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**‘Partnerships in European Urban Governance: The Reality of  
Bringing Multiple Worlds Together’**

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## ***Abstract***

*This article seeks to investigate the role and attitudes adopted by local partnerships as they undergo Europeanisation processes and accommodate the offers and demands arising from membership to the European Union (EU) of the countries they belong to. Drawing exclusively on secondary data, the analysis of partnership approach reveals how the aspects of selection of partners, collaboration, power, and policy-making and implementation are affected by particular partnership working in the context of European urban regeneration. Despite the existence of optimistic indications towards European integration and the offer of significant added value identified in the functioning of some of the partnerships under consideration (outward look in terms of new resources and collaborative ability), the article also identifies serious problems in the rest of them in the form of inward look and inability to adopt in certain circumstances, which makes their working rather dysfunctional and problematic.*

## ***Introduction***

Most of the literature on Europeanisation and urban governance appeared after the late 1980s. Academic interests reflected the ‘*massive expansion of the powers of the EU following the Single European Act 1986 and then the subsequent increase in resources the EU directed into regional policy initiatives*’ (John, 2001: 90). In this respect there are different points of view regarding these changes between those who see them as transformative and others who see them as insignificant. However, no one seems to deny that traditional approaches in urban politics are abandoned (i.e. long-term planning in the interest of the public) replaced by new ones. These approaches

are more short-sighted focussing on economic potential and social benefits (Andersen, 2001). In addition different local interests become increasingly important therefore closer collaboration between local actors is needed in order to achieve these benefits. In this light, cross-sectoral collaboration has been used to describe the efforts to increase political capacity at regional and local level within the EU context, through inclusion of directly involved and affected actors.

Based on the above considerations, this article presents the partnership approach in the European urban governance context based on the effects of the policy notions of networking and collaborative advantage to the development of partnership arrangements. It then defines the partnership concept and identifies four organisational aspects, which are examined within the context of European urban regeneration. Eight case partnerships are used in order to outline the very different patterns and frameworks of partnership working in different countries within the EU context. In terms of empirical research the article bases its findings on secondary data and attempts to identify potential avenues for further research suggesting relevant research questions on the impact of collaboration to the construction of local partnerships.

## ***The Partnership Approach in Urban Governance***

### ***Policy Networks and Collaboration upon Partnership Working***

The term partnership, arguably, belongs to the family of network concepts. Additionally it has stronger ideological weight than other members of the network family do because it is most referred to as a goal in policy-making terms. For

example, in recent years the European Union (EU) has supported regional economic development through construction of local partnerships in areas eligible for fund assistance (Elander and Blanc, 2001).

According to Bassett (1996), as society becomes more complex, policy-making is subject to fragmentation into different policy areas. Within these areas, different relationships between interest groups are established, blurring the boundaries between state and society by including more actors, most notably from the private and community sectors. The relationships established within these areas can be defined as policy networks. Consequently, by establishing a way of functioning for these interest groups the relationships under consideration can be called networking. Networking, based upon trust and reciprocity, has recently reflected the way of shifting from government to governance (Rhodes, 1997). In relation to governance at the urban level, the rise of networking during the 1990s was seen in the working of local partnerships and inter-agency groups (Local Government Management Board, 1998). The de-bureaucratisation of the local state and the fragmentation of traditional political institutions are the focal point of urban governance in Europe (John, 2001).

There is not only the networked form of local politics though. Urban governance also refers to the capacity of governing systems to collaborate in order to solve public problems in a complex context (Pierre, 2000: cited by John, 2001). In this respect governance involves non-state solutions to the collective action problems (John, 2001). This is the point where the notion of collaborative advantage can be introduced as the force of achieving something unusually creative, which no organisation could have produced on its own (Huxham, 1996). This is reflected upon urban governance

as it involves political activities that go beyond established institutions and includes networks of individual and institutional actors. With today's complex problems, command and control do not seem to work; networking, bargaining and collaboration are part of the answer (John and Cole, 2000).

Considering that since 1988 the EU has required central governments to consult with public and private organisations and in this way to create partnerships at urban level it becomes apparent to explore next the notion of partnership within the context of urban governance.

