plans through the CDBs; and
- the perceived rigidity of some eligibility criteria – such as the definition of budget parameters.

The reporting mechanism illustrates that APCs are subject to an elaborate and highly standardised accountability and monitoring system that allows for little input 'from below' (i.e. is mainly controlled by agents of the state with comparatively little formal accountability to the community). Respondents from APCs perceive the reporting duties – such as the electronic transmission of SCOPE data, the submission of annual reports, case studies or quarterly financial returns – as overly onerous and disproportionate if compared to the modest APC budget (see Chapter 6, Section 6.3.1). Moreover, the quarterly SCOPE report is limited to capture quantitative information such as the number individuals progressed into employment or the number of community projects supported (see Appendix 3, Table A-3.1). Even though SCOPE was perceived by both APC and ADM professionals as a 'number crunching exercise', it is still used as a performance standard that ensures a consistency in information flow and indicates comparative progress of APC to both ADM and political sponsors.

A combination of different methods assesses the performance of APCs in terms of money management and programme progression. Monitoring procedures consist of a plethora of complementary intermediaries or immutable mobiles that are designed to ensure compliance of APCs with the contractually agreed agenda and priorities outlined in their programme of activities (see Appendix 3, Table A-3.2). Annualised

budgets and the characteristic features of SCOPE are not considered optimally tailored to meet the realities within which APCs operate. They are, however, perceived as constant factors or, in the words of ANT, immutable mobiles, rather than regarded as variables that can easily be altered or changed through political action. The analysis of the interviews confirmed that funding and accountability arrangements of APCs consist of complex *formal and informal* relationships: it seems as if both things and humans would complement one another and, together, would 'negotiate' a conclusion as to whether or not accountability and funding criteria have been met.

7.2.4 Value for money

The findings portrayed in Chapter 6 suggest that the pursuit of the cohesion strategy since 2003 promotes the co-option of APCs into local government-led structures. It also could be demonstrated that the cohesion process, as part of a wider strategy that is rooted in the Strategic Management Initiative (SMI), requires APCs to comply with value-for-money principles. The increasing importance of value for money had already been identified as a key theme in the re-configuration of Dublin's governance framework (see Section 6.3). The intensification of external control and performance-monitoring systems for funding arrangements and associated accountability practices has also been accompanied by the introduction of self-auditing measures and certificates directed at encouraging better governance.

Respondents from APCs feel that more and more of their time goes into responding to the reporting and monitoring requirements laid out by their funders. Examples for elements of the technology of auditing are (see also Chapter 6, Section, 6.3.1, Table 6.7):

- quantitative measures (such as the SCOPE system and Target Sheets);
- self-monitoring and -auditing practices – such as *Excellence Through People* and the *Q-mark*;
- efforts to capture qualitative work of APCs (such as through case studies and the Himmelman Model).

The utilisation of VFM-related auditing and self-assessment protocols are expected to step up the performance of APCs in delivering services into their communities. The promotion of a new professionalism among APCs is facilitated through the circulation of immutable mobiles. From the perspective of ANT, VFM auditing techniques are immutable mobiles because they are 'things' that do not change their meaning, form or shape and, more importantly, can make a difference. In the end, they communicate political priorities that are *hoped to induce behavioural changes* among APCs. The *Excellence Through People Award*, the *Q-mark*, the assessment of collaborative practice (based on the Himmelman Model) and VFM audits have been designed to optimise the internal economies and procedural effectiveness of APCs. They evaluate the *status quo* and point out the potential for improvements concerning the quality of

management and professional work practices that are considered essential to achieve the overall purpose of any APC.

The empirical data exemplifies the relevance of principles associated with ANT to explain the role of VFM in funding and accountability procedures such as:

- the Latourian concept of power understood as the capacity of 'things' to induce behavioural changes that have not been anticipated prior to their creation or circulation (Latour 2004); or
- Pickering's notion of the mangle of practice and his argument that "the contours of material agency are never decisively known in advance" (Pickering 1993: 564).

The measurement of collaboration based on the Himmelman Model, for example, has been proposed in acknowledgement of the diversity of activities pursued by APCs that cannot be captured by traditional performance-monitoring systems. According to ADM (Pobal 2006a: 12), the new model was "developed in the context of promoting integrated service delivery" with a view to accounting for qualitative aspects of APC work and measuring "the extent to which true collaboration takes place". The import of a technology that measures integrative efforts by APCs complements quantitative monitoring tools and is hoped to lead to a more complete picture of APC performance.

The practical implications of existing and proposed accountability and monitoring practices re-enforce arguments and views from the empirical case research that were highlighted and discussed in the two previous sections: i.e. that, from the angle of ANT, the development of immutable mobiles such as accountability and performance-monitoring systems and the introduction of value for money standards are a manifestation of usually successful efforts to enrol, tame and domesticate APCs (understood as a remote-controlled peripheral unit of material and human entities) into a governance system that can be controlled from centrally-placed network builders.

7.2.5 Summary

What is regarded as the funding framework is a result of the (historically) negotiated or prescribed positioning of APCs as *per se* complex entities within the 'meta-network' of governance. According to Murdoch's notion of first-order proximations (see Chapter 3, Section 3.3.2.2), the negotiations, and agreement, on the national partnership model in 1987 and more recent ambitions to move towards the DWS (NESC 2005) provide the wider framework within which ANT looks at processes that aligns APCs (as 'dependent' stakeholders) into a structure that is tailored to communicate, translate, complement and/or replicate the will of network builders:

Those who are powerful are not those who 'hold' power but are those able to enrol, convince, and enlist others into networks on terms which allow the initial actors to 'represent' the others. Powerful actors speak for all the enrolled entities and actors, and control the means of representation [...]. The controlling actor grows by borrowing the force of others; it can inflate to a larger size [...]. Power is, therefore, the composition of the network (Murdoch 1995: 748).

Law's (1986) concept of remote control provides a practical framework for mapping central-peripheral or top-down power flows within Dublin's governance framework and the role of accountability and performance-monitoring systems therein. ANT can be utilised to cast light on 'things' or activities that make up what is discernible as the funding mechanism for APCs and, thereby, offers an approach to make assumptions on the construction of governance and the re-enforcement of power imbalances therein. From the viewpoint of ANT, accountability and performance monitoring are technologies that ensure the delegation of power throughout the governance network. This is achieved through the circulation of immutable mobiles (see Table 7.1 in previous section) as a material *and* social manifestation of power that holds local APCs firmly within a prescribed social, economic and 'geographical envelope' that is remote-controlled from within the political centre (see Chapter 3, Section 3.3.2.2). ANT can be deployed to scrutinise the functionality of immutable mobiles and break down their role in shifting power among networked entities.

This thesis illustrates that ANT is a conceptual tool that can be utilised to dismantle the complex governance system, funding and accountability procedures as well as performance-monitoring and auditing technologies into their constituent parts: humans and non-human entities such as:

- the placement of senior DCC staff on APC boards (Chapter 6, Section 6.2.1);
- the establishment of RAPID outside APC structures and its perceived failure (Chapter 6, Section 6.2.5.1): "They have now created a monster" (Interview DCC 3b);
- the discontinuance of multi-annual funding (Chapter 6, Section 6.3.3.2);
- the decentralisation of DCC through legislative change and the establishment of the CDBs (Chapter 6, Sections 6.2.1 and 6.2.2);
- the semiotic use of language (Chapter 6, Section 6.4.2);
- the creation and spread of narratives of duplication (Chapter 6, Section 6.2.6); or
- the obligatory endorsement of APC plans by the Dublin CDB (Chapter 6, Sections 6.2.4.3 and 6.3.3.3).

So, usually, the circulation of institutional agents and immutable mobiles from strategic positions within the governance framework (the 'enroller') was hoped to prompt or induce a desired behavioural change of APCs (the 'enrollee'). ANT emphasises the existence of an interplay between spaces of negotiation and prescription (Murdoch 1998), which is overlapped by an interplay between collaboration and resistance as described by Pickering's account of the 'mangle of practice' (Pickering 1993). In following circulated – or observing strategically placed – agents, immutable mobiles and/or intermediaries through the governance network, it was discovered that processes of enrolment resulted in interactions between networked entities that did not always yield the outcomes that had been expected. According to the account given by respondents from different backgrounds, a variety of influential forces that had initially

not been considered relevant became quite influential in challenging the efficacy of circulated entities¹⁷¹ vis-à-vis their original objectives, namely:

- to boost the operational potential and capacity of APCs in ameliorating symptoms of poverty and deprivation in collaboration with the state, social partners, public representatives and local communities;
- to achieve an alignment of APCs with local government systems which has been facilitated by the Local Government Act 2001 and the cohesion process; and
- to prepare APCs for their more specific role within the statutory governance system as activist measures supporting the aims and objectives of the Developmental Welfare State (NESC 2005).

This study finds that the recruitment and circulation of immutable mobiles (e.g. the Dublin CDB, VFM audits and new guidelines for APC boards) by dominant network builders (e.g. the DoCRGA) comes at the cost of simplification. The focus on qualities concerning the performance of APCs are reduced to black boxes (see Chapter 3, Section 3.1, Table 3.1), which obscure innate complexities and characteristic features of actions and activities that lead to desired outcomes:

- The cohesion process could be regarded as a black box-type mechanism: it aims at minimising the internal frictional resistance of APCs to the transformation of input (i.e. funding) into desired output (i.e. reduced poverty and less fiscal expenditure for social consumption).
- The set of performance-monitoring procedures is another prime example for black-boxing: the SCOPE system is designed to measure output of an APC and, thereby, to indicate value for money to political decision-makers. It solely records achievements in form of quantitative data that masks both qualitative aspects (outcomes) and the complexity of activities that had to be invested to implement actions and progress projects in the first place (see Chapter 6, Section 6.4.5.3);
- In a similar vein, government-approved certificates and standards fulfil a semiotic function as they are the embodiment of a variety of internal measures, processes and standards, which indicate 'professionalism', 'good governance', 'value for money' and a 'can-do attitude' to relevant strategic partners that could resource the work of APCs.

Bearing in mind, however, that the exact outcomes of a systematic enrolment of entities, black-boxing and/or the circulation of intermediaries cannot be predicted owing to the complexity and heterogeneity of 'networked material'. Accidental interactions or undesired side-effects could result in unpredicted blockages and resistance that may jeopardise the intended outcomes of network builders. The RAPID programme is an example for the perceived failure of statutory efforts to optimise the investment of earmarked resources into severely disadvantaged areas (see Chapter 6, Section 6.2.5.1). Thus, the anticipated and 'real' impact of enrolment can differ. In the

¹⁷¹ An analogy is provided by Glaser's efforts to construct the bubble chamber (Pickering 1993: 568-574; for more info on the Glaser's invention, see Science Matters 2005).

end, agents at both ends of the power spectrum, such as forces within government, on the one hand, and APCs, on the other hand, *could* turn into double agents. Taking into account the descriptive nature of ANT, it follows that prescriptions or directives that are intended to control the behaviour of networked entities (such as APCs) can only be identified in hindsight – when roles and behaviour between ‘enroller’ (as the emitter of power) and the ‘enrollee’ (as the envisaged subject to it) has already been negotiated, and, more importantly, when they are not camouflaged, but are clearly identifiable to the observer.

In ANT terms, the circulation of agents and agencies under the LDSIP represents a colonisation of the governance network in a way that is conducive to the priorities pursued by the network builders. For example, senior DCC-employees and national experts expressed a desire:

- to progress public-sector modernisation;
- to emulate the European model of local government;
- to increase DCC’s levels of competency in local development; and
- to set priorities for local development policy and practice.

Based on its micro-sociological approach to analysing the circulation of power within networks, ANT is particularly suitable to identify, describe and follow actors and immutable mobiles as they get enrolled into, interact within, or pass through Dublin’s governance framework. ANT can tell a story about how APCs became gradually incorporated into a new local-governance system. It can assess the performative power and sphere of activity of guidelines, governance standards, reporting requirements and individuals in creating or altering the power balance in Dublin’s governance network. It can ascertain the degree to which the circulation of things (e.g. circular letters) and humans (e.g. staffing of new structures) fulfil their role as remote-controlled entities that are hoped to obediently embody political will and perform accordingly.

In all, ANT emerges as an approach that is suitable to map out and profile the ‘mechanics’ of re-positioning APCs within Dublin’s landscape of urban governance. ANT is particularly suitable for highlighting the instrumental role of relatively static monitoring tools designed, first, to assess the handling of funding and programmatic progress and, in addition, to give guidance in regard to the eligibility of potential actions in regard to the parameters set out in the LDSIP – such as the SCOPE system, the annual target sheet and relevant guidelines and budget parameters. Following heterogeneous materials such as funding guidelines, HR standards and value-for-money principles throughout the governance system proved useful for understanding *how* APCs ‘became negotiated’ into a new position within the network space or governance. However, this study also identified weaknesses of ANT. These are discussed in the following section.

7.2.6 ANT and intentionality: the sore spot – case closed?

This thesis attempts to assess the gravitational pull of different actors and entities in relation to their influence to exert, to negotiate or to resist power. Strong evidence could be presented, suggesting that the re-positioning of APCs within Dublin's governance network took place under the dictate of state-defined terms and conditions; mainly through the circulation of (quasi-)immutable intermediaries and agents. Then again, respondents from different quarters acknowledged that sites of contestation between all kinds of networked entities emerged, which, at times, altered the centrally-devised agenda for restructuring governance. Examples for the latter case are the perceived failure of RAPID (see Chapter 6, Section 6.2.5.1) and the ability of APCs to 'twist arms' through informal networking and, thereby, undermining the immutability of circulated intermediaries (see Chapter 6, Section 6.4.5.2). However, by and large, the scope of APCs to resist unwanted change is limited. This thesis showed that the evolution towards new governance structures in Dublin and related policy directives have long-lasting and almost irremediable effects: once created through *intentional human action*, legislation and institutional structures stand for longevity, immutability and will continue to carry power of their intellectual fathers but, as indicated in the case study, only if, and as long as, it suits those within, or with meaningful access to, the political decision-making arenas in government buildings.

The exploration of the empirical material identified a strong ideological drive for governance restructuring *from within and through* the structures provided by the state. This impetus was not found to be meaningfully resisted or considerably altered by APCs and other relevant actors operating in the sphere of local governance. Even though the evidence presented suggests that 'things' have a capacity to act, it was found not to be a capacity *per se*. According to the views elicited from interviews with key individuals from a variety of different institutional and professional backgrounds, it became clear that processes of ideation and worldviews of certain network builders have been instrumental in shaping the structural frame of governance restructuring within which struggles involving 'things' and humans might develop.

ANT provides a useful strategic approach for studying processes at the interfaces between and within heterogeneous networked entities that result in new outcomes. But if the principle of general symmetry is strictly applied, ANT has probably to remain silent on *explaining* funding arrangements. ANT cannot sufficiently account for factors influencing perceptions, motivations and the professional 'psyche' of key individuals that have been identified as instrumental in defining the order of priorities (a) that gave rise to the formation of structures that shape the governance network in Dublin and (b) that are behind the new formation of governance and the design of interrelated funding arrangements for APCs. The following two main sections will ascertain if some of these explanatory gaps can be addressed by Stone's concept of socially produced power in urban regimes (Section 7.3) or ideas that are rooted in Gramscian thinking (Section 7.4).

7.3 URT

7.3.1 Introduction

According to URT, access to well-resourced and powerful decision-making circles in Dublin is dependent on the capacity of individuals, groups or organisations to make a meaningful contribution – be it political power, know-how or money – to the implementation of an agenda prioritised by those who are in power. In the context of this thesis, URT needs to identify resource dependencies between a variety of interests that are involved in, or affected by, re-structuring governance. URT can possibly be utilised to examine the (informal) influence of alliances between key stakeholders involved in restructuring Dublin's governance landscape and its implications for plans and activities of APCs. A particular challenge is to elicit the role that business interests play in the integration of APCs into a DCC-led institutional ensemble of agencies that are tasked to streamline local development initiatives in the city.

The analysis of the empirical material gathered in the case study shows that the formation of informal relationships is instrumental for APCs' capacity to forge a meaningful coalition among a variety of stakeholders involved in Dublin's landscape of local governance (see Chapter 6). At first sight, URT seems to offer a satisfactory approach to explaining the empirical findings of the case study because it specifically revolves around "the *informal arrangements* that surround and complement the formal workings of governmental authority" (Stone 1989: 3, original emphasis).

In the context of this thesis, the application of URT is based on the presupposition that the achievement of governmental authority and successful civic cooperation across institutional and sectoral boundaries is dependent on resources provided by the private sector. Stone (1989: 7) defines an urban regime "as the informal arrangements through which public bodies and private interests function together to make and carry out governing decisions". He acknowledges that, first, the term *private interest* is not confined to the business elite and, indeed, refers to other sectors from civil society such as the trade unions, political parties or not-for-profit organisations. In fact, these are the sectors involved in decision-making processes concerning the national and local partnership model in Ireland (see Chapter 2, Section 2.2).

But Stone equally highlights that even though business interests may not be overt, they are always part of the regime, either in a passive role or represented through intermediaries. Despite disagreements among scholars as to whether or not URT is an approach that can be applied in the European context, there is general agreement that successful urban regime formation – understood as the ability to create an alliance equipped with the power to govern – is dependent on resources provided by the private sector.

7.3.2 URT on the test bench: a case of fitting square pegs into round holes?

In the case of Dublin, analysts highlight the involvement of private capital in land development and draw attention to increasingly entrepreneurial strategies and urban boosterism which is targeted at maximising investments into economic activities into the city (McGuirk 1994; Bartley and Shine 1999, 2003; McGuirk and MacLaran 2001; MacLaran and Williams 2003; Punch *et al.* 2004; Punch 2004; Hogan 2006). Case studies in Dublin illustrate that in the mid-1980s urban planning and development policies became dominated by an entrepreneurial ethos. This is mirrored in policies promoting tax incentives, property-based regeneration initiatives and forms of corporate ventures such as public-private partnerships and special-purpose development agencies (MacLaran and Williams 2003). At the same time, the notoriously under-resourced local authority in Dublin started pursuing a new managerial ethos that embraced a market-led approach to urban development (see Chapter 6, Section 6.2.1).

Throughout the interviews with DCC professionals, it emerged that the role of APCs and community participation in profit-oriented urban development or regeneration projects is systematically excluded as participatory models of regeneration based on consultation 'slow things down', which, effectively, negatively impacts on profitability (see Chapter 6, Section 6.2.7). If regeneration projects allow for community involvement, then, in the words of a respondent from DCC, only 'those who suit us' are invited to participate (Interview DCC 7). In these instances the URT concept of small incentives can explain how little concessions are made by powerbrokers as a way to get support from those factions within the community that could jeopardise the success of lucrative property-based regeneration projects such as Residents Associations Community Development Projects, APCs, Community Activists or local bottom-up regeneration initiatives (e.g. St. Michael's Estate Regeneration Team or Tenants First). URT can explain the utilisation of small incentives as a means to get buy-in from or discipline those residents and community groups whose opposition could torpedo urban regeneration projects. Even though making concessions in form of material and other promises might reduce profit maximisation, it guarantees the overall success of the project. Reaching agreement based on the control over selective interests that capacitates interest groups with the power to make 'side payments' is undoubtedly a tokenistic form of inclusion which sits well with URT principles:

A group or governing coalition that has a capacity to further small opportunities on go-along-to-get-along terms is in a strong position to attract allies rather than activate opponents (Stone 1989: 193).

A few case studies illustrate how powerful alliances of developers and local authorities apply small opportunities in a strategic way to appease potential opposition from residents, local community activists and not-for-profit agencies (Saris *et al.* 2000; Saris *et al.* 2002; Hogan 2005; Punch 2005). Acknowledging the importance business interests play in urban development policy in Dublin, the analysis of the interview

material suggests that the restructuring of the local-governance model concerning social urban regeneration processes involving APCs appears to be driven from within government buildings; i.e. no influence from economic elites could be identified. According to the views expressed by government officials and senior DCC staff, the envisaged role of APCs under an integrated governance model could cement links between local development and local government which will improve cost-effectiveness of state-funded social-inclusion measures. Professional expertise and experience gathered under the umbrella of APCs makes them an attractive coalition partner under a re-shuffled regime of managerial governance in Dublin.

Respondents from DCC could foresee APCs as a vehicle that can be used to address issues of social exclusion under the auspices of DCC, operating as a form of sub-contractor under negotiated or prescribed service-level agreements (see Chapter 6, Section 6.2.6). Whereas local development agencies are either excluded from involvement in profit-oriented regeneration schemes or invited under terms and conditions dictated by those in control of selective interests, they are welcome to deal with the adverse effects of unbalanced economic development opportunities. Contemporary practice in urban policy in Dublin illustrates that a sharp line exists between the sphere of economic-driven urban development and social urban regeneration.

Taking a lead from those analysts who argue in favour of an application of URT in a non-US urban context (see Chapter 3, Section 3.2.2.2), URT can probably explain economically driven urban development projects in Dublin and the exclusion of APCs and not-for-profit community interests from decision-making processes. The link between the factual exclusion of APCs from influencing wider processes concerning the physical urban regeneration and planning policies is remarkable because the phenomenon of urban deprivation and social exclusion is inextricably linked to the quality of the built environment: the profile of the case-study area and other 'poor places' (cf. Pringle *et al.* 1999) leads to the assumption that there exists a strong negative correlation between poverty and the availability and accessibility of statutory services, social infrastructure and amenities (Watson *et al.* 2005).

URT could be used as an approach to investigate the power relationships in urban economic development initiatives and property-based regeneration projects and the role of community interests therein. Perhaps this provides an entry point for additional research but lies not within the remit and scope of this case study. In fact, private sector capital has played a huge role in urban regeneration projects such as the development of the Dublin docklands through the Dublin Docklands Development Authority (DDDA) (Bartley and Shine 2003; Hogan 2005, 2006) or the urban renewal of the Temple Bar area through Temple Bar Properties Ltd. (Bartley *et al.* 1999; Payne and Stafford 2004). In the context of this study, it would be too far-fetched to use URT as an explanation for processes driving urban governance reform targeted at

promoting the integration between state-funded local development and local government as this process has been conceptualised and carried out from within government buildings (see Chapter 6, Section 6.2).

Some key principles of URT – such as informal networking and political clientelism – can be clearly identified as central features of power formation and relationships in urban governance in regard to the integration of local development and local government and its repercussions on funding arrangements. At the same time, however, the restructuring of the governance framework is portrayed as a consequence of neo-liberal managerial policies and their effective promulgation based on the influential workings of the interdepartmental *Task Force on the Integration of Local Government and Local Development Systems*. It appears that no private-sector business interest has been involved in the development of objectives for governance reform, neither directly or through representatives (Appendix 1, Table A-1.4).

The analysis of the empirical data revealed that URT is not a suitable theoretical concept to explicate the funding arrangements for APCs in the context of local-governance restructuring in Dublin, mainly because no relevant resource dependencies from the private sector could be identified¹⁷². The development of new local governance structures in Ireland and the design of funding arrangements for APCs have been conceptually devised from within government buildings; i.e. no business interest could be identified that was involved in shaping funding arrangements for APCs. APCs are based on an entirely different governance model than those pursued through profit-oriented urban regeneration projects (see examples above). Between their establishment in the early 1990s and the end of the LDSIP, APCs have always pursued a needs-based approach to local development, which mainly focused on complementing, or making up for gaps, in statutory welfare delivery – such as the development and implementation of labour-market related actions and activities that supported capacity-building and local self-help in disadvantaged areas (Chapter 2).

Apparently, in Dublin, little incentives exist for private sector involvement in shaping APC-type state-funded local development initiatives. Some involvement of the local business sector is probably to be found at the implementation stage of programmes as some of the APC actions involve local employers – mainly as possible partner in placing individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds into employment (e.g. Pobal 2006b: 36). In the case of exploring the causal forces shaping funding arrangements of APCs in Dublin, it is argued that the lack of discernable involvement from both business interest and private resources in repositioning APCs through institutional restructuring justifies to decline URT as a suitable tool to be applied in the context explaining processes at the interface between APCs and their political paymasters.

¹⁷² This does not imply that URT cannot be applied in the Irish context *per se*. Hogan (2006), for example, deploys growth machine theory, a concept that is based on the influence of powerful elites in pursuing their growth agenda, to explain urban developments in the Dublin Docklands.

Whereas the Irish government and the authorities in Dublin City pursue an (urban) economic development strategy based on public-private ventures, there is no indication that private sector involvement is required to attain governmental decision-making capacity in urban governance restructuring – as mirrored in the re-alignment of local development agencies with local government.

7.4 The RA

7.4.1 Introduction

From the regulationist perspective, national partnership agreements, the emergence of APCs, the SMI (which was particularly influenced by the New Zealand model for public-sector modernisation) and contemporary restructuring of urban governance in Dublin can be regarded as part and parcel of state-driven responses to an economic and, hence, fiscal crisis of the state. Jessop highlights the interdependency between fiscal solvency and economic growth:

“[...] the state is not only responsible for securing certain key conditions for the valorisation of capital and the social reproduction of labour power as a fictitious commodity but also has overall political responsibility for maintaining social cohesion in a socially divided, pluralistic social formation. In turn, taxes are both an unproductive deduction from private revenues (profits of enterprise, wages, interest, rents) and a means of financing collective investment and consumption to compensate for so-called 'market failures'” (Jessop 2001a: 10).

Taking a Gramscian stance, it can be argued that for ideas to become meaningful, they must be articulated within a hegemonic project; i.e. a project that stems from the economic sphere, but which is broad enough to incorporate diverse and even partly antagonistic ideas. According to McGuirk, Gramscian ideas can shed light on “the practices of political construction by which the elements of a hegemonic project are shaped” (McGuirk 2004: 1024). In Ireland, national partnership agreements represent such a hegemonic regulatory model (see Chapter 2, Section 2.2). State-initiated measures under the umbrella of the national partnership model generally pursued the creation of a business-friendly environment, coupled with policies addressing increasing societal polarisation and poverty through area-based responses (e.g. Turok 2001), public-sector modernisation (e.g. DoELG 1996) and the reformation of statutory welfare provision (e.g. NESC 2005).

The focus of APCs rests on the development of labour-market inclusion programmes and the promotion of social-inclusion policies. This was a response to perceived structural contradictions within the national frame of the contemporary accumulation regime (Fine Gael *et al.* 1994). The modifications and changes in Dublin's governance landscape over the last few years¹⁷³ and the re-positioning of APCs therein also reflect the objectives of the SMI (see Chapter 1, Section 1.4.2; Chapter 6, Section 6.4). Launched in 1994, the SMI became the foundation for public-sector reform in Ireland.

¹⁷³ This study focused on changes that occurred under the 2000-2006 LDSIP.

In 1997, Eric Embleton, then Assistant Secretary at the Department of Finance, described the reasons for developing the SMI in Ireland as follows:

A period of budget crisis forced downsizing and staff reductions in the civil service. As fiscal pressures and public constraints grew, a group of senior officials (Assistant Secretaries) *began meeting informally* to discuss what they could do to improve the functioning of the administration. *Later*, building on this effort, *they formally launched* the Strategic Management Initiative, a *non ideological approach* aiming strictly at improving management (OECD 1997: no page numbers, emphasis added).

In contrast to the above statement made by Mr. Embleton, the analysis of policy documents and recent institutional developments in Ireland suggests that the ambitions of the SMI, supposedly from the very outset, first, went far beyond a mere internal organisational reform of the public sector and, second, were *anything but* non-ideological. Mr. Embleton made reference to the power of senior officials to forge paradigmatic shifts in government practice and, thereby, shape the architecture of a new regulatory regime. This study identified a variety of other influences on shaping governance in Ireland such as economic development experiences and government systems from other cities in the US, the UK or mainland Europe (Bartley *et al.* 1999) that were 'brought home'. For example, 'educational field trips' of government representatives and officials that were encouraged by city-twinning possibly induced substantial consequences for urban development policy in Dublin:

The system we had at local government up to 1999 had changed very little over a hundred years. This is the problem. We are unusual here. I have been in some of the European cities, I've been in the States, and there, in the States, basically it's smaller councils. You'd have a council, I mean San Jose [California, USA], we're twinned with San Jose, and I've been over there and looked at their system of government. There you have the mayor in complete charge, who has complete authority, and [...] only ten councillors. [...] So I think we are top heavy. I think we will be better to look at reducing the number of elected politicians (Interview DCC 2).

This is a phenomenon described by Peck (2003: 228), emphasising the hegemonic influence of the US, as 'new channels of cross-border policy' and 'serial emulation'¹⁷⁴:

[...] American policies and programs have for years been generating a steady traffic of policy-makers and politicians from overseas, just as they have inspired countless imitators in other jurisdictions.

Following a neo-liberal governance model, the establishment of new institutional arrangements alongside existing local development agencies represents a paradigmatic change in urban governance. In Dublin, a variety of DCC-affiliated players was introduced into the governance system, most of which have a similar remit and agenda as state-funded APC-type local development agencies (e.g. RAPID; see Chapter 6, Section 6.2.5). *The Developmental Welfare State* articulates yet another, more recent, hegemonic project within the broader social partnership framework (NESC 2005). The NESC report highlights a strategy of policy and institutional adaptation as an appropriate and necessary response to "Ireland's long-run economic

¹⁷⁴ In this context, it is interesting to note that the New Zealand system, which was the template for Irish public reform, was informed by US management theories (Bartley and Shine 2003).

and social development vulnerabilities” (NESC 2005: ix). The NESC strongly recommends the development of a welfare system that, first, is tailored around the individual and, second, “not only addresses social risks, needs and inequalities more adequately, but also connects more fully with the dynamic of the economy” (*ibid.*). APCs are considered an integral part of proposed activist measures that, in a society with low unemployment, should complement labour inclusion policies. The report described the future role of APCs as follows:

Their mission today can be expressed as seeking to improve the inclusiveness of Ireland’s labour market by appropriately supplementing or influencing active labour market policies at the national level so that more of their clients in deprived areas can access Ireland’s stronger economy (NESC 2005: 189).

The status of APCs has been considerably modified under the cohesion strategy (see Chapter 6, Section 6.2.6). The analysis of the empirical material in Chapter 6 revealed that APCs are expected to play a stronger role as a delivery agent for local performance-oriented anti-poverty programmes, with a particular focus on labour-market inclusion measures. The analysis of published material and interview data leads to the assumption that the envisaged alignment and integration of APCs into the urban governance landscape is a state-driven regulatory response to the latent risk of unwanted societal consequences that are associated with the fragmentation of politico-economic spaces and its repercussions on Ireland’s economic competitiveness.

The views expressed throughout the interviews indicate that a neo-Gramscian perspective adds an ethico-political dimension to economic discourses that, according to Jessop, had long been neglected by the regulation approach (Jessop 1997b). The Gramscian concepts of hegemony and the organic intellectual (see Chapter 3, Section 3.3.4) can both contextualise and explain changes in Dublin’s institutional governance framework and the forces driving the repositioning of APCs therein – including the role of funding arrangements. The analysis also reveals that Althusser’s views on the nature of ideology and his concept of overdetermination provides scope for explaining non-economistic influence of the governance restructuring in Dublin as a responses to *perceived* contradictions within the contemporary features of the political economy¹⁷⁵ (see Chapter 3, Section 3.3.4.2, Figure 2) (cf. Goonewardena 2005).

This study explored processes that are below the surface of what, from the outside, appears to be merely driven by concerns about economic competitiveness and fiscal solvency. It also illustrates that social and political agency play a crucial role in the design of local governance in Ireland, which is part and parcel of the mode of social regulation (cf. Aglietta 1979: 19; Jessop 1990: 194; Tickell and Peck 1992: 192). The

¹⁷⁵ In essence, Althusser attempts to resolve the structure-agency dilemma by asking: “with what concept are we to think the determination of either an element or a structure by a structure?” (Althusser and Balibar 1970: 187).

interviews revealed that perceptions and views of senior government officials have been instrumental in designing the plans for a new architecture of governance¹⁷⁶:

I was wondering if you knew where the idea was coming from to do that? To establish the Task Force [i.e. the Interdepartmental Task Force on the Integration of Local Government and Local Development Systems] and to produce these reports?

It evolved from the thinking of a number of individuals who were around the ADM process. Not necessarily from within ADM, although Tony Crooks and myself would have an influence on it. But it would have come from a series of individuals – the only one of whom I can think of is still at a very senior level of government, a guy called Dermot McCarty, he's now secretary to the government. Paddy Teahon who is his predecessor would have been probably the originator of it. A woman called Sylva Langford who is an assistant secretary in, I think in Justice, Equality and Law Reform, would have been a supporter of it. A woman called Julie O'Neill [then Assistant Secretary to the Tánaiste] would have been a major supporter. So it is a coming together of a number of key senior civil servants, a couple of key agencies, working around what ADM was, who in conversation persuaded their political masters of this need (Interview NE 1b, emphasis added; see also Appendix 1, Table A-1.2).

Even though processes of institutionalisation, funding arrangements and value for money that were observed in the case study are probably informed by economic challenges in the last instance, empirical evidence could be presented suggesting that the re-design of local governance (which represents a prescriptive framework for the *modus operandi* of APCs), is based on the existence of a collective ideology influenced by (a) systemic power of organic intellectuals and (b) their perceptions of challenges to what was considered a societal and economic reality. The findings indicate that the conceptual ideas for statutory regulatory approaches such as national partnership agreements, the Strategic Management Initiative, the Developmental Welfare State and the cohesion process have been developed and successfully promoted by a number of organic intellectuals. These approaches are interconnected and must be seen in the wider context of regulatory responses of the state, which are ultimately directed at securing fiscal solvency and economic competitiveness.