### ***The Rationale of Partnership in Urban Governance***

In 1990 the OECD defined partnerships as

*'systems of formalised co-operation, grounded in legally binding agreements or informal understandings, co-operative working relationships, and mutually adopted plans among a number of institutions. They involve agreements on policy and programme objectives and the sharing of responsibility, resources, risks and benefits over a specified period of time' (Hughes and Carmichael, 1998: 208).*

Although not a panacea for solving every local development problem, partnerships have the potential to be an effective response for improving relationships between multiple stakeholders (Hughes and Carmichael, 1998). In addition to the definition given above, Peters (1998) sets out the following characteristics of partnerships, also applicable to partnerships in urban governance: Firstly, a partnership involves two or more actors, at least one of which is public. Secondly, each participating member is a principal. Thirdly, an enduring relationship among the partners is involved. Fourthly, each of the participants brings something to the partnership. Finally, there is shared responsibility for the outcomes of partnership activities.

Partnership arrangements in urban governance may include different types of actors, hence different types of partnerships. Bailey et al (1995) identifies six types of partnerships at this level: 1) Development partnerships or joint ventures, which are related to a specific development site involving housing or commercial development. Profit-sharing arrangements may be entered into when the development is completed; 2) development trusts that usually operate at a local or a neighbourhood level and are initiated by local community organisations but often involving local authority and local businesses; 3) joint agreements, coalitions and companies which include a variety of local stakeholders who enter into an informal working agreement or formally established company in order to promote a clearly defined local regeneration strategy; 4) promotional partnerships which include those partnerships that are initiated largely by local business interests or in response to national initiatives; 5) agency partnerships which are locally based agencies that are part of a national network, with clear guidelines on their constitution and remit set out by legislation; and 6) strategic partnerships which are an emergent type of partnerships that operate at the urban but also county or sub-regional level.

### ***Partnerships in Context – Four Aspects for Consideration in Partnership Working***

In the beginning of the new millennium local economic policy and urban regeneration are considered high in the agenda of European urban governance. As Elander and Blanc (2001) point out in the face of globalisation and the erosion of the welfare state, cities have become more active in search for new investments. In this light, partnerships are now commonplace. John and Cole (2000), argue that a new way of

dealing with urban issues has occurred, which undermines the existing patterns of chain and command and transfers decision-making taken by 'official' bodies (such as local authorities) into semi-institutional partnerships. In this way, networking and collaborative advantage become of great importance sealing the creation of partnerships as alternative bodies for deciding and implementing policy in urban governance.

There are four aspects that can provide significant evidence of potentially successful working partnerships in the context of urban governance, taking into account the contribution of networking and collaborative advantage. These aspects have been chosen for this article because they reflect principal partnership values and the consequent outcomes affected by these values. They are: Selection of partners, collaboration among partners, issues of power and, decision-making and implementation. First, selection of partners can be a determining factor of partnership functioning as it defines one of its main pre-conditions for establishment. For instance, where partnership working is mandatory, (Audit Commission, 1998), or a condition of a bid for resources, the choice of partners should be decided in advance. The impact of collaboration can be identified in the focus of who should be invited and who excluded in order to get the best possible selection compatible with the partnership aims and functioning (Apostolakis, 2002).

Collaboration then constitutes the essence of amalgamation of different partners. The point here is to define the collaborative advantage regarding collaboration. According to Peters a factor of promoting collaboration is the extent of mutuality of interests between the participating sectors (especially between the public and private ones)

concerning the specific goals that a partnership might pursue (1998). In this respect, mutuality of interests can promote the collaborative advantage of a particular partnership. Moreover, Peters argues about the possibility of exchange among the partners. That is, each side should bring to the partnership something of value, which is related to the partnership aims and goals. For example, the private sector partners need the capacity of the public sector to exert legitimate authority over the local society. On the other hand, the public sector needs the flexibility of the private sector and its ability to take quick decisions (Peters, 1998). In this way both sectors can benefit and develop the collaborative advantage of the partnership.