7.4.2 Institutionalisation

In the case of the Greater Dublin Area (GDA), phenomena associated with social and economic challenges have been documented in detail elsewhere (Killen and MacLaran 1999; McGuirk and MacLaran 2001; Bartley and Shine 2003; MacLaran and Williams 2003; Punch 2004; Punch *et al.* 2004). The adverse effects of uneven economic development manifest in spatial segregation as expressed in “the creation of a city with ‘accessibly rich’ and ‘accessibly poor spaces” (Bartley and Saris 1999: 82). The area-based approach to local development and the establishment of APCs was a response to socio-spatial disparities that became manifest in the emergence of

¹⁷⁶ This finding corresponds with Jayasuriya's (2004: 490) finding that “the ‘core executive’ of the state takes on a pivotal role as the coordinator of metagovernance” as they are not only influential in shaping the nature of the governance network but also are instrumental in creating rules for the coordination of regulatory resources.

unemployment blackspots, areas liable to social unrest¹⁷⁷ and economic dependency (see Chapter 2, Section 2.2.1).

The concept of *meta-regulation*¹⁷⁸ provides an explanatory framework for the introduction of APCs as part and parcel of sub-systems of governance that are driven by super-regulatory policies. Collinge (1999: 559) describes meta-regulation as “the systemic process of restructuring the corrective regulatory mechanisms when these begin to fail, and when normal crises become ‘structural’”. Morgan (2003) provides a definition of meta-regulation that is suitable to illustrate the hegemonic role of business-inspired governance models in Dublin:

In essence, meta-regulation manages the tensions between the ‘social’ and ‘economic’ goals of regulatory politics, tensions that enflame passionate and highly wrought political conflict over the ethical limits of global capitalism [...] Meta-regulation excludes competing ways of understanding regulatory policy choices, causing bureaucrats to ‘translate’ aspects of social welfare that previously may have been expressed in the language of need, vulnerability or harm into the language of market failures or market distortion (Morgan 2003: 491).

In the context of this study, the concept of meta-regulation also highlights a dialectical relationship between economic imperatives of governance restructuring demanding fiscal-efficient and legitimate resource utilisation by APCs, on the one hand, and the pursuit of participatory models of community involvement in shaping new local regulatory processes, on the other. The SMI-initiated modernisation of public administration led to a paradigmatic shift in local governance that had considerable implications for the *modus operandi* of APCs. The workings of the Interdepartmental Task Force, the DWS report (NESC 2005) and, hence, the question of ideologically motivated driving forces for restructuring governance – and the re-positioning of local bottom-up initiatives therein – come into play when discussing the process of institutionalisation from the vantage point of the RA. Under the cohesion process they gradually became subject to processes directed at facilitating their alignment and integration into a local authority-administered local development structure.

The views elicited from the interviews and literature review show how the utilisation of values that are dominant in centres of command impact on shaping new institutional regulatory arrangements and a complementary support framework that works through the instigation of new dependencies for APCs. From the viewpoint of RA, the creation of new local modes of meta-regulation that influence how APCs prioritise actions and with whom they engage could be ideologically traced back to (a) the new managerial ethos of public-sector reform and (b) processes of ideological coercion prescribed through ‘structural restructuring’ of the institutional framework, new performance standards and the re-figuration of the funding framework.

¹⁷⁷ See Bartley and Saris (1999) on the 1995 Gallanstown riot (Cherry Orchard) in the case study area.

¹⁷⁸ Meta-regulation refers to the design of actions that work towards ensuring the re-productivity of social processes exerting control over the accumulation process (Tickell and Peck 1992).

The interview material clearly suggests that the gradual co-option of APCs into a state-controlled local-governance system prioritises questions of service delivery and efficiency (output) over questions of participatory democracy and process-orientation (outcome). APCs have been established to complement national regulatory strategies by means of developing local responses that help to resolve contradictions within the contemporary regime of accumulation. Irrespective of their broader anti-poverty agenda and their remit to improve governance practice in co-operation with the public sector, the social partners, local politicians and groups from civil society (Turok 2001), the role of APCs has been somehow limited to the development and implementation of local labour-market inclusion strategies, work activation measures and bridging gaps in statutory service delivery¹⁷⁹:

Its [the APC's] purpose is to produce and implement a plan with objectives to accelerate local economic development and thereby increase employment and to tackle exclusion and marginalisation resulting from long-term unemployment, poor educational attainment, poverty and demographic dependency [...] Partnerships also provide a service to encourage entrepreneurship (Crooks 1998: 34-35; cf. Pobal 2006b).

Reviews also highlight the innovative capacity of APCs to develop and deliver programmes addressing disadvantage as a strength that led to their proliferation (Goodbody Economic Consultants 1999; Turok 2001; NESC 2005). APCs are acknowledged as a valuable resource base because they fulfil a specific complementary role within the statutory regulatory framework (cf. NESC 2005: 190), namely:

- to ameliorate a mismatch “between transformations in production conditions and in the use of social output (household consumption, investment, public expenditures, international trade and so on)” (Lipietz 1992: 311); and
- to facilitate processes of governance restructuring directed at maximising the use of statutory resources¹⁸⁰.

The analysis of the interview material indicates that, from the viewpoint of agents of the state, the merits of APCs in facilitating regulation are:

- their know-how about the terrain of struggle; and
- their added value to governance based on a capacity to bridge an ‘ideological gap’ between groups from civil society and statutory bodies (see Chapter 6, Section 6.4.5.1);
- their potential to develop programmes addressing “the perceived challenges to the role and effectiveness of the state (and indeed other public authorities) in the face of forces such as globalisation” (McCarthy 2007: 14).

¹⁷⁹ The term *work activation* describes policies directed at moving social welfare recipients (of working age) into paid employment.

¹⁸⁰ DoCRGA guidelines suggest including representation from the City Enterprise Board (CEB), which, according the Auditor and Comptroller General, “are now an important part of the enterprise development strategy being promoted by the Department [of Enterprise, Trade and Employment] and the contribution they make to economic development is significant and represents value for money (Comptroller and Auditor General 2007: 140). This indicates relevance attributed to APCs in supporting local economic development.

The cohesion process was identified as a determined effort to close a regulatory and ideological gap between the local-development sector and local government systems (cf. DoCRGA 04/04/2007, 31/07/2007b) through 're-positioning' of APCs vis-à-vis ADM and DCC (see Chapter 6, Section 6.2, Figure 5). This was accompanied by a corresponding authoritative alignment of accountability practices, funding arrangements and auditing procedures for APCs, which left relatively little scope for APCs to make a contribution for the design of new lines of command (see Chapter 6, Section 6.3).

In this context, views expressed by Gramsci (1971) and Althusser (Althusser and Balibar 1970) stress the importance of ideology and class in shaping structural regulatory practices and relationships within which individuals are embedded (see Chapter 3, Section 3.3.4.2). The analysis of the empirical data suggests that a variety of actors are involved in implementing government-led policy changes concerning restructuring urban governance in Dublin. The analysis of interview material presented in Chapter 6 accentuates the importance of key individuals who strategically operate from specific institutional platforms that are associated with statutory power; such as the influential role of senior civil servants in shaping and drafting trend-setting government documents, which were instrumental in initiating the SMI and propelling forward observed manifestations of governance reform and related institutional re-configurations in Dublin (see Chapter 6, Section 6.2).

According to the views and perceptions elicited from the individuals interviewed for this study, it is argued that Gramsci's account of hegemonic projects, and the role of organic intellectuals in instigating ideational change, can explain observed governance changes in Dublin and associated implications for the funding arrangements of APCs. Gramsci (1971) describes organic intellectuals as follows:

The mode of being of the new intellectual can no longer consist in eloquence, which is an exterior and momentary mover of feelings and passions, but in active participation in practical life, as constructor, organiser, "permanent persuader" and not just a simple orator (but superior at the same time to the abstract mathematical spirit); from technique-as-work one proceeds to technique-as-science and to the humanistic conception of history, without which one remains "specialised" and does not become directive (specialised and political) (Gramsci 1971: 10).

Hence, organic intellectuals do not differ from other 'traditional' intellectuals¹⁸¹ by their occupation but in terms of their *social function* in propagating the worldview and ambitions of the class to which they 'organically' belong. Morgan (2003: 490) purports that "it is in the welter of technical decisions occurring day by day in the backstage committee rooms of political arenas that the real power to shape the ultimate ends of governance lies. And meta-regulation is a crucial forum of such power".

¹⁸¹ According to Gramsci (1971: 7-8) traditional intellectuals are those who "put themselves forward as autonomous and independent of the dominant social group". He, however, questions their independency as "social utopia" (*ibid.*).

The case-study material underscores that the guiding principles of meta-regulation that became manifest in Dublin's governance framework are not necessarily designed on the basis of democratic legitimacy but are based on perceptions of senior civil servants (cf. OECD 1997; Jayasuriya 2004). For example, the institutional restructuring of the local-governance system was influenced by:

- informal meetings between senior civil servants in response to perceived fiscal and economic crisis (OECD 1997), which culminated into the work of the *Co-ordinating Group of Secretaries* and the development of the SMI (see Chapter 1, Section 1.4.2);
- the involvement of senior civil servants in drafting policy documents (see Chapter 6, Section 6.2.7); and
- the incorporation of ideas from abroad (Bartley *et al.* 1999).

The interview material indicates that DCC managers are jockeying for political power, or what Considine (2002) refers to as 'navigational competence', whereas service delivery or 'rowing' functions are increasingly out-sourced or delegated to subordinate special-purpose bodies such as the CDB and its substructures, RAPID or LACs and APCs (see Chapter 6, Section 6.2). There is clearly a perception among senior DCC officials – understood as an (organic) elite – that they are 'the real government' and DCC headquarters remains in control of steering and policy-making which is tolerated by central government and ministers because DCC is not afraid to 'make hard decisions' (see Chapter 6, Section 6.2.6). Whereas stated departmental objectives and programmatic guidelines indicate that APCs should facilitate the development of proactive and empowered communities that have some delegated responsibility in implementation of urban policies affecting their life, empirical evidence suggests that the implementation of value for money-driven, output-oriented, performance-monitoring systems prevents the systematic pursuit of such participatory approaches.

7.4.3 Accountability and monitoring arrangements

Previous sections documented the relationship between the development of regulatory mechanisms in response to the formulation of politico-economic priorities such as national partnership agreements, public-sector reform, welfare restructuring and the cohesion process. In this context, the RA and, more specifically, Gramscian concepts of hegemonic power and the organic intellectual can account for observed changes in regard to the funding mechanism of APCs in the context of stated priorities:

- to promote the approximation of governance models, accountability and budgetary systems between APCs and the public sector;
- to focus and enhance the service delivery role of APCs; and
- to maximise the use of resources in the local-development sector.

In this situation, the tightening of control over APC budgets and the concentration of efforts to monitor accountability procedures at the interface between APCs and the public sector are steps towards achieving the integration of APCs into a local-

governance system that pursues centrally-defined policy objectives (see Section 6.2.4). In addition, the absence of formal guidelines or a lack of mutually agreed principles of collaboration between statutory bodies, APCs and local communities creates dependencies on interpersonal relationships among one another that require skilful political manoeuvring and diplomacy – particularly from resource-dependent APCs. The reliance of APCs on informal personal relations with key individuals from different quarters was reported as extremely relevant for leveraging additional resources, getting 'buy-in' for ideas and concepts, lobbying politicians, recruiting senior board members and implementing their local development strategies.

APCs felt they are in a vulnerable position. Even though they acknowledged the merits of a certain degree of informality, which they found useful in terms of bypassing the 'mills of bureaucracy' (e.g. Interview APC 11), they criticised the lack of responsibility and commitment from the public sector, which was considered as limiting their potential in relation to:

- forging durable alliances;
- influence the public political debate on the role of local development in society; or
- constructively challenging potential partners and government agencies and, moreover, holding them accountable.

The empirical analysis of the interview data provides evidence that the concepts and objectives of the SMI, which are mirrored in government publications – in particular *Better Local Government* (DoELG 1996), *Regulating Better* (DoT 2004) and the work of the Interdepartmental Task Force (DoELG 1998, 1999a, 1999b, 2000) – were the ideological foundation for the institutional integration of APCs into a hierarchical, local authority-administered local-governance framework that emulated business-like practices. The exploration of experiences of, and views expressed by, professionals from APCs and the public sector demonstrate that the central-peripheral flow of power identified in governance restructuring is mirrored in the design of funding and accountability procedures (see Chapter 6, Section 6.3).

Contemporary accountability procedures require APCs to adhere to complex reporting requirements towards their political sponsors (Chapter 6, Section 6.3.2; also Table 6.7) ('upwards'), whereas the quality of their formal obligation to report to 'their' community ('downwards') is largely left to the role played by community representatives on the APC board (see Chapter 2, Figure 1). Also, accountability and performance criteria were found not to be reciprocal in so far as the onus of reporting and demonstrating success is on APCs. No formal provisions could be identified that require a similar responsibility for exercising accountability duties from their strategic partners (e.g. the sectors represented on their boards). The obligatory endorsement of APC plans by the Dublin CDB was frequently referred to as a prime example of the lopsided nature of accountability. APC professionals and board members criticised that other parties represented on the Dublin CDB (see Chapter 6, Section 6.2.2, Table 6.2) have not

been made answerable in a comparable manner (see Chapter 6, Section 6.2.4.3) (cf. Pobal 2006a: 33). The data suggests that the allocation of funding to APCs and related auditing practices:

- are subject to ideologically-driven changes based proposals developed by senior civil servants with an advisory capacity to government (see Chapter 6, Section 6.2.7);
- have been aligned with the budgetary practice of the public sector (see Chapter 6, Section 6.2.4.3)
- are tightly controlled and monitored by means of governmental directives, guidelines and accountability and performance-monitoring arrangements (see Chapter 6, Section 6.3.1, Table 6.7);
- are based on two sets of indicators: a set of formal guidelines and procedures and informal criteria that reward 'high-profile' APCs (see Chapter 6, Section 6.2.2).

APCs are in a vulnerable position in regard to reacting to or negotiating terms and conditions of national policies and directives concerning their work remit and priorities. This vulnerability manifests in, first, the dependency of APCs on core funding provided by the state and, second, the non-collaborative nature of the institutional environment within which APCs are situated. The latter aspect forces APCs to rely on informal and *therefore* fragile relationships¹⁸² with influential allies from within the statutory system. The application of 'extra criteria' and informal information in assessing the success of an APC illustrates the necessity for APCs to mobilise and win allies considered 'high-profile' by their political paymasters. The data, however, shows that this ability hinges upon the indigenous resources (including social capital) within the area that can be mobilised and, moreover, the professional capacity of the individual APC (see Chapter 6, Section 6.3.2). The following quotation from an interview with APC staff carried out in a previous case study illustrates the difficult role of an APC in influencing their positioning within urban governance model as a "subtending system and structure" (Collinge 1999: 562) of the national regulatory framework:

Respondent 2: I would say that it would suit the state very well if partnership meant the community or local side delivering centrally-defined ideas, you know. But it hasn't been like that. It's about you pushing out the boundaries and testing how far it will go. And you are right, it is about self-confidence.

Respondent 1: At its very best there are allies within the state who want to hear this kind of stuff, who know it.

Interviewer: But you have to check who they are?

Respondent 1: Of course, of course.

Respondent 2: It requires pragmatism and a lot of skills, a lot of political skills and how you operate by the thinking.

Respondent 1: Yes, and respecting those constraints. Nobody is without constraint. We have to be able to respect them. You need to respect the constraints without accepting them (Borscheid 2001, quoted from interview with APC Staff on 31/05/2000).

¹⁸² One respondent experienced that in crisis situations APCs can only to a certain degree rely on support and loyalty from senior decision-makers as "allies within the statutory system will not put their head on the line but will follow their pension" (Interview APC 11).

In all, a variety of aspects point out trade-offs between the pursuit of equality-based principles and the hegemonic dominance of economic rationality in policy making and public-sector modernisation. The increasing importance of business-like regulatory practice is reflected in the funding arrangements for APCs: first, in the different nature of accountability requirements for APCs towards their political funders, on the one hand, and local communities, on the other; and second, in the subordination of developmental aspects of APCs to the delivery of measurable, welfare-related services.

7.4.4 Value for money

From the regulationist perspective, the launch of the SMI and the subsequent increase of business-like accountability practices in the public sector are part and parcel of the new regulatory approach that underlies governance restructuring in Ireland. The systematic prioritisation of fiscal efficiency and managerial auditing procedures facilitated the introduction of new standards of managerial accountability of entrepreneurial city governance (see Chapter 1, Section 1.2). The proliferation and tightening of fiscal accountability criteria has been driven by an increasing emphasis on value-for-money principles within the public administration. New managerial practices observed in Dublin reflect international trends which are driven by “the demands of entrepreneurship and output-based performance” (Considine 2002: 22).

The SCOPE system, the *Q-mark* and *Excellence Through People* are forms of centrally-controlled self-regulatory practices that facilitate the integration of APCs into a public-sector-controlled governance framework (see Chapter 6, Section 6.4). APC professionals felt that contemporary evidence-based performance-monitoring and value-for-money standards are not optimally designed to capture qualitative aspects of their work (see Chapter 6, Section 6.4.5.3). In addition, it was stated that VFM principles and extensive auditing procedures are overly strictly applied to APCs, whereas statutory partners of APCs are not perceived to be audited in terms of their co-operative efforts and commitment in regard to supporting or funding projects they have been involved in (see Chapter 6, Section 6.3):

We underwent a three day audit from FÁS for a spend of 11,000 Euro. If this is not over the top, what is? This level of scrutiny is not applied to statutory agencies.
(Interview APC 11)

In relation to VFM, the interviews also identified discrepancies between:

- formal monitoring and auditing systems designed to capture achievements of APCs in terms of value for money;
- and interpretations as to what respondents from different backgrounds considered indicators of success.

Irrespective of formal criteria applied to assess the achievements of APCs, successful APCs must have the capacity to create a sphere of collaboration that is tailored to meet the expectations of their funders, their political paymasters and the local

community and voluntary sector. So, APCs need to demonstrate that they are able to provide an environment that caters for a variety of actors with different interests and agendas. Political sponsors of APCs stated that 'good APCs', first, use their core funding to lever considerable additional resources from statutory agencies to improve the delivery of services to target groups and, second, get 'buy in' from local groups that would usually not engage in dialogue with the state or statutory programmes (see Chapter 6, Section 6.4.6). In combination with the empirical findings outlined in Chapter 6, all the above indicates that reporting systems and monitoring procedures have been designed to exert tight control over plans and activities of APCs in accordance with the ethos of value for money.

The VFM framework and interpretations of success of APCs (see Chapter 6, Section 6.4.5) suggests that ideas rooted in Gramscian or Althusserian thinking provide a useful strategic framework for rationalising the contemporary practice of assessing the success of APCs based on VFM principles. Previous sections already referred to the instrumental role of government officials and key individuals in initiating paradigmatic shifts in regulatory practice through promotion of new ideas. The formulation of new ideas resulted in what, in Gramscian terms, became hegemonic projects such as the national social partnership model (MacSharry and White 2000), the piloting of APCs and the SMI (Bartley *et al.* 1999). Looking at what makes for a successful APC, respondents frequently reported that APCs depend on winning 'high-profile' allies from resourceful¹⁸³ quarters. Gaining support from key individuals is considered essential for APCs because this is one of the key ingredients for building up recognisable action ability as a basis for effectively pursuing their plans. In Ireland this course of action is well-established throughout the public sector (cf. Clancy and Murphy 2006) and, by no means, is unique to state-funded APCs.

This generally accepted practice can be explained through (see Chapter 3, Section 3.3.4.2):

- the Gramscian concept of *organic intellectuals* who fulfil a societal elitist role in representing groups of stakeholders with vested interest in capitalising on structural (social, political, economic and cultural) imbalances within societal settings; and
- Althusserian thoughts on
 1. *overdetermination*: which can be described as the search for those forces that regulate 'inter-performative' relations between structures and determine which structure is dominant and which one is subordinate;
 2. the role of the *ideological state apparatus* in shaping the 'collective conscious' and (a) the resulting perception of individuals about societal realities within which they are embedded (as subjects to ideology) and (b) their abilities to act

¹⁸³ This could be of diverse nature such as information and expertise, ideological support or solidarity leading to issue-based alliances, political decision-making capacity or the provision of economic opportunities or financial means.

or resist within same (Althusser 1970). According to Althusser, the emergence of hegemonic human agency is based on the ability of elitist groups or individuals to use material, professional and/or intellectual privileges to access institutionalised power from where controlled influence can be exerted through ideological communication (e.g. the communication of governance restructuring is couched in the language of the market place and VFM).

A comparison between stated (theoretical) objectives and practical implementation of VFM principles, on the one hand, and perceptions or views expressed by the individuals interviewed as to what they consider a successful APC, on the other, helps reveal how the introduction of VFM criteria into the sphere of funding arrangements of APCs cannot be dissociated from the ideologically-driven agenda of key actors that operate from within the (ideological) state apparatus (Althusser 1970). In the context of this study, national social partnership, the SMI, the cohesion process and the Developmental Welfare State are integral ideological building blocks of a new local-governance framework whose relevance for governance restructuring and repositioning APCs has already been portrayed in Chapters 1 and 2. They are part and parcel of national regulatory efforts directed at optimising the use of public monies with a view to minimising social consumption and maximise the social dividend of welfare-related expenditures as to not put at risk the use of fiscal income for alternative means directed at securing economic competitiveness.

7.4.5 Summary

A core group of senior civil servants played a key role in the planning, development and implementation of public-sector reform. The launch of the SMI – and consequential structural changes in the landscape of local governance – has considerably altered the power configuration in the field of local development. The case study illustrates that cross-departmental and cross-sectoral informal collaboration among public officials and other key individuals are instrumental in shaping the architecture for local-governance restructuring. The exploration of views of national experts and professionals stressed the importance of key individuals and committees (see Appendix 1) as instrumental for the promotion of new ideas for governance restructuring that, for example, resulted in the SMI and subsequent measures promoting public-sector reform with strong local government at its centre. The import of ideas from other government systems has been identified as instrumental in modelling public-sector restructuring in Ireland.

In the field of local-governance restructuring and the cohesion process, the re-configuration of APC board structures, funding arrangements and performance auditing practices and other efforts to bring APCs alongside DCC-affiliated local development bodies, such as the Dublin CDB and its sub-structures (see Chapter 6, Section 6.2.2), emerge as new regulatory activities “that secure a more viable fiscal and political base” (Collinge 1999: 567). The re-organisation of governance reflects the

ethos of value-for-money driven modernisation processes throughout the entire governance system – from running of central government departments to the organisation of APCs.

The design of funding arrangements has facilitated the institutional restructuring which enabled a systemic integration of APCs into the DCC-led governance model but has not fully anticipated the implications for the overall operational effectiveness of APCs in regard to their complex agenda. The introduction of performance indicators targeted at optimising internal economies of APCs illustrates a systemic approximation between the managerial ethos of public-sector reform and the bottom-up agenda of state-funded APCs: the same technology of money management, reporting and auditing systems has permeated every layer of the institutional framework of meta-regulation in Dublin to ensure fiscal efficiency, cost-effectiveness and good practice in running the organisation (i.e. value for money).

This study indicates that senior government officials and other key individuals in the public sector play a crucial role in governance restructuring. Acting in the interest of the entrepreneurial state (Teahon 1997; OECD 1997), these individuals become more managerial and have a certain degree of navigational freedom that comes with limited accountability requirements to both politicians and the electorate (see Chapter 6, Section 6.2.6). The empirical data illustrates that institutional restructuring in Dublin is part and parcel of the government-driven search for a spatio-temporal institutional fix coping with perceived economic pressures and fiscal calculations (cf. Peck and Tickell 1994; Jessop 2001b).

Notwithstanding a rhetoric of partnership that suggests multi-stakeholder participation within a governance framework that is portrayed as inclusive, the capacity of APCs to negotiate agendas, to challenge funding policies and to put forward alternative routes for enhancing the collaboration between local development and local governments systems has been found overly dependent on their ability to mobilise 'high calibre' or organic intellectuals among their partners across institutional boundaries. If interest groups or individuals from local communities¹⁸⁴ want to be part of decision-making structures provided by the state-funded local development framework, they are dependent on their capacity to participate in structures that are dominated by the philosophy of managerial governance. Urban communities depicted as disadvantaged are dependent on their capacity to identify routes to strategically place 'their' organic intellectuals as a form of 'professionalised' representation within local-governance structures or withdraw and pursue alternative routes to achieve their agenda.

¹⁸⁴ In the context of this study, the term *community* is not meant to suggest traditional views of an organic system that suggests the presence of 'functional' neighbourhoods where there exists solidarity among individuals or a shared sense of place or a common history. It rather refers to individuals that interact within the geographically confined urban territory that is covered by the jurisdiction of an APC.

7.5 Review of the empirical findings in the light of ANT, URT and the RA

7.5.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews the research findings from the views of ANT, URT and the RA. After a comparative analysis of each theory's explanatory potential vis-à-vis the empirical data, an informed decision can now be made as to which theoretical framework is suited best to explain observed governance changes in Dublin and their impact on funding arrangements for Area Partnership Companies (APCs). A review of the potential of actor-network theory (ANT), urban regime theory (URT) and the regulation approach (RA) as explanatory frameworks for the repositioning of APCs within Dublin's governance landscape, and the consequential implications for their funding arrangements, led to the elimination of URT as a suitable theory for the in-depth analysis of the empirical material. The empirical research could not identify any hints that suggest resource-dependency on private sector involvement in processes driving governance restructuring and associated funding arrangements for APCs. Therefore, URT appears to be the least relevant theoretical framework in the research context of this study. In contrast, Murdoch's concept of 'first-order proximations' (Murdoch 1998) or the Latourian concept of power (Latour 2004), in the case of ANT, and an 'Althusserian' (Althusser 1970; Althusser and Balibar 1970) or 'neo-Gramscian reading' of the RA (Jessop 1997b) appear to be better suited to explain observed patterns and processes affecting funding arrangements for APCs

7.5.2 ANT or the RA?

ANT and RA were found to be relevant in terms of their potential to explain characteristic features of funding arrangements for APCs in the context of governance restructuring. It is hypothesised that concepts associated with the RA provide a theoretical explanation for the observed relationship between funding arrangements for APCs and governance restructuring in Dublin that is superior to those provided by ANT and URT. It was decided that – for the purpose of a comparative assessment of the remaining two theories by means of a case study – a null-hypothesis approach would be deployed. Following the inverse logic of the null-hypothesis approach, this thesis set out to ascertain whether URT or ANT are better suited to account for the role of APCs in the governance system than ideas and concepts that are rooted in the RA. However, URT has been eliminated in the course of this dissertation as a suitable theoretical framework to explain the logic of funding arrangements for APCs in the context of state-led (and state-financed) governance restructuring in Dublin. With URT already discounted only ANT, therefore, remains to be tested in comparison with the RA. In short, the purpose of this section is to test the null hypothesis; i.e. to test whether ANT is superior to RA. Before ultimately testing if ANT is more powerful than RA, this section will briefly reflect on the explanatory potential of ANT and RA discussed in this chapter in relation to observed linkages between the processes propelling forward institutional reform and the characteristic features of funding arrangements for APCs.

7.5.2.1 ANT

The value of ANT lies in the description of the mechanisms through which new governance structures have been developed. It was also considered helpful in dissecting the role played by *all* networked agents and entities that have been identified as being influential in promoting and implementing structural changes in the governance system. Furthermore, ANT highlighted interactions at the interface between APCs and those structures and agents that have been introduced into the governance system. The application of ANT could explore and illustrate *how* funding arrangements have facilitated the co-option of APCs into a new local-governance framework. The concepts offered by ANT, however, cannot theoretically explicate processes of ideation and the pivotal role of key individuals in instigating a paradigm shift in thinking – such as the establishment of national partnership agreements, the development of the SMI or the launch of the cohesion process – that became manifest in local-governance restructuring and corresponding funding arrangements for APCs.

A fundamental limitation of ANT is the neglect of the 'Why?' question: ANT cannot *explain* why certain actors have the capacity to act and why they enlist or enrol other entities the way they do. According to the empirical material, however, it is fundamentally important to understand why certain actors, first, are in an elevated position *vis-à-vis* others and, second, have the power even to induce paradigmatic shifts in political thinking. In short, the important role of ideational change (i.e. intentional and, hence, human action) that, according to both the literature reviewed and the interviews, has been central to governance restructuring can probably not satisfactorily be explained by ANT. The research could not identify a parity of esteem between individuals and inhuman entities. Asking 'Why?' questions points towards the influential role of key individuals in promoting the re-configuration of local governance.

In regard to the potential of ANT to account for the relationship between funding arrangements for APCs and local-governance restructuring, it can be said that ANT is an appropriate methodology to describe *how* the regulatory mechanism works in detail. But, reflecting back on the empirical findings from an ANT's perspective (Section 7.2), ANT is not conceptually designed to link these observations to processes of ideation or the supremacy of human agency in instigating and controlling (ideological) change. The remaining sections explore the re-positioning of APCs within the institutional framework of local governance through the conceptual lens of the RA.

7.5.2.2. The RA

In comparison with ANT and URT, the regulationist perspective adds another dimension to the analysis of observed patterns because it views the relationship between local governance restructuring and funding arrangements of APCs as a result of wider forces and machinations operating within the statutory apparatus. For example, ideas that inspired the launch of the SMI and public-sector reform can be traced back to economic imperatives and stated political priorities to re-design

governance systems in a way that does not run counter to economic priorities, VFM principles and the customer-friendly design of statutory services.

The RA provides an agency-focused view in the search for plausible explanations for characteristic features of the accountability systems and funding arrangements for APCs because it highlights the role of forces behind their creation. It can help answer the question as to why one should follow certain actors through the network space described by ANT and can, therefore, account for the part played by different key individuals by means of analysing their professional (and/or ideological) position, related responsibilities and the passions and interests they pursue within the governance system (Hirschman 1987). In contrast to ANT, the perspective provided by the RA is able to contextualise the behaviour and decisions of powerful agents (organic intellectuals) against the backdrop of their worldview. The RA points out processes of 'ideation' (e.g. paradigm shift in the way of thinking) and ideological motivation as instrumental for the design of both contemporary governance restructuring and its implications for funding arrangements for APC, which can be linked to the perception of wider politico-economical processes affecting the Irish regime of accumulation.

The arguments and aspects raised above in the context of ANT also bring ideas and concepts into play that highlight the potential of the RA as an appropriate strategic framework for explaining the relationship between governance restructuring and the design of funding arrangements for APCs. Althusser's concept of overdetermination and his advancements in regard to the role and nature of elites and the ideological state apparatus in influencing systemic performativity of less privileged strata of society (which mirrors Gramscian ideas of hegemony and organic intellectuals) appear to be more suited to accounting for the observed relationship between governance restructuring, funding arrangements and the thrust of plans and activities of APCs than ANT.

It is argued that, in the context of this research, the conceptual ideas associated with RA, which uses a different language and terminology to that of ANT, could also better explain the complexities of interactions between relevant actors (including the use of power in acts of legislation, regulation, or funding criteria) and between organisations within the institutional ensemble of the wider statutory apparatus.

7.5.3 Wrapping it up: the verdict

Processes of institutionalisation, accountability practices and value-for-money principles were identified as the three most relevant key themes for the analysis of the empirical findings. In the context of Dublin's changing governance framework, ANT and the RA both have merit in identifying influences on processes of institutional re-ordering, refining performance-oriented methods and associated funding practices for APCs. The analysis of the material reviewed and data suggests that the RA is possibly

more suitable for explaining the design of funding arrangements for APCs and associated implications for plans and activities than ideas rooted in ANT. The RA emerges as an appropriate and theoretically 'grounded' conceptual framework for explaining interrelated issues among (a) economic policy reformulation under social partnership, (b) public-sector reform and its impacts on local-governance systems. Accordingly, it is well placed to account for governance changes such as the observed and stated impact of the SMI on political priorities responsible for the cohesion process and for the design of funding arrangements for APCs.

It is argued that ANT's concepts of translation, immutable mobiles, inscription and agency describe processes can also be explained from the perspective of the RA. The RA provided a strategic approach to analyse the role played by guidelines, criteria, reporting requirements and managerial performance standards in the wider context of events that initiated governance restructuring in the first place. Moreover, from the viewpoint of RA, the cohesion process facilitates the transition towards a new local mode of meta-regulation that aims at addressing social and economic challenges and redefines, accordingly, the envisaged *modus operandi* for APCs. Funding arrangements for APCs have been designed in a way that facilitates the integration of APCs into a new state-controlled model of local governance.

The analysis of the empirical material suggests that key individuals were instrumental in the negotiation and development of local meta-regulatory responses to perceived societal and economic challenges. A Gramscian view helped explain the role of powerful agents who, based on their privileged position vis-à-vis power, were able to benefit from their systemic advantage and convince individuals with decision-making capacity as to how successful mediation of national priorities concerning social consumption and economic goals could be implemented. The research also found evidence that the articulation and generation of such projects is not necessarily informed by realities on the ground, but by perceptions and existing worldviews of those organic individuals that have access to sites of political power. The discussion on instrumentalisation of 'narratives of duplication' for inducing political change (see Chapter 6, Section 6.2.4.3) illustrates the ideological power of strategically positioned key individuals¹⁸⁵ in a convincing manner (i.e. so that decision-makers act upon it) (cf. Smith 2004).

APCs are subject to this ideology but, in contrast, have no easy formal direct access to relevant decision-making circles. The interviews highlighted 'counter-narratives' as the most promising way for APCs (a) to somehow negotiate their position within a new governance framework and (b) rectify misconceptions about realities on the ground that have informed the revision of APCs within governance. Success can be achieved through placing 'counter-narratives' into decision-making circles that (a) defuse notions

¹⁸⁵ The term 'strategically positioned' implies that these individuals – in their professional role – act according to the ideological view of those who placed them into their positions and who equally might have the power to remove them from a privileged position.

of duplication and (b) highlight the relevance and value-added of APCs to political decision-makers. In this context, Althusser's concept of overdetermination, for example, helps to illustrate how new local-governance structures emerge as a result of interactions between its constituent elements. ANT cannot see cohesion as a strategically constructed programme. The Althusserian notions on the formation of ideology make it possible to analyse and explain funding arrangements for APCs in the context of local and national governance restructuring as a socially negotiated action that is directly linked to contemporary global economic challenges.