The third aspect, the related to power issues, is possibly the most important factor for determining success for a partnership in urban governance after its beginning of operation. Some partnerships are strongly integrated, that means there is a substantial executive capacity at the centre of the partnership or between the centre and related organisational offshoots. In contrast in more weakly integrated partnerships the central body plays a more symbolic role and the strategy pursued is more diverse and less well defined (Harding, 1998). With regard to the latter, Bassett (1996), argues that power relations can be zero-positive in the sense that potential partnership success would increase the power and influence of all the participating members.

Finally, in relation to decision-making and implementation, Wilson and Charlton argue that partnerships can only function efficiently and effectively if executive power lies with a relatively small number of representatives. In practical terms, attempts to allow every interest group to influence decision-making are unworkable (1997). As it is expected this seems incompatible with the very notion of collaborative advantage as



it does not involve common action by all the participating members in this operational aspect. However, if there has been decision by the partnership assembly to delegate lead responsibility for particular projects to the executive team this obstacle can be overcome.

## ***Europeanisation and Partnership Approach***

### ***Europeanisation and Urban Regeneration***

In recent years the literature on the European Union has shifted beyond the traditional boundaries of its governing institutions and the range of European policy competencies. While these areas continue to attract attention, an increasing number of analyses are concerned with broadening the meaning of the term 'Europeanisation'. This is because the term also encompasses studies of the impact on national governmental infrastructure, national policies and decision-making processes (Smith, 2001), and (most importantly for this article) the interaction between various policy interests. In the light of this the European Union continues to providing a fascinating example of collaboration among actors of a diverse range, each with a different background in terms of resource bases, political capacities and relative leverage which has culminated in the formation of a complex international regime (Cram, 1998). In addition, according to Aspinwall (1998), collective action between interest groups at the EU level helps to knit together formerly disparate networks of actors and, in this way, to process further the European integration. However, as Cram points out this collective action is not inevitable, as the question which collective forum to join and

which partners to ally with can be influenced by a broad range of factors, from past experience of collaboration to political expedience (1998).

There has been a series of political challenges facing regions in many of the EU member states regarding collaboration. Policy competences transferred to the EU include issues in which regions have a direct interest or for which regional governments are constitutionally responsible. Examples of these issues include institutional matters, the design of partnerships in policy implementation and the general principle of subsidiarity (Keating, 1998). The same indications can also be found in the context of local government. According to John (2001), europeanisation changes the relationships between central and sub-national government (in the form of regional and local governments). Instead of being bipolar, central-local relations become just one of the dyads between the three levels of government (EU, state, sub-national government). In this sense the increase in the number of possible relationships allows a more strategic interaction. Governance becomes more complex and the outcomes of political interactions are hard to predict.

Optimistic writers contend that the expansion of the responsibilities and powers of the European Union could decentralise power and authority towards the further development of regional and local governments (Bogdanor, 1991; cited by John, 2001). On the other hand such an approach can lead to centralisation because national governments take more powers into their hands to implement directives, for example in the case of environmental regulation in the UK (John, 1996; cited by John, 2001).

A EU function which is of great importance for both regional and local governments is the disbursement of funds. The incentive of having access to funds is, in many cases, the main reason for them to engaging with European affairs. Local authorities are particularly interested in the European Social Fund (ESF) because it can finance training programmes, which many seek to get. In addition, since 1975 the EU runs the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), a concerted fund programme with regional objectives. The main policy implementation body within the EU, the European Commission, periodically reviews the rules of allocating funds (John, 2001). The main reform was in 1988, when the European Union decentralised the administration of funds and refined the principles which guided this administration. The requirement of partnership arrangements became obligatory, reflecting the Commission's concerns about the full involvement of public authorities in the administration, preparation, financing and evaluation of the funds. In this respect, although national governments have the responsibility for making the final decisions on the allocation and monitoring of funds, they have also to construct partnerships with sub-national and other organisations in order to deliver the projects (John, 2001).

Based on the considerations above it could be argued that there is a transformation of urban politics in Europe, in which shortsighted approaches focussing on economic potentials and benefits are the primary objective. As Andersen (2001) argues, although there is no such thing as European urban policy, there are clearly similarities in the way national, regional and local governments try to address urban problems. Firstly, the new approach to urban politics is based on policy networks that involve public authorities, businesses the community and voluntary sectors. Secondly, the new approach includes a targeted move e.g. concentration on spatially defined fields

of action. Thirdly, operation of the new approach is based on cross-sectoral collaboration that includes directly involved actors in order to broaden the political and social basis of participation. The name used to describe this new approach of action is, of course, urban governance (Andersen, 2001).

A consequence of such an approach is that most of the urban renewal programmes mainly in Western Europe are based on it. On the one hand, such programmes are broader in relation to their operational aims including not only physical regeneration but also social relations, labour-market participation, education, etc. On the other hand, the organisation of the process focuses on bringing in a broad group of stakeholders that can co-ordinate their efforts. In other words, the overall purpose is not only to refurbish buildings or get people back to work but to transform social relations. This implies a transformation of the vision and the attitudes of the participating members (Andersen, 2001). It is at this point where partnerships enter, as operational schemes that can examine the nature of the dynamics or relationships between partners in regeneration initiatives. According to Elander and Blanc the term seems to cover quite different practices, which have to be examined through an in-depth study of each case. Targets like reduction in unemployment, improvement in housing opportunities and provision of community facilities are common, but the policy effects are very difficult to measure (2001). Moreover, there is little evidence in terms of important issues such as participation of local residents and influence of urban regeneration by local political interests. Some of these issues are considered in the next paragraphs of the article where an exploration of the four aspects of partnership working is given regarding the context of European urban regeneration.

### *Partnerships in European Urban Regeneration*

Partnerships are considered as an integral part of developments for success in European urban regeneration. This is due to their compulsory character according to the EU directives since 1988. In this part of the article the four aspects of partnership working mentioned in the third sub-section of the first section are examined in the context of European urban regeneration. Several examples are given from a range of countries, especially from the western part of Europe. These examples do not claim homogeneity in policy outcomes because of heterogeneity in the way of policy-making and delivery at the central level in these countries.

Selection of partners is an important factor, which can influence the operation of partnerships. Hence, it seems necessary to examine different cultures in partner selection around the EU. For example, according to Lundqvist (1998) construction of partnerships at the local level in Sweden is predominantly an affair between neighbouring local authorities, especially if the municipalities also belong to the same county. The selection of partners is heavily influenced then by the role of the local authorities as public bodies and the nature of partnering becomes a secondary issue. Usually, as Lundqvist points out, partnership construction between neighbouring municipalities involves collaboration around certain infrastructures based on high investments that come to function as common pool resources. However, the visibility and appropriateness of costs and benefits are crucial factors in determining the form of partnership. Non-profit partners such as local authorities are sought in the case in which cost and benefits are not very visible; thus it is difficult to shift out among prospective partners. Where the cost/benefit distribution is easy to establish then joint stock companies are frequent.

This is not the only type of partner selection though, as there are cases in other EU countries where the forum in which different actors participate takes the form of wide representation. For example, the board of directors of the Tallaght Partnership in Ireland is based on a wide pattern of representation which includes the public sector, local employers, trade unions, and the voluntary and community sectors (Geddes, 1998). Moreover, in the case of the Wester Hailes Partnership in Scotland, in 1989-1990, there was an even wider representation including the Scottish Office, as the government representative, the local council, the regional council, the district council, local businesses, the Health Board, the Employment Service, and the local community and voluntary sector. Considering that private industry did not play as large a role in this partnership it seemed that it was mainly an agreement between government and the community and voluntary sectors (Bailey et al, 1995).

Then, there is collaboration between the participating members of a partnership arrangement in European urban regeneration. Two examples of collaboration will be explored next. The first one is related to a successful collaborative experiment in the Netherlands. It is about the Marienburg project, a regeneration project in the city of Nijmegen (Spiering, 2000). In order to cope with the complexity of the project the particular local authority decided, in 1990, to develop the project in collaboration with a private company, the ING Real Estate Development. Despite the different philosophy in operating the two partners managed to establish an atmosphere of trust and common expectations that helped in the achievements of their goals. This was because both partners knew exactly what they wanted from the project. As a result both partners regarded each other with high professionalism and reliability. They

operated as a team, where everyone stood for the same goals. Even in relation to their main differences, which were concerned with financial and political aspects, the partnership succeeded in overcoming the obstacles for the sake of the common aims of the project (Spiering, 2000).