In contrast to ANT (see Section 7.5.2.1. above), the RA can *explain* why certain actors have the capacity to act and why they act the way they do. The important role of ideational change that, according to both literature reviewed and the interviews undertaken, has been central to governance restructuring can probably not satisfactorily be explained by ANT. The research could not identify a parity of esteem between individuals and inhuman entities. Asking 'Why?' questions points towards the influential role of key individuals in promoting the re-configuration of local governance.

The employment of the Gramscian concept of the *organic intellectual* explains both interactions *and* power differentials between relevant actors. Gramsci's ideas, embedded in Althusser's concept of ideology and overdetermination, can explicate the enabling role strategically placed individuals fulfil as mediators between economic interest and social obligations of the state and also why they have the power to even induce paradigmatic shifts in political thinking. Althusser's concept of overdetermination and his notions on the ideological state apparatus – both of which provide an explanation for the systemic subordination of less privileged strata of society vis-à-vis more powerful societal groups (which mirrors Gramscian ideas of hegemony and organic intellectuals) – are better suited than ANT to account for the observed relationship between governance restructuring, funding arrangements and the thrust of plans and activities of APCs.

The RA regards funding arrangements of APCs as part and parcel of processes of state restructuring that occur at various spatial scales and institutional levels. By means of a case study, this thesis explored if regulationist principles can explain local-governance restructuring and its implications for funding arrangements for APCs. Based on the case-study investigation, it is concluded that the regulationist perspective can account for ideologically driven actions, which are systemically blinded out by ANT (see Section 7.2.6).

8. CONCLUSION

8.1 Introduction

This thesis illustrated that growing international economic competition among nation states and between cities increasingly requires tailor-made strategies and governance models that are capable of securing the foundations for societal functioning under economic and political systems that have a bearing on the locale (see Chapter 1, Section 1.2). In Dublin, issues concerning political marginalisation and socio-economic disadvantage of individuals that live in “ill-equipped and isolated residential environments produced on the edge” (Punch 2005: 754) are mainly addressed by Area Partnership Companies (APCs) and a variety of smaller, state-funded localised programmes. These provide a range of education and learning services, support labour-market participation and create economic opportunities for those segments of society that are considered most distant from mainstream society (cf. Pobal n.d.; DoSFA n.d.; DoCRGA n.d.-e). In other words, APC-type special-purpose bodies and other urban regeneration partnerships can be regarded as an outcome of both economically and socially motivated ideologies “which agents use to restructure domestic institutions, shift political boundaries and alter patterns of distribution” (Blythe 1997: 232). Views expressed by professionals from APCs, ADM and the public sector indicate that APCs are expected to play a greater role:

- as an extended arm of the statutory welfare-related service delivery system (e.g. NESC 2005);
- as an overarching intermediary or facilitator for the integration of local development and local government systems (DoCRGA 31/07/2007b, 01/08/2007).

The empirical case study in Dublin investigated funding arrangements of APCs under the 2000-2006 Local Development and Social Inclusion Programme (LDSIP) in the context of local-governance restructuring. The research explored associated written material and elicited views from individuals from a variety of different professional backgrounds and who were involved at different institutional levels of the governance network. The analysis of data gathered suggests that funding arrangements for APCs mirror priorities of ideologically-driven public-sector modernisation in Ireland, which is directed at achieving better value for the utilisation of public resources (see Chapter 1, Section 1.4.2). Institutional and procedural changes in local governance undoubtedly had an impact on the modus operandi of APCs, but the participatory model of local development pursued by APCs was reported to be diametrically opposed to the business-like service delivery oriented model prioritised in public administration. The state-funded community-based development sector and the public sector differ in terms of organisational remit and operational culture. The empirical data indicates that these discrepancies cannot be bridged through contemporary efforts of governance restructuring that are based on the ethos of the neo-liberal model of the Strategic Management Initiative (SMI). The study also sought to ascertain to what extent contemporary governance restructuring processes enhanced APCs' capacity to add

value to the development of plans and activities addressing issues of poverty and socio-spatial marginalisation of groups from society 'from the bottom up'. Moreover, it was argued that the characteristic features of funding arrangements and their impact on plans and activities of APCs can be meaningfully analysed through the conceptual lenses of three competing theoretical frameworks, each of which offers a specific entry point and explanatory value: actor-network theory (ANT), urban regime theory (URT) and the regulation approach (RA).

The chief objective of this study was to identify which of the three theories provides the best explanation for the design of the funding framework for APCs vis-à-vis changes in the sphere of local governance. The study specified three sets of key criteria as surrogate measures against which the explanatory value of the three theoretical frameworks were comparatively assessed:

- *institutionalisation*: a process of transforming APCs from pilot projects into permanent structures of the (local) governance system;
- *accountability and monitoring practices*: reporting requirements and measures to ascertain if APCs meet the expectations of their funders and the people in the designated disadvantaged area;
- *value for money*: the measurement of success and good operational practice against pre-defined or/and agreed objectives.

8.2 Domestication: towards utilising the competitive advantage of APCs

Between 1991 and 2007, the operational model of APCs underwent a metamorphosis (see Chapter 2). This study shows that a number of successive steps (see Chapter 6, Section 6.2, Table 6.1) led to a domestication of local APCs. Gradually, through processes of 'creeping institutionalisation' and intense statutory regulatory efforts, APCs underwent a transformation: on their developmental trajectory, APCs moved from semi-autonomous, *de jure* independent, private companies towards the role of state-controlled contractors. This went hand in hand with a shift in focus from area-based interventions – targeted at ameliorating local manifestations of poverty and exclusion through experimental innovation and partnership in poverty black spots – towards a model of general service delivery. This thesis focused on the analysis of stages of governance transition under the LDSIP. Three parallel, but interconnected, developments could be identified that are strongly associated with governance restructuring in Ireland.

- Preparing the ground for the integration of APCs into the apparatus of the state through the objectives pursued by the Interdepartmental Task Force and, ultimately, the Local Government Act, 2001 (see Chapter 1, Section 1.4). This has been addressed under the theme of institutionalisation, which has been implemented through the cohesion process (Chapter 6, Section 6.2).
- A tightening of accountability practices, after the discontinuance of EU funding in 2003 (Chapter 6, Section 6.3).
- Introduction of VFM-policies and practices (Chapter 6, Section 6.4).

The following sections take up the three key themes that were identified as surrogate measures for governance restructuring: institutionalisation, accountability and monitoring, and value for money. They summarise and partly refine the main observations made in Chapter 6 in regard to the SMI-induced rationalisation of local governance – such as the cohesion process – and related consequences for the funding arrangements of APCs.

8.2.1 Institutionalisation

Governance restructuring in Dublin is rooted in the SMI. The SMI provides the hegemonic ideological framework for the modernisation process of the statutory apparatus that led to an intensification of measures targeted at increasing better value for the utilisation of funding provided by the Irish state (see Chapter 1, Section 1.4). Evidence presented in Chapter 6 of this study illustrates that the desire to enhance economic competitiveness was instrumental in promoting state-led governance changes Ireland. The gradual institutionalisation and professionalisation of APCs that occurred under the LDSIP was identified as just one of such measures that – alongside the proliferation of public-private partnerships and plans to implement the Developmental Welfare State – serves to minimise social consumption as to optimise investments in economic activities. Government publications and government-initiated reviews, evaluations and audits indicated that the diverse state-funded local-development sector represented a challenge to the optimal use of public monies and, consequently, recommended a rationalisation of the state-funded local-development sector. Views expressed by government officials and civil servants generally highlight the perceived need for more stringent financial and democratic accountability and more direct government influence in decision-making processes.

Already in 1999, towards the end of the 1994-1999 OPLURD, it was made clear by central government that a continuation of the area-based approach was conditional on, first, fiscal solvency of the state and, second, the agreement of Dublin-based APCs to become part of an overarching operational framework that put DCC-affiliated structures at its centre (see Chapter 6, Section 6.2, Figure 5). Under the 2000-2006 LDSIP, government-initiated efforts targeted at streamlining local development structures culminated in the creation of the DoCRGA and the launch of the cohesion process, which brought about profound operational changes for APCs (see Chapter 6, Section 6.2.6). The description of processes of institutionalisation in this study serves to illustrate how APCs have been co-opted into ‘collaborative’ arrangements with local authority-affiliated structures at their centre. These have been developed on the basis of a business-like governance model that has been promoted with a view to:

- maximising the utilisation of resources;
- increasing financial and democratic accountability; and
- improving the quality of statutory service delivery to citizens.

This thesis illustrated how funding dependencies were utilised to bring APCs alongside policies prescribed by their political paymasters (see Chapter 6, Section 6.3.1). Most significantly, the institutionalisation of APCs became manifest (a) in the creation of a government department, which was given the brief to intensify links between the state and the local-development sector, and (b) in the formation of the tri-ministerial initiative in 2002. These measures reflect the guiding principles for governance restructuring (cf. DoELG 1998). The launch of the cohesion process in 2003 was experienced by APCs as a paradigmatic shift in policy because it initiated the reconfiguration of power structures through the promotion of 'institutional harmonisation' between APCs and local government structures.

The key objective for the cohesion process was the development of better value in the delivery of services among a plethora of state-funded local development agencies. The cohesion process facilitates the institutional, operational and territorial alignment of APCs with local government-led structures and, effectively, replaces the philosophy of area-based targeting with an overall service delivery- or target group-based approach. Moreover, the announced restructuring of APC boards (see Chapter 6, Section 6.2.6) effectively brings an end to the local social partnership model (cf. McCarthy 1998; Harvey 2002). In particular, views expressed by national experts suggest that the cohesion process pursues an envisaged approximation between local development and local government systems that had long been on the agenda of key individuals involved in moulding the restructuring of local governance. As a result, the *perceived* gravitational centre of power moved towards Dublin City Council (DCC) and its affiliated structures. The area-based approach to local development is portrayed as a form of 'decentralised centralisation'. APCs became an institutional fix locally, representing the central state rather than being an innovative mechanism promoting *informed* and citizen-oriented local development through democratic experimentalism. The latter proactively seeks to involve citizens in decision-making processes that affect their community. The concept, which informed the establishment of APCs in the early 1990s, was based on the idea that creating room for constructive input and challenges from individuals and groups that are situated outside, or at arms-length distance from, the governance system could lead to vertical institutional learning and greater effectiveness in local governance (cf. OECD 1996).

The analysis of different viewpoints on governance arrangements for APCs suggests, however, that APCs operate in a 'space of prescription' (Murdoch 1998) that is increasingly being dictated by wider economic considerations of central government. The gradual co-option of APCs into the apparatus of the state provides few identifiable focal points for APCs to negotiate the terms for their re-positioning within the overall framework of governance¹⁸⁶.

¹⁸⁶ When the 2000-2006 LDSIP ended, APCs were still left without clear guidelines outlining the nature of a follow-up programme. Respondents from APCs felt that they were working in an environment of uncertainty and political indecision.

8.2.2 Accountability and monitoring

This thesis demonstrates that the rationalisation of Dublin's governance framework went hand in hand with an increasing focus on re-structuring funding arrangements for APCs. The analysis of the empirical material suggests that changing funding arrangements have been instrumental in facilitating the alignment of APCs into a state-led governance system. The analysis of the data identified three key factors that had a profound impact on funding and reporting arrangements of APCs:

- the withdrawal of direct EU funding after the 1994-1999 OPLURD (Chapter 6, Section 6.3.3.1);
- the change from multi-annual to an annual budget system in 2003 (Chapter 6, Section 6.3.3.2); and
- the requirement for the endorsement of APC plans by the CDBs (Chapter 6, Section 6.3.3.3).

The research findings underscore that the allocation of funding into designated disadvantaged areas became more regulated after the discontinuance of EU funding in 2002. Also, performance-oriented funding arrangements and competitive tendering for government resources became more prominent: under a new regime of accountability and monitoring, funding is not only to be accounted for but increasingly expected to maximise the social dividend in the form of tangible returns for society as measured by (output-oriented) performance-against plan evaluation and a set of less tangible extra-criteria that are considered to be indicative of good practice and value added benefits. The introduction of annual budgeting in 2003 created a systemic compatibility between public-sector budgeting and the practice in the state-funded local-development sector. This institutional coupling became further enhanced through the endorsement process of APC plans by CDBs that formally tie APCs into the local government-led local development.

It can be concluded that, in terms of organisational capacity and programme delivery, the changing governance framework in Dublin under the LDSIP increasingly challenged APCs. They had to invest more efforts in negotiating and clarifying their position vis-à-vis the DCC-affiliated Dublin CDB, whilst implementing their programme of activities in accordance with their contractual agreement with ADM. Interviewees from APCs stated that compliance with the performance-oriented funding system requires a disproportionate amount of resources for reporting requirements, which has adverse effects on the organisational capacity to pursue targets outlined in their area action plans. APCs voiced concerns about funding arrangements that were not tailored to local realities within which they operate (see, for example, Chapter 6, Section 6.3.1).

In particular, the discontinuance of multi-annual budgeting and the growing responsibility of APCs to comply with a growing variety of accountability and performance-monitoring requirements that were defined by their political funders are evidence of tighter managerial control over APCs. This move to annual budgeting

contrasted with government intentions to consider the introduction of multi-annual budgets for the community and voluntary sector that were outlined in the *2000 White Paper on Volunteering* (Government of Ireland 2000). It can also be demonstrated that efforts to achieve greater democratic representation in decision-making processes have become sub-ordinated to procedural issues ensuring evidence-based delivery of services and financial accountability. The empirical findings suggest that the institutional alignment of local development and local government systems had adverse effects on the *modus operandi* of APCs.

In particular, respondents from APCs and, to a lesser extent, ADM professionals fear that the business-like ethos of public-sector reform and associated output-oriented accountability, monitoring practices and annual budgeting is not compatible with APCs' social-inclusion remit and, therefore, could result in sub-optimal use of resources such as:

- *a dilution of the anti-poverty and bottom-up focus*, where the attention of the APC is diverted away from the most disadvantaged to those who can be supported in a way that shows results;
- *playing it safe*, when identified opportunities for innovative projects come second place to actions and provision of services that yield immediate results; and
- *short-term planning*, where insecurity over budgets prevents the development of strategies and alliances that need long-term (political) commitment and/or financial support from statutory agencies and strategic partners.

In addition, the somewhat arbitrary application of a mix of formal and informal indicators feeds into the (informal) ranking of APCs. The amount of funding allocated to APCs is influenced by *two sets* of indicators: formal indicators and, less obvious, informal extra-criteria. Whereas the former include factors such as population size and the degree of deprivation, the latter indicate the *perceived* institutional capacity of APCs to deliver what is wanted by funders. It was found that APCs are likely to be recognised as 'good APCs' by their political paymasters if they can:

- mobilise indigenous resources;
- secure commitment from senior officials from state organisations and other powerful allies for their cause; and
- effectively communicate and market their achievements.

Evidence presented in this study suggests that APCs that are considered 'high-profile' by ADM are rewarded when it comes to the allocation of funding (see also below). The contemporary practice of making resource allocation conditional on notions of 'high-profile' and competitive bidding procedures represents a pronounced inverse-care culture because the degree of deprivation as a key indicator for the allocation of public funding is superseded by a value system that is tailored to reward APCs that are 'marketeers' or 'social entrepreneurs' (see Chapter 6, Section 6.3.1).

The performance-monitoring system is designed to capture the achievement of contractually agreed numeric outputs and, hence, pre-defines the societal dividend that can be yielded by funding that is channelled into designated disadvantaged areas through APCs. This 'performance-against-plan' accounting does not sufficiently take into account the R & D brief given to APCs and, as indicated by respondents working in local development, potentially discourages the achievements of 'performance-beyond-plan' by APCs. The research findings clearly point out that the performance mechanism for APCs operates on the basis of centrally-defined VFM parameters that are not adjusted to meet the local realities within which APCs operate because such indicators cannot adequately capture qualitative aspects of APC work. As a result less tangible developmental efforts and outcomes of activities initiated by APCs are likely to be underrepresented in progress reports vis-à-vis measurable activities and outputs captured by common performance indicators. Respondents from APCs admitted that, as a result, they might fall into the trap of prioritising their work in accordance with previously agreed quotas and deadlines – even though the innovative capacity and ultimate outcome of programmes might be sacrificed.

Interviews carried out for this study generally confirm findings of previous research in the case-study area (Bartley and Borscheid 2003; Bartley and Saris 1999; Saris *et al.* 2000; Saris *et al.* 2002). On the one hand, the output-oriented funding arrangements might well be considered the best value by funders in regard to achieving a social dividend for public money funnelled into designated disadvantaged areas. On the other hand, the design of the funding and associated reporting arrangements was felt to be running counter to the area-based development and promotion of innovative, participatory and outcome-oriented programmes from the bottom up. APCs operate in an environment that is characterised by a reportedly pronounced dependency of APCs on informal relationships. Moreover, funders increasingly utilise a 'reward-system' that ranks APCs based on:

- their capacity to comply with contractually defined parameters so that it is "a pleasant and trouble-free experience for the funder" (Interview ADM 2); and
- their capacity to access additional resources.