The second case refers to the partnership arrangements regarding urban policies implemented in France after 1977 on housing regeneration. It was then when formal public-private partnerships were set up around the country under the Housing Improvement Scheme. The partnership construction had two steps. In step one, landlords agreed to give priority to their former tenants and to follow rent regulations. In response they could become eligible for public funding. According to step two, provided that landlords had signed the convention, the tenants either could afford the regulated rent increase or they could not. If they could not afford it, they became eligible for a new housing benefit (Elander and Blanc, 2001). In most cases, according to Elander and Blanc, this partnership approach was unsuccessful. Many landlords saw the construction of partnership as a trick, binding them to reduced profits. After having refused public funding, they could then set rents at market levels, which were higher compared to the ones offered by the convention. In addition, there were accusations of 'hidden agendas' between the main partners, though this could not openly admitted. As a result, the policy was abandoned followed in 1982 by a new programme, which benefited only the low-income tenants. In this way specific regulations promoted these tenants' participation in decision-making over what should be improved. But in most cases participation was purely tokenism. Today, urban regeneration policies put more emphasis on economic initiatives that provide

jobs for unemployed tenants and on crime reduction. But these strategies need to be tested as they are still newly implemented (2001).

Balancing power according to partnership needs and to each participant's aims is a very difficult task partnerships face with. The case of Bristol in the early 1990s is a very interesting one from the point of view that the creation of partnerships as schemes for urban regeneration brought with it the development of power elites within the partnerships under consideration. In 1991, The Bristol Initiative (TBI) was launched in order to fill the gap left by the declining leadership role traditionally provided by old Bristol firms and families. In addition, it was a response to inadequacies of the local Chamber of Commerce. The new organisation quickly developed a variety of policy fields, from upgrading the city centre to the provision of social housing (Bassett, 1996). The TBI was soon joined by another partnership, the Western Development Partnership (WDP), which was launched with the backing of the TBI and the local TEC. The partnership brought together representatives from the private sector, employers' organisations and other local council from the same area. The aim was to make Bristol 'one of Europe's most prosperous and technically advanced cities'. The TBI's emergence as a new voice for Bristol business caused friction with the Chamber of Commerce, which was resolved only in 1993 when the TBI chairman became the new Chief Executive of the restructured Chamber. So the new Bristol Chamber of Commerce and Initiative (BCCI) emerged as the major player of regeneration in the city along with the Bristol City Council. In this light there is evidence of a new business elite in the city organised around the 'President's Group' within the BCCI. This body had around 120 members, 60 of which came from the business sector. There also existed a number of around 25 activists within the



group. Another factor that needs to be taken into account is the role played by key individuals e.g. the charismatic Chief Executive of the BCCI, who took the role of recruiting the new generation of business leaders and developing a coherent philosophy of where the plans of regeneration should be. As Bassett (1996) argues, in the case of Bristol in the early 1990s a limited number of key participants drawn from the leading business organisations seemed to have more power than other partnership members. This was despite the fact that all members had the financial and other resources to bring to the partnership, so the relationships were ones of exchange.

All three aspects mentioned above have their significant impact on the fourth one, which is decision-making and implementation. An interesting case of overloaded power construction, which made decision-making and effective implementation problematic is the one of Paul Partnership in Limerick-Ireland referred by Geddes (1998). The partnership developed a highly complex management structure, which could be analogous to that of a big private firm or public organisation. In this respect there was the main management board of directors of 24 directors nominated by 16 partner bodies, which met and made the main policy and funding decisions. Beneath the management board there were three sub-tiers: three operational sub-committees, six programme development workshops and three special programme committees. In this way there were about 200 people who had positions within the partnership. In addition, there was about 50 full-time and part-time staff and the partnership's plan included 21 discrete activity areas with some of these activities managed externally by collaborative partnerships. As it might be expected there were criticisms of bureaucracy within the Paul Partnership and addressing them was one of the biggest challenges facing the partnership.