A picture emerges in which resources channelled into designated disadvantaged areas are rather dependent on the professional skill set and the informal networking capacity of the APC than on the degree of disadvantage. Professional skills also were reported to come into play in the area of APCs 'marketing' their skills and promoting their achievements so that they appear as a 'high-profile' entity and, therefore, relevant partners for public officials, statutory agencies, politicians and social partners wanting to utilise APCs for their purposes.

It also can be shown that the monitoring of APCs follows a rhetoric of *double accountability* (i.e. 'upwards' and 'downwards'). This requires APCs to be answerable to (a) their funders/political supporters ('upwards'), mainly to account for the use of

resources vis-à-vis activities and output generated, and (b) the population in designated disadvantaged areas ('downwards'), mainly to account for delivery of outcomes and participatory *modus operandi*. The analysis of the interview material also reveals that systematic procedures targeted at monitoring the quality of the APC's participatory inclusiveness and democratic accountability towards the community interest are in place (cf. ADM 2000), but are not being pursued with similar vigour as those for reporting requirements to the political funders. In all, funding arrangements and, in particular, related accountability requirements have been found to be tailored to meet the expectations of the funders and political supporters of APCs rather than the core objectives identified by the local people (see Chapter 6, Section 6.3).

Evidence presented here indicates that APCs have been drawn into new administrative procedures and auditing processes which undermine their capacity to engage in activities that foster participatory approaches based on involvement from local citizens. The increasing funding dependency and the focus on the professionalisation of the governance apparatus including (a) the state-funded local community sector (Harvey 2002; McCarthy 2006), in general, and (b) the area-based approach to addressing deprivation and structural disadvantage, in particular, gives way to exerted control over both APCs and grassroots movements through strategies of co-option and exclusion:

- *Strategy of co-option*: APCs are positively evaluated and financially rewarded if they engage in activities that facilitate the implementation of centrally-devised anti-poverty strategies that are complementary to *both* welfare and competition policies;
- *Strategy of exclusion*: APCs that pursue local bottom-up strategies that challenge mainstream agendas and central managerial control over local territory are frowned upon and will eventually be penalised – despite rhetoric over the empowerment role of APCs.

Views from government and city council officials and ADM clearly signal that 'high-profile' APCs not only comply with criteria and deliver on targets but also do not blame or overly criticise their funder. In turn, they are positively evaluated (see Chapter 6, Section 6.3.2 and 6.3.3). As these viewpoints leave no doubts about a clearly defined accountability of APCs towards their political paymasters, they throw up questions about the credibility of guidelines demanding a 'downward accountability' of APCs (see Chapter 6, Sections 6.3.1 and 6.4). The current focus on market-led priorities and practices in public-sector management threatens participatory democracy as a guiding principle of APCs. Based on the views expressed throughout the interviews, an intensification of the usage of contractual practices such as service-level agreements could further illustrate the systemic dependency of APCs on their political sponsors.

Contemporary policies towards APCs:

- are an impediment to their pro-active pursuit of innovative risk-friendly approaches or their ability to scope out terrain for mainstreaming,
- emasculate participatory potential and, in a final step,
- incorporate APCs into the statutory arsenal of welfare-related services.

This study suggests that contemporary funding and reporting arrangements for APCs facilitate their instrumentalisation by the state. The research findings also showed that the practiced business-like approach towards the integration of local development and local government systems runs counter to the stated objectives of the cohesion process: to achieve value for money with a focus on the optimisation of *outcome*.

8.2.3 Value for money and success

Under the increasing influence of the SMI, private sector practices gained influence in the design of performance-monitoring and funding arrangements. Government publications promote new managerial approaches to achieve better regulation (e.g. DoT 2004: 46). Policies are increasingly couched in the language of the market place. Throughout the research value for money (VFM) was an omnipresent concept. The growing relevance of economic intra-organisational procedures finds expression in the proliferation VFM principles and efforts to promote good governance among APCs. The empirical evidence presented demonstrates that the desire to deliver 'better value' is a key objective for contemporary governance restructuring in Dublin. In particular, government officials and senior city council professionals made ample reference to VFM principles such as 'cost-effectiveness', 'efficient service delivery', 'good management skills' and mentioned other business-like codes of practice when they described what they considered the foundation of successfully operating APCs¹⁸⁷.

The adoption of a 'value-added philosophy' for the public sector also came to affect APCs through governance changes that were instigated under the LDSIP. Traditional output-oriented evaluation and monitoring practices that focused on immediate results of funded activities, such as the number of individuals placed in training, are still high on the agenda, but have been supplemented by efforts assessing processes concerning internal economies of APCs (see Chapter 6, Section 6.4). According to McCarthy (1998: 46) "a lot of effort has gone into defining indicators to help in evaluating the work of the Partnerships". Even though respondents from all quarters acknowledged the difficulty of capturing qualitative progress in regard to improving the situation of designated beneficiaries through participatory measures and capacity building (outcome-oriented focus), few resources seem to have been invested into developing an appropriate mechanism that can account for all aspects of APC work.

¹⁸⁷ It was found, however, that VFM principles were regularly used interchangeably, both in government publications and by respondents throughout the interviews. In the interviews, respondents were asked to name or describe characteristic features that they associate with a successful APC. Thereby, it was hoped to identify shared views and differences among respondents concerning the concept of good practice and value added (see Chapter 6, Section 6.4).

The proliferation of new auditing techniques for APCs complements traditional reporting requirements (e.g. submission of SCOPE data, case studies and quarterly reports). Performance-oriented assessment of APCs underwent a shift towards focussing on:

- compliance with good governance practice;
- investments made to encourage intra-institutional learning;
- the promotion of self-monitoring; and
- the capacity to network and achieve collaboration among relevant actors from the state and, to a lesser extent, civil society.

The following impact assessments and performance audits for APCs, for example, have been devised to look at qualitative aspects of APC work with a view to (a) enhancing cost-efficient management of internal operations and (b) ensuring compliance with good/professional practice in regard to company policies¹⁸⁸:

- the definition of optimal working models measuring the mode and quality of programme implementation and collaborative practice (Chapter 6, Section 6.4.1);
- the *Excellence Through People Award* and the *Q-mark* (Chapter 6, Section 6.4.3); and
- government-commissioned VFM audits (Chapter 6, Section 6.4.2).

In terms of demonstrating value for money within local partnership arrangements, the onus of proof for achieving collaboration and positive output clearly challenges APCs more than other stakeholders; i.e. there is not a shared responsibility among relevant stakeholders represented at the partnership table pro-actively to pursue and commit themselves to achieving institutional learning and optimisation of collaborative efforts. The exemption of relevant statutory organisations from their responsibility to collaborate or constructively seek to promote an inter-institutional alliance for meaningful local partnership reduces the scope of APCs:

- to develop their full R & D potential through piloting new initiatives and seeking to address identified gaps in statutory service delivery;
- to pursue new approaches and respond to opportunities that could lead to the collaborative development and/or mainstreaming of new projects;
- to initiate vertical institutional learning (e.g. OECD 1996; NESO 2005).

According to the empirical interview material, VFM criteria are not perceived to be capable of assessing procedural effectiveness of APCs. They can neither measure "user satisfaction" (NESO 2005: 190-191) of individuals or organisations that have been supported by an APC nor account for qualitative aspects of APC work such as time and efforts invested into developmental work with local groups or forging

¹⁸⁸ Respondents from APCs and local community groups, however, expressed the view that the time and effort that had to be invested to comply with self-monitoring practices – and related accreditation of the achievement of prescribed quality standards – is overly bureaucratic and disproportionate vis-à-vis the value gained from these exercises.

collaborative arrangements with strategic partners. Moreover, they do not capture the factors associated with the informality of the procedural framework within which they operate. It is argued that the development of elaborated monitoring arrangements to capture qualitative work of APCs is only useful if the performance of statutory agencies with a stake in welfare-related service delivery is equally assessed and challenged in terms of their pro-active engagement with APCs at local level.

8.3 Theories

The primary objective of this thesis was to investigate to what extent the theoretical frameworks provided by actor-network theory (ANT), urban regime theory (URT) and the regulation approach (RA) can explain local-governance restructuring and the impact of associated business-like principles and practices on funding arrangements for Area Partnership Companies (APCs) in Dublin. After a preliminary review of early empirical material and previous research findings it was hypothesised that the RA would be the most promising theoretical framework for explaining contemporary funding arrangements for APCs in the light of governance restructuring. Methodologically, this study employed a null-hypothesis approach in regard to assessing theories. Accordingly, this research approach sought to ascertain if the alternative theoretical frameworks provided by ANT and URT are more suitable to account for the relationship between observed changes in Dublin's governance landscape and funding arrangements for APCs than concepts rooted in the RA. If the evidence collected did not confirm this, then, by default, it would be reasonable to conclude that the RA was indeed the superior theory in this instance.

The exploration of the interview material was based on the different theoretical perspectives provided by ANT, URT and RA. It led to the conclusion that ideas rooted in Gramscian thinking and conceptual ideas developed by Althusser, both of which can be conceptually situated within the regulation school, provide the most relevant theoretical framework for the explanation of power structures within Dublin's institutional governance ensemble and for its implications for funding arrangements of APCs. The next two sections summarise briefly the assessment of URT and ANT. They are followed by a section that outlines why the RA emerged as the superior theoretical framework.

8.3.1 ANT

ANT portrayed the restructuring of Dublin's governance framework as a government-induced colonisation of an actor space by new institutional structures and DCC-affiliated actors. The analysis of the empirical material from the perspective of ANT was useful because it:

- allowed studying processes related to APC funding 'from the inside out';
- presented an opportunity for an in-depth description of interactions between circulated and networked actants (non-human entities) and agents (humans); and

- facilitated the identification of key actors and their spheres of immediate and, to a lesser degree, extended influence.

ANT can also shed light on processes Pickering (1993) described as the 'mangle of practice': i.e. the complex interplay between intentional actions directed at creating immutable mobiles and resulting (complex) repercussions between such immutable agents, on the one hand, and humans and other (material) networked entities, on the other¹⁸⁹. The employment of ANT as an analytical tool for the empirical data allowed mapping inter-agency connections and following the flow of power between APCs, immutable mobiles and a multiplicity of other agents. Based on the analysis of the interview material and policy reports, this study came to the conclusion that the reconfiguration of governance in Dublin occurs in a 'space of prescription', which is defined as a geographic area "of relatively fixed coordinates and will tend to be marked out by formal and standardised sets of heterogeneous relations" (Murdoch 1998: 370). In the context of the institutional restructuring of Dublin's governance system, ANT was extremely helpful in identifying connections between relevant agents of change and exploring their role in creating and/or transmitting flows of power. The examination of networked relations could describe the constituent parts of the governance network and map out the relations and (transformational) interactions between them.

ANT was found to be over-occupied with the principle of *general symmetry*, which makes no difference between the quality of material and human agency and, thereby, neglects questions of intentionality and ideology. It identifies sources of power but remains silent on processes of intentionality, motivation, passion or interest. Looking at the restructuring of Dublin's governance landscape and its implications for funding arrangements of APCs under the LDSIP, the interviews highlighted the importance of human agency in *consciously* initiating and/or responding to social and economic circumstances that were *perceived* as undesirable. ANT is a useful but quite limited theoretical framework because the performative power of material devices could not be satisfactorily de-coupled from human agency. Therefore, ANT cannot provide a plausible explanation for the contemporary design of funding arrangements against the backdrop of observed shifts within Dublin's governance framework.

8.3.2 URT

In the literature, Dublin is described as highly competitive and increasingly entrepreneurial city (see Chapter 4, Section 4.2.1). Whereas the state and the local

¹⁸⁹ An example for 'material agency' that, in turn, influences human behaviour is the creation of the SCOPE system as an effort to measure the achievements of APCs. SCOPE, however, failed holistically to capture activities of APCs. From an ANT point of view, the failure of SCOPE to measure qualitative aspects of APCs can be interpreted as an act of systemic (material) resistance that, then, was hoped to be compensated for by the assessment of case studies and the measurement of collaboration (base on the Himmelman Model) and organisational performance standards (see Chapter 6, Section 6.3.2, Table 6.8). So, based on perceived shortfalls of SCOPE (material resistance), the performance measurement system became extended (human response).

authorities provided the enabling framework for entrepreneurial urbanism to prosper, the development of Dublin was predominantly driven by “the activities of the private-sector property development forces” (MacLaran and Williams 2003: 171). Case studies provide examples of how capital provided by the private sector played an enabling role for the pursuit of ambitious urban development projects under private-public partnership agreements – usually without meaningful involvement from local people (Bartley and Shine 2003; Hogan 2005). Against this backdrop, it was hoped that URT, a conceptual framework rooted in pluralism, could be used to identify and assess the extent to which the formation of alliances among representatives from the state, the private sector and the community have a role to play in the design of APC-type social urban regeneration projects and local development initiatives in Dublin.

According to Stone (1989) bi- or multi-lateral regime formation, as defined by URT, is conditional on a mutual resource dependency between potential allies such as business interests, the political sphere and other relevant groupings from civil society. An analysis of Dublin’s governance framework, however, did not disclose relevant resource dependencies between private capital and the state sector in the formulation and implementation of objectives for governance restructuring or in the design of funding arrangements for APCs (see Chapter 7, Section 7.3). Both the published material and the empirical data point out that the new framework for local governance has been conceptualised from within government buildings (see Chapter 6, Section 6.2). Consequently, the application of URT as explanatory vehicle for processes impacting on funding arrangements of APCs was ruled out as a suitable theoretical framework for the further analysis of APC funding within Dublin’s changing local governance framework.

8.3.3 The RA

The conceptual designs of URT and ANT were initially found to be useful for the investigation of the inner workings of localised neo-pluralist and complex heterogeneous local networks of governance in Dublin (see Chapter 3, Sections 3.2.1 and 3.2.2). Neither could, however, satisfactorily explain the formation of new alliances that were influential in the design of funding arrangements for APCs. In contrast, ideas rooted in Gramscian and Althusserian thinking can account for the social formulation of national hegemonic accumulation strategies. Furthermore, they can explicate how these strategies impact on state organisation and ideology (Section 3.3.4.2) and, consequently, are mediated into the local settings within which APCs operate (Chapter 7, Section 7.4).

This thesis illustrates how the design of funding arrangements for APCs is inextricably linked to the ideology of public-sector modernisation, the development and promotion of which emerged from ideas promoted by a number of senior government officials (see, for example, Chapter 1, Section 1.4.2 and Chapter 7, Section 7.4.1). These individuals were instrumental in influencing the ideological framework for governance

restructuring within the wider competitive model of capitalist accumulation and, moreover, proactively facilitated the translation of global social and economic policies into the sphere of APC-type local development processes.

The forging of social partnership (e.g. MacSharry and White 2000) and its translation into the sphere of local development illustrates the role of key individuals in societal paradigm shifts. Viewed through the lens of overdeterminism and the statutory ideological apparatus, the creation of what is widely perceived as a dominant or hegemonic economic structure can be equally conceptualised as the embodiment of agency “exercised by collectives of humans” (Glassman 2003: 681). In other words, the manifestation of a meta-regulatory framework is not necessarily or exclusively dictated by an ‘ominous’ external global superstructure, by something that is disconnected from the locale and miraculously exerts ‘osmotic influence’ on the locale. This study provided evidence that the nature of regulatory efforts are also influenced by local responses that emerge as a result of perceptions or as a result of negotiated agency among competing ideologies (promoted by individuals in key positions) (*ibid.*).

The empirical research material provided evidence that funding arrangements for APCs are inextricably linked with the institutional restructuring of the governance system. Influence depends on the capacity of individuals or groups to exert systemic power (i.e. ‘the power to’), as – for example – outlined by Stone (1989). It can be demonstrated through this case study, that the driving forces for state modernisation and streamlining the governance system in Ireland are deeply rooted within the political *desire* of individuals in key positions. The individuals possessed the power to create a local-governance model within an economically competitive state that is conditioned to absorb and respond to challenges of processes associated with economic globalisation.

The gradual co-option of APCs into the apparatus of the state was based on the creation of systemic resource dependencies, which minimised the potential of APCs to negotiate the nature of their new relationship with the state or resist change. The cohesion process promoted a colonisation of the space of governance by local government players, which undermines the potential for developing forms of capacity building, grassroots empowerment and project development that could challenge what has been defined as the priority by the state (understood as the hegemonic model). In the light of the strengths and weaknesses of three theoretical concepts deployed in this study (see Chapters 3 and 7), the neo-Gramscian framework is evidently the most fruitful theoretical framework for explaining complex relationships and processes that impinge on funding arrangements of APCs in Dublin.

8.4 The key contribution of this study

Under the 2000-2006 LDSIP, the conceptual bottom-up approach and the ethos of democratic experimentalism which has been promoted by APCs on behalf of their funders until the end of the 1994-1999 OPLURD have been systematically replaced by a neo-liberal service-delivery model of welfare. The case study research of one urban APC in west Dublin provides an in-depth analysis of how concepts that are at the heart of the new public managerialism have facilitated the gradual incorporation of a typical APC into the local government system through a reconfiguration of the funding and accountability arrangements. Currently, even though APCs are part of the state apparatus, they are still in a process of transition and have not been fully incorporated yet. The current upward reporting requirements place APCs in an invidious institutional position on the governance map (see Chapter 6, Section 6.2, Figure 5): on the one hand, APCs are accountable to ADM¹⁹⁰ that act on behalf of the Department of Rural, Community and Gaeltacht Affairs; on the other hand, they are accountable to the Dublin CDB that is closely affiliated with local government and, hence, the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government.

A variety of studies on urban governance analyse the growth in neo-liberal tendencies and their socio-spatial manifestations in Dublin (e.g. Chapter 7, Section 7.3.2). As outlined in Chapter 3 (Section 3.3.1), only a few empirical studies on governance transition and local urban regeneration initiatives have been interpreted against the theoretical frameworks deployed in this thesis. Some analysts, for example, investigated developments in urban governance from the perspective of growth machine theory (Hogan 2006), pluralism and concepts of stakeholder governance (Bartley and Shine 2003), Latourian concepts of power (McGuirk 2000), or (Marxist) political economy ideas (Punch 2004, 2005). Most of these studies, however, deal with the socio-spatial impacts of planning and development in the area of urban regeneration policies that principally seek physical transformation (MacLaran and Williams 2003). In contrast, according to Bartley and Shine (2003: 161), APCs can be regarded as “complementary to traditional urban regeneration schemes in so far as they are more concerned with social and economic transformation”. APC-type approaches to local development clearly have a role to play in ameliorating adverse impacts of neo-liberal urban development policies on poor communities, which suffer because they offer little incentives for economic investments from the private sector.

In providing an in-depth analysis of a local governance network by means of a local study focusing on one APC in a suburban marginalised neighbourhood in west Dublin, this thesis contributes to the utilisation of theoretical frameworks that previously have not been applied to the empirical analysis of state-funded local initiatives. Also, a systematic comparison of three theoretical perspectives has not been undertaken in the Irish context of urban regeneration. Most of the studies reviewed (see above) only utilise *one* theoretical perspective to explicate power flows behind observed processes

¹⁹⁰ ADM was renamed into Pobal in 2005 (see Chapter 2, Section 2.2.2).

of urban regeneration. The focus on one in-depth case study has limitations (see Chapter 4). However, it allows comparison of the potential of three different theoretical frameworks to account for the driving forces for governance restructuring and its implications for state-funded local development initiatives in poor communities. This study, therefore, can be a useful baseline or point of departure for further investigations concerned with constructions of power that shape and influence policies and practices targeted at addressing social and economic regeneration initiatives in disadvantaged neighbourhoods.

The conclusion that the RA is the most suitable theoretical framework for explaining funding arrangements for APCs against the backdrop of shifting contours of governance in Dublin is a valuable finding of this thesis. It strengthens the case for the utility of the RA by demonstrating its explanatory credentials in an interesting setting of neo-liberal policy roll-out (i.e. the Irish Celtic Tiger). It also demonstrates some of the relative weaknesses of ANT and URT by illustrating their inability to adequately account for the experiences explored in this case study. The findings of this study do not, of course, constitute universal endorsement of the RA or a definitive rejection of ANT and URT. For example, it could be argued that even though URT was not considered a feasible concept in a suburban area with limited economic growth potential, it still might be of explanatory value (a) in an urban spatial setting where private sector interest in promoting economic activities prevails or (b) in a scenario when opportunities arise that transform formerly less valued spaces into areas of economic development potential. Also, in the case of ANT, subsystems that play an important role within governance restructuring such as the utilisation of powerful narratives or the issue of funding guidelines can complement and add value to our understanding of power that cannot conceptually be captured by theories that might be considered superior in a particular research context. It is also argued that a focus on ANT and URT allowed light to be shed on aspects of governance that might not have been discovered as influential, had the analysis of empirical data only been undertaken from a neo-Gramscian perspective. This thesis illustrated that a comparison of different theories by means of one specific case study can enhance our understanding of forces that drive governance transition and, therefore, should be taken into consideration in future research analysing governance. While the thesis focused on one in-depth study of an APC in a suburban neighbourhood in west Dublin, it made an attempt to check empirical findings from the case-study area with experiences of senior professionals from two additional APCs in Dublin. These interviews indicate that identified challenges, perceptions and implications of governance restructuring and associated funding arrangements are not unique to the case-study area but also prevail, and affect APCs, in other designated disadvantaged areas in Dublin. However, conclusive affirmation of this will require further research. Therefore, it is anticipated that additional comparative in-depth research will be carried out for other APCs to ascertain whether the findings of the case study in west Dublin are indicative of a general trend of governance restructuring.

8.5 Final observations

The research suggests that the forces shaping accountability procedures, funding arrangements and performance criteria of state-funded Area Partnership Companies (APCs) in Dublin are part and parcel of public-sector reform. The latter is a centrally-driven strategy to restructuring governance in accordance with national priorities in regard to fiscal efficiency, social consumption and economic goals. The contemporary funding and accountability framework for APCs facilitates the repositioning of APCs within the statutory governance network in a way that shifts power in local decision making into the sphere of the state.

The integration of local development and local government systems resembles a shotgun marriage. The practical implementation of the cohesion process and the nature of value for money principles applied to APC suggest that the state lacks understanding as to how multi-stakeholder local development processes work in practice. Under the cohesion process, APCs have been caught up in, first, adapting to new political and bureaucratic processes at work and, second, challenging its adverse consequences. This involves an undue distraction of energy and resources from social-inclusion work, which endangers the achievement of APCs' programmatic objectives.

The bureaucratic mode of re-ordering that has been adopted to integrate APCs into the apparatus of the state turns a blind eye to the developmental priorities identified by local groups and citizens that are situated, or operate, outside the state-funded community-development sector and/or that have no professional representation or access route for negotiating their position in relation to governance restructuring in Dublin. Also, the conditions for effective participation in APC structures that have been created expect individuals and groups to be compliant with rules and regulations and develop professional expertise that guarantees reliable representation at the local partnership table. It also does not take into account the potential of a local partnership approach that is based on the principle of parity of esteem. The timely involvement of locally-operating stakeholders from the statutory sector and interest groups from wider civil society in an open, facilitated consultation process might have added value to informing the 'harmonisation' of the relationship between the public sector and community development initiatives. It would probably have (a) resulted in a framework for a new governance model that is better tailored to take into account, and respond to, local realities within which state-funded APC-type local development initiatives and statutory service providers operate and, moreover, (b) led to the development of more satisfactory parameters for measuring value for money.

Being subject to change whilst being largely kept outside key decision-making circles that orchestrate the re-ordering of governance in Dublin, limits the scope for APCs to, first, contest, confront or mediate transformational powers impacting on their remit, agenda and action ability and, second, credibly to promote a local partnership process

in their area that is based on principles of parity of esteem and democracy. However, political funders of APCs still expect them to build functional alliances with state agencies and local groups. In the absence of a formal regulatory framework that can ensure reciprocal responsibility among all relevant stakeholders concerned with local development issues in designated disadvantage areas, APCs are dependent on their capacity to (a) provide small incentives (e.g. trust, seed funding, experience, good plans) and (b) get commitment from senior officials/civil servants to pro-actively support APCs as the foundation for making public agencies more responsive to the development of co-operative approaches that address issues of poverty, deprivation and social exclusion in disadvantaged neighbourhoods.

In the light of the findings presented in this study, the key tasks of APCs, namely to add value through locally building functional multi-stakeholder alliances, utilising core funding for reeling in additional resources and, at the same time, retaining a risk-friendly approach to project development from the bottom up appears to be an unattainable mammoth task. Under contemporary conditions, APC are inextricably linked into the wider regulatory framework of governance – the design of which is shaped by competitive economic policies. Within the broader competitive governance framework of social partnership, developmental welfare, SMI and better regulation, the financial dependency of APCs on the state and on both the goodwill and support from a variety of organic intellectuals situated at nodal points of power makes APCs what Raco and Imrie (2003: 25) refer to as a “vehicle for the promotion of instrumental or governmental efficiency”.

Drawing on Jessop’s (1990) dialectical notion that a coupling of institutional inertia and strategic selectivity can alter the elbowroom for capital forces to manoeuvre, Murdoch (1995: 736) stresses that “there is room for struggle [...] within certain structured formations; the outcomes are not predetermined, but some are made more likely than others”. The systematic subordination of APCs as an institutional vehicle caters to the centrally-defined objective to pursue economic growth and locally facilitate progression towards the competition state and ‘developmental welfare’. However, it is unlikely to create opportunities for a genuinely empowered and informed input from those who often have to bear the adverse effects of growth policies and who are considered the most disadvantaged within Irish society.

Processes of institutionalisation coerce APCs into collaborative arrangements with local authority-administered structures (see Chapter 6, Section 6.2, Table 6.1). The capacity of disadvantaged communities to influence the design of, and participate in a, new city-wide governance framework for local development is dependent on their ability to strategically place ‘their’ organic intellectuals within decision-making structures of the emerging system of governance in Dublin. Also, successful representation and advocacy relies on the professional capacity and ‘high-profile’ of

'their' APC to cope with changing institutional and funding arrangements – namely without compromising on local needs and wants.

The institutional re-configuration under the cohesion process and changes in the funding framework illustrate that the bargaining capacity for APCs to oppose, negotiate or influence terms of reference for local-governance restructuring is limited. According to interviews with board members and professionals from APCs and ADM, the scope for interagency solidarity and lobbying through the national partnership network, PLANET, is perceived as a limited way to create 'noise' and attract some attention from within political circles. As a result, in the absence of independent funding, the bargaining potential of APCs very much depends on their capacity to work through informal networks – which are usually accessible through strategic key individuals such as local politicians other influential key individuals (either represented on their board, from within statutory bodies or government departments), multi-agency alliances and/or strategic partners.

This thesis suggests that, so far, the designers of governance restructuring have not achieved their officially stated objectives: to maximise the utilisation of resources, to increase financial and democratic accountability and improve statutory service delivery to citizens. It is argued that they are not likely to do so unless governance ensures equal opportunities to participation in decision making and defining agreed terms of reference for value for money and outcome-orientation by all relevant players – including statutory agencies, local politicians, social partners, APC-type local development bodies and, in particular, those who are most disadvantaged in Irish society.

APCs are challenged to mediate between the economically-driven interests of their political masters and the designated beneficiaries of their actions. Within systemic limitations identified APCs have to act as a facilitator seeking to provide a neutral space within which a variety of (often conflicting) interest groups can identify common objectives and, accordingly, agree on terms for collaboration. APCs operate at the interface between communities and the state and, hence, are effectively tasked to locally manage what Morgan describes as "the tensions between the 'social' and 'economic' goals of regulatory politics" (Morgan 2003: 490). However, the analysis of different viewpoints on governance arrangements for APCs suggests that APCs operate in a 'space of prescription' (Murdoch 1998) that is dictated by wider economic considerations of central government.

Under the contemporary neo-liberal competition-oriented model of governance restructuring, limited scope exists for developing an agreed and independently-facilitated approach towards creating a platform for defining terms of reference for local-governance re-structuring. The gradual co-option of APCs into the statutory apparatus provides little potential for APCs to negotiate the terms for their re-

positioning within the framework of governance. APCs might develop into subordinate service delivery agencies of the state that fulfil a role in welfare-related provision of services that, in the national scheme of governance, contributes to a consolidation of policies that pursue the establishment of the Developmental Welfare State.

Observations based on the analysis of the empirical case study lead to the conclusion that a successful integration of APCs into Dublin's governance landscape and their potential to design and implement innovative local development measures 'from the bottom up' requires a move away from the contemporary policy of state-dictated co-option of APCs that is practiced in Dublin and Ireland. Against the backdrop of plans to streamline governance and establish the Developmental Welfare State, it would be advisable to re-visit the ethos of citizenship, partnership and collaboration and think about a multilateral agreement on the creation of a neutral space for negotiating a new and inclusive *modus vivendi* between the state and APCs.

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APPENDIX 1: Relevant committees and groups

Table A-1.1: Central Review Committee

Members	Organisation / Role
Government Departments	
Mr. P. O'h Uiginn	Taoiseach: Secretary (Chairman to 30 April 1993)
Mr. P. Teahon	Taoiseach: Secretary (Chairman from 1 May 1993)
Mr. T. Arnold	Agriculture, Food and Forestry: Assistant Secretary
Mr. S. O'Morain	Enterprise and Employment: Assistant Secretary
Mr. C. O'Loughlin	Finance: Secretary
Ms. J. O'Neill	Tánaiste: Assistant Secretary
IBEC	
Mr. J. Dunne	Director General
Mr. B. Geoghegan	Director
Mr. D. Croughan	Chief Economist
Construction Industry Federation	
Ms. M. Corboy	President
Mr. L. Kelleher	Director General
Mr. G. Hennessy	Economist
Irish Farmers Association	
Mr. A. Gillis	President
Mr. M. Berkery	General Secretary
Mr. C. Lucey	Chief Economist
Irish Creamery Milk Suppliers Association	
Mr. T. O'Dwyer	President
Mr. D. Murphy	General Secretary
Mr. C. Dolan	Economic Adviser
Irish Cooperative Organisations Society	
Mr. J. Tyrell	Director General
Mr. S. O'Donoghue	Director
Macra na Feirme	
Mr. M. O'Keefe	President
Mr. T. Curran	Chief Executive
Irish Congress of Trade Unions	
Mr. P. Flynn	General Secretary: Local Government and Public Service Union
Mr. W. Attley	Joint General President: Services, Industrial, Professional and technical Union
Mr. E. Browne	Joint General President: Services, Industrial, Professional and technical Union
Mr. B. Anderson	National Secretary: Manufacturing, Science & Finance Union
Mr. D. Begg	General Secretary: Communication Workers Union
Mr. D. Murphy	Public Service Executive Union
Mr. P. Cassells	General Secretary: ICTU
Ms. P. O'Donovan	Assistant General Secretary: ICTU

Source:

Table A-1.2: Co-ordinating group of secretaries

Members	Name of Department / Office
Paddy Teahon	Secretary Taoiseach (Chair)
Kevin Bonner	Secretary Enterprise and Employment
Sean Dorgan	Secretary Tourism and Trade (to 1 September 1995)
Michael Dowling	Secretary Agriculture Food and Forestry
John Hurley	Secretary Finance (Public Service Management and Development)
Cathal Mac Domhnaill	Chairman Revenue Commissioners
Edward McCumiskey	Secretary Social Welfare
Julie O'Neill Assistant	Secretary Tanaiste
Dr Don Thornhill	Secretary Education
Facilitator	
Professor John Murray	Trinity College Dublin
Secretariat	
Brenda Boylan	Taoiseach
Mary Doyle (Secretary)	Taoiseach
Eric Embleton	Finance
Karen Gibson	Taoiseach
Adrian O'Donovan	Taoiseach
Aidan Timmins	Taoiseach

Source: Department of the Taoiseach (1996).

Table A-1.3: Participants in MSc Class for Assistant Secretaries in Trinity College Dublin

Member	Government Department / Organisation
Denis Byrne	Department of Agriculture
John Dully	Department of Tourism and Trade
Donal Garvey	Central Statistics Office Ireland
Wally Kirwan	Department of the Taoiseach
Tom Mulherin	Department of Social Welfare
Gerry O'Hanlon	Central Statistics Office Ireland
Seamus Rodgers	Valuation Office
Oliver Ryan	Department of Social Welfare
Catherine Treacy	Land Registry
Brendan Tuohy	Department of Transport, Energy and Communications
Michael Tutty	Department of Finance

Source: Department of Finance Press Office.

Table A-1.4: Task Force on the Integration of Local Government and Local Development Systems

Members	Name of Department / Office
Noel Dempsey, T.D.	Minister for the Environment and Local Government (chair) (FF)
Chris Flood, T.D.	Minister of State at the Department of Tourism, Sport and Recreation (FF)
John Fox	Department of Agriculture & Food
Eoghan O'Conaill	Department of Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht & the Islands
Sean Murray	Department of Enterprise, Trade & Employment
John Cullen	Department of the Environment and Local Government
Kevin Cullen	Department of the Environment and Local Government
Stephen O'Neill	Department of Finance
Sylda Langford	Department of Justice, Equality & Law Reform
Raphael Kelly	Department of the Marine & Natural Resources
Deirdre Carroll	Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs
Dermot McCarthy	Department of the Taoiseach
Julie O'Neill	Department of Tourism, Sport and Recreation
Dr. Ruth Barrington	Department of Health and Children
Secretariat	
Joe Allen and Sabine Günther	Department of the Environment and Local Government

Source: Department of the Environment and Local Government (1998).

Table A-1.5: Members of the *Excellence Through People* Approvals Board

Member	Organisation
Mr. Michael McDonnell	Director, Chartered Institute of Personnel Development
Mr. Frank Walsh	Manager, Services to Business, FÁS
Mr. Mike Fitzgerald	SIPTU
Ms. Avine Mc Nally	Assistant Director, Small Firms Association
Mr. Bryan Andrews	Chief Executive Officer, Public Appointments Service
Ms. Maria Callinan	Chief Executive Officer, Portlaois Enterprise Centre
Mr. Liam Doherty	previously IBEC
Mr. Peter Rigney	Industrial Officer, ICTU
Ms. Mary O'Connor	HR Manager, IITD
Mr. Jim Mulcahy	Director, Enterprise Ireland

Source: FÁS, info provided by email

Correspondence A-2.1: Letter sent to City/County Development Boards

Circular LG 03/04

6 February

Improving local and community development structures and programmes

Dear Director,

I am directed by the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government to refer to previous correspondence and discussions regarding the above initiative involving the Minister and the Ministers for Community, Rural & Gaeltacht Affairs, and Justice Equality and Law Reform. As part of the initiative, a range of measures aimed at improving local and community development services on the ground have recently been adopted by Government. A copy of a press release setting out the main features of the Government's decision is attached.

Your attention in particular is drawn to the following:

Proposals for Improved Cohesion

Community and local development groups are being requested by the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs/ADM Ltd to bring forward measures for improved alignment of structures in their area by mid year, 2004. This process is to be co-ordinated at local level by the CDBs. CDBs should now initiate contact with the various agencies in their areas with a view to moving the process forward. The objective here is to develop measures such as the sharing of facilities and administrative supports, ground enhancement of and improved targeting of services on the I through better co-ordination or an integrated approach to the introduction of new and existing measures. Each Board should also feed into this process, based on its work to date, (including the COB Strategy) and experience on the ground.

Funding for Co-ordinated Measures

Funding is to be provided to support specific co-ordinated measures emerging from the above-mentioned process. The focus of this funding will be on enhanced service provision. Decisions on the selection of projects to qualify for such funding will be based on objective criteria and specific outcomes and outputs will have to be demonstrated. You will be notified as soon as any further information is available.

Review of Social Inclusion Measures Group

A review of the role and membership of the CDBs' Social Inclusion Measures (SIM) Groups will be carried out by this Department in consultation with Directors. The main purpose of the review is to ensure-balanced representation and effective operation. Further details will issue in this matter in due course.

Endorsement Process

The Government has formally approved the CDBs' responsibility for endorsement of plans of community and local development agencies and overseeing and the promotion of an integrated approach to service provision at local and community

level. The endorsement of plans for 2004 should be finalised as soon as possible in line with the guidelines issued on 31 July 2003. In this context Directors are reminded that these are guidelines, not a straightjacket. Where sensible arrangements that achieve the objectives of the endorsement process in a real and practical way can be made, then such opportunities should be availed of.

A **short** progress report (no more than two pages max) on the endorsement process should be furnished to the Department by **27 February** next.

Waterford 'Model'

Waterford City Development Board's initiative in tracking social inclusion expenditure in the city across Departments and agencies is to be advanced as a pilot project.

Integrated Target Group Plans

Finally, in line with the recommendation of the NOP Mid-Term Review and the NOP/CSF Evaluation of Social Inclusion Co-ordination Mechanisms, each COB should now take preliminary steps to prepare an Integrated Target Group Action Plan for **one** priority target group identified under the National Anti Poverty Strategy¹ (NAPS). Given the broad nature of the NAPS categories, the target group selected should be a tightly defined subset of these e.g. long-term unemployed men, at risk early school leavers between the ages of 9 and 14. Further guidance on the preparation of the Target Group Plan will issue in the near future.

If you have any further queries regarding the above, you can contact, Ms Mairead R an 01 888 2800) or Mr Eamonn Waters (0-1 888 2700).

Yours sincerely,

Joe Allen
Local Government Policy

c.c. each County/City Manager

¹ These are as follows: The Unemployed; Children; Women; Older People; People with Disabilities; Travellers; Migrants and Members of Ethnic Minority Groups; Disadvantaged Urban Dwellers; Disadvantaged Rural Dwellers

Correspondence A-2.2: Endorsement of Community Development Plans

Endorsement of Community Development Plans by CDBs

The following are a number of key points in regard to the procedures which will apply in regard to the consideration and endorsement of plans by CDBs:

- It has been agreed with the Department of Environment & Local Government that the same annual workplan should be submitted simultaneously from CDPs to the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, and to the CDB. There will not be a separate workplan for each. The Department is anxious to prevent this process generating unnecessary extra work and bureaucracy for projects.
- *The* workplan will be based around existing practice in regard to preparing an annual workplan, with the added proviso that projects will be asked to show linkage between their activities and the relevant CDP strategic plan. A template detailing the information required in the workplan will issue in the next week or so.
- If the CDB seek some clarification or wish to query some of the actions in the workplan, they will raise those queries directly with the projects, in the first instance.
- Only in the case of a CDB being unable to resolve queries or issues with the project, will the CDB then contact the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, and raise those issues or concerns.
- The Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs will then mediate those issues with the CDB and project concerned.
- In accordance with existing practice, the funding to projects will continue while this process is ongoing. Projects will not be prevented from receiving funding while the workplan is being teased out with either the CDB or with the Department. However, the issue of a new contract could be delayed in some case by the need to clarify issues.
- The 2004 contracts for projects are likely to be on a three year basis, but will be subject to submission of a satisfactory annual budget and annual workplan in each year.
- It is envisaged that CDPs will be asked to submit their workplans by 15th January. CDBs have been asked to try to complete the endorsement process by the end of February in order that new contracts can issue in March to those projects which will be out of contract at that stage.

- The Departments concerned recognize that there is a need for greater
- consistency and coherence in regard to the membership of SIM Committees within CDBs and are taking steps to address concerns in this regard.
- Projects which currently have contracts until the end of 2004 will not be require to submit workplans until then.
- All projects are expected to co-operate with this process. In keeping with existing procedures, any project which refuses to submit a workplan to the Department or CDB will inevitably prevent the issuing of its new contract, and will inevitably prevent any prospect of budget increase to its community.

As was indicated in earlier correspondence to CDPs, this is an evolving process, and the procedures are not set in concrete, but are amenable to change.

David Brennan
Principal Officer

COHESION 2005-2006

A Scoping Paper for information and discussion

This short paper will assist in meeting the role of the CDB in respect of Cohesion by identifying key issues and offering suggested ways forward in respect of Cohesion. It does so by addressing key questions.

What is this round of cohesion funding meant to do?

- Bring greater coherence to the Local development sector through amalgamation of structures. This specifically means the creation of new Local Development structures that fuse Area Based Partnerships and Community Development Projects in the first instance.
- These are specific programmes funded by CRAGI directly or through ADM. The process is open to the participation of other local development community based initiatives such as RAPID, Drugs Task Forces, and Family Resource Centres etc.
- Each of these programmes is independent and can choose to participate or not. CRAGI have however stated that they only intend funding these new overarching structures in the post 2006 funding scenario.
- The objective is a unified structure within each of the five areas of the City by the end of 2006
- This will widen access to supports under programmes by providing full city coverage of programmes
- Delivery of programmes via integrated structure by the end 2006
- The new structure is meant to be new. It is not a takeover of CDPs by Partnerships. Any new structure must give equal weight to all the local development interests involved.

What is the City Development Board asked to do?

Why the CDB at all?

The Board is seen as a partnership structure designed to promote the integration of services to the citizen. It has particular responsibility through SIM for the oversight and monitoring of Social Inclusion Measures. Local development funding is one such measure.

The CDB is expected to do the following:

- Invite applications for funding by way of a Cohesion Plan
- Facilitate process
- Assess applications based on criteria set out by department listed below. On the basis of such assessment approve or reject applications.

What the Plan should look like ;

Essential

- ***Statement of agreement on achievement of county/city integrated structures by end 2006***
- ***Clear milestones on progress towards such alignment***
- ***Fit with Objectives for Improved Cohesion***
- ***Business Plan co-ordination***

Provision for service level agreements

Integrated working arrangements for staff in agencies involved
Sharing of facilities and resources
Evidence of multi-agency participation
Measure meeting the relevant priorities/actions/targets of the CDB Strategy
Obvious improvement in the delivery of services

Must meet specific stated needs by

Identifying existing geographic gaps
Identifying population groups likely to benefit from changes

Must display within the proposal

Specific outcomes and deliverables
Clearly defined milestones
Strong fit with overall objectives

Should display additional features such as

Firm commitment to change
Potential as a National Demonstration Model

What does this mean for the future?

In practice it means :

- Five Over-arching Local Development Structures for the City, one in each Area Committee Area subsuming Partnerships and CDPs in that area in the first instance.

In practice the implication in the city is as follows ;

- Ballyfermot, Kimmage/Crumlin and Canals must combine/link. They can retain local structures and community partnerships (inclusive of statutory field staff) for each of the historical partnership areas. The current sub area of the Inner City Partnership known as South Inner City would be an equal element in its own right of this new over arching structure that links all parts of this area.
- Northside simply extends to the entire North Central Area. Reconstitutes Board if necessary to include CDPs and other participating groups.

- Fingals/Cabra links with Ballymun and the Cabra element co-operates with the Inner City Partnership within Dublin Central Area. This should be relatively easy as the Cabra element of this Partnership has a separate and autonomous structure.
- Inner City Partnership and Cabra area link and reach out to all parts of Dublin central.
- In the South East Area a new “Partnership” structure forms through the co-operation and linkage of Rapid(Pearse Street) Ringsend CDP and Teneure/rathmines Community Development (ADM)
- At Area Level the umbrella structure would involve key management staff of statutory agencies.
- Boards of overarching structures would recruit manager and team.
- Strengthen capacity to deliver services to targeted communities. This would be achieved through whole city coverage and ability to target communities of need.

How might this work in practice?

These are thoughts to help discussion.... not directives or stipulations

- The responsibility of developing a plan under cohesion in the first instance rests the local development sector (partnerships, ADM funded companies, RAPID, drugs task forces, family resource centres, other community based projects)
- Any plan should ideally provide for a overarching structure, while maintaining local expression
- This could mean the creation of a limited company or cooperative covering all of Dublin City Council area. The membership of the company or the cooperative would consist of the community interest/initiative that would join together in the plan. This area level company/cooperative could adopt the operational methodology successfully deployed as a Dublin inner city partnership of establishing more locally focused community development partnerships. These could be based on electoral areas or existing and understood community boundaries e.g. Ballyfermot, Finglas, Ballymun. Another approach would be that the over arching partnership would be a federation of existing or new community based structures.
- State and public sector representation at senior management level to be confined to the over arching structure e.g. city council area managers to sit on over arching structure.
- Local expressions of the structure would engage with field staff of agencies as appropriate.
- Community projects would be supported through the over arching structure and would deal specifically with Community Development issues in a manner akin to that of CDP
- The plan would identify critical milestones. The objectives would be to have an agreed over arching structure by November 2006.

Milestones along the way might include:

1. Plan of action to include statements of commitment from the parties collaborating in the plan. Plan to include funding proposals to include items such as costs negotiating and developing structures
2. Research into issues of viability
3. Providing services/structures in areas or in respective target groups not currently covered
4. Joint facilitated meetings of Boards/groups affected
5. Development of joint programme of action.
6. Identification of budget.
7. Agreement on deadlines for implementation.

What happens if the Local Development Sector opts out?

Who knows ??

On present evidence there would be no “acceptable” structures within the city for Local Development Funding in 2006. Of course some groups in the sector might proceed in the absence of other group involvement and this could result in such groups being recipients of funding post 2006. Their work up to that could be funded by the Cohesion Funds.

This approach can be viewed as an opportunity or a threat.

As an opportunity it extends the ability of the sector to address social inclusion across the city. This is particularly important given the evidence from groups like CORI that the nature of poverty and social exclusion and its location has changed.

As an opportunity the sector can write its own formula for how it happens as long as this provides an overarching structure using the five areas and is not seen as “business as usual”.

A threat to the existing structures ? Are those structures open to change ? Has the environment within which they work changed ? Can they continue to find expression or meaning within any alignment ?

What is current DEVELOPMENT BOARD POLICY ?

- Ensure vibrant and independent Civic Society organisations that can critically engage with the State and Local Authority around local development and social inclusion issues.
- Outcome focused and adequately resourced local development
- Whole city coverage through linking to boundaries of Area Committees
- Targeting Groups and communities of interests within City or Area Committee
- Greater commitment and accountability of State and local Authority to local development through service level agreements and funding.

APPENDIX 3: Monitoring and evaluation templates

Table A-3.1: SCOPE – Target Sheet

Partnership / Community Group:

Services for the Unemployed

	Male	Female	Total
Total number of individuals receiving supports under this Measure (case load)	<input style="width: 60px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 60px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>	0
No. of L.T.Unemployed	<input style="width: 60px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 60px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>	0
Full Time Job Placements over all Target Groups	<input style="width: 60px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 60px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>	0
Part-time or Short-term Job Placements over all Target Groups	<input style="width: 60px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 60px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>	0
Work Experience Placements over all Target Groups	<input style="width: 60px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 60px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>	0
Labour Market Scheme Job Placements over all Target Groups	<input style="width: 60px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>	a	Value

	Male	Female	Total
Numbers of Individuals receiving pre-development self-employment supports	<input style="width: 60px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 60px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>	0
Numbers of Groups receiving pre-development social economy supports	<input style="width: 60px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 60px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 60px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>
Number of new businesses (up to 1year) receiving support	<input style="width: 60px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 60px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 60px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>
Number of new social economy enterprises/businesses (up to 1year) receiving support	<input style="width: 60px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 60px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 60px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>
Number of established businesses receiving support	<input style="width: 60px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 60px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 60px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>
Number of established social economy enterprises/businesses receiving support	<input style="width: 60px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 60px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 60px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>

	Male	Female	Total
Number of Jobs created in enterprises and social economy enterprises/businesses	<input style="width: 60px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 60px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>	0

	Male	Female	Total
Number of Individuals receiving education supports	<input style="width: 60px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 60px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>	0
Number of Individuals receiving training supports	<input style="width: 60px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 60px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>	0
Nos. receiving recognised certification e.g. NCVA, Leaving Cert. City & Gids	<input style="width: 60px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 60px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>	0

			Total
Number of networks/collaborations (Services for the Unemployed)	<input style="width: 60px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 60px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 60px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>

Community Development

			Total
Number of groups receiving pre-development support	<input style="width: 60px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 60px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 60px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>
Number of new groups receiving support	<input style="width: 60px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 60px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 60px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>
Number of established groups receiving support	<input style="width: 60px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 60px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 60px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>
Number of environment and Infrastructure Initiatives	<input style="width: 60px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 60px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 60px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>
Number of groups receiving training support	<input style="width: 60px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 60px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 60px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>

			Total
Number of networks/collaborations (Community Development)	<input style="width: 60px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 60px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 60px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>

Community Based Youth Initiative

	Male	Female	Total
Total number of children/young people supported under this Measure	<input style="width: 60px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 60px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>	0
Total number of adults supported under this Measure	<input style="width: 60px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 60px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>	0
Number of early childhood education initiatives	<input style="width: 60px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 60px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 60px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>
Number of preventing early school leaving initiatives	<input style="width: 60px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 60px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 60px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>
Number of initiatives addressing actual early school leaving	<input style="width: 60px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 60px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 60px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>
Number of initiatives promoting developmental youth work	<input style="width: 60px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 60px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 60px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>
Number of initiatives supporting access to further/third level education	<input style="width: 60px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 60px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 60px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>
Number of initiatives for training of trainers	<input style="width: 60px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 60px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 60px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>

			Total
Number of networks/collaborations (Community Based Youth Initiative)	<input style="width: 60px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 60px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 60px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>

Source: ADM (2000).

Table A-3.2: Programme of Activities – action template

Strategy Number		Project Name	
Action Code		Budget € (if relevant)	

Purpose of action?						
General description of action, including what will actually happen, lead agency and strategic partners						
Target groups? (Name & code). Please specify a maximum of 3 target groups that are prioritised in the action. (Note: if an action – or part of an action – has a broad focus, the more wide-ranging categories can be used, e.g. T4, T15, T16)						
Estimated numbers that will be supported? (<i>explanatory note provided</i>)	<i>SLE Individuals</i>		<i>CBYI Youth</i>		<i>CBYI Adults</i>	
	Male	Female	M	F	M	F
	Groups:					
	Initiatives/ Networks:					
Expected outcome / progression from the implementation of the action?						
How exactly is the bulk of money to be spent? What is the main cost involved? Detail financial contribution from each contributor.	Contributor 1. 2. 3. Total Budget		€	Expect ed	Committed	
What support staff will support the action?						
Detail any measures within this action which demonstrate your group's proofing strategy. (<i>This should include any evidence of proofing under the headings of equality, gender, rural, poverty and environment.</i>)						

Source: Pobal.

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