Another case, of a not overloaded power construction this time but still problematic in relation to decision-making and policy implementation is the one of the Rotherham Economic Partnership (REP), which was launched in 1993. Originally the partnership was always chaired by 'leading' figures from the private sector. Apart from this, its offices were independently located and it was managed by a member of the local council's staff and not someone senior (e.g. the leader of the council). In this sense, it was an 'arms length' partnership (Davies, 2001). In the first place, the partnership's concerns were to 'work for the economic well-being' of the city 'attracting and regenerating investment'. In addition, it developed a 'strategic' vision, which set out an optimistic picture of what a regenerated Rotherham would look like. This strategy was revised in certain occasions afterwards. Davies suggests that there were views amongst the partnership's participants about problematic decision-making hence implementation of policies. This was because of the partnership's focus on bidding for 'pots of money' that discouraged strategic thinking. Moreover, there were accusations about the partnership's governance by the council. Notwithstanding, according to other local actors, the council '*did not care so much*' about the partnership (2001).

From the cases presented above, only the Tallaght Partnership, The Bristol Initiative and the Paul Partnership were funded by the EU, based on the EU Third Programme to Combat Poverty, the LEADER and the KONVER programmes. These and similar funding programmes are seen within the broader framework of the European integration process in which urban regeneration plays an important role (Elander and Blanc, 2001). In this respect the scope of the EU partnership programmes has widened

becoming increasingly multi-dimensional. They range from economic development and job creation to training and education, housing renewal, environmental policies, community safety, health and local community development. However, according to Olsson and Jacobsson, there is a clear hierarchy of power in the case of partnership programmes funded by the EU because the EU Commission, as a supranational bureaucratic organisation decides on policy-making. Once the legal, political and financial framework is set up, implementation is left to actual partnerships (1997; cited by Elander and Blanc, 2001). As a consequence, there are questions raised about the inclusiveness of these partnerships. For instance, in the process of policy-making and implementation, bureaucrats, experts and after them corporate and local political elites leave little room for influence by the broader audience of local residents. Additionally, there is no a focal point of accountability. On the base of these considerations, the reality of bringing multiple worlds together does not seem to be always the desirable one for the European local partnerships.

### ***Research to Be Put Forward***

When looking at the context of European urban governance one is struck by the co-existence of more or less contradictory evidence on the creation and operation of partnership schemes that seem to compete with each other. Raising funding is the most obvious reason for this, as there exist increasing demands for local economic growth, social inclusion, community development, and environmental sustainability under the label of urban regeneration. Considering the fragmented character of urban governance in Europe and the operation of so many partnerships at local level there are many potential research tasks that would be fulfilled in this subject. The area

seems under researched and the number of research questions that need a response considerably high.

In this respect networking and collaborative advantage can be considered as essential mechanisms for bringing different interest groups together into a partnership. Furthermore, they can be seen as tools that bring collaborative betterment (Himmelman, 1996). This begins before the establishment of the actual partnership arrangement and continues up to its operational process. Himmelman offers a guide of what a collaborative arrangement such as local partnership would need in order to see if its questions are answered overtime (1996). In this light, potential research projects on partnerships in European urban governance focusing on regeneration would have to respond to crucial questions such as the ones that follow based on the four aspects that have been examined in the previous sections of the article:

- What are the actors involved in trying to solve particular problems in urban regeneration? What interests do these actors represent? What are the incentives for participation? What costs and benefits are involved in a decision for participation?
- What are the goals and objectives of the collaborative attempt? What is the mission of the partnership arrangement? What is the information obtained about similar collaborative attempts in the past?
- Which power relations are involved in the particular collaborative attempt? How these relations affect urban regeneration in the area? What type of conflicts are visible and between which actors and interests?

- How is the partnership governed? Who is providing leadership? How is the partnership administered and managed? What is the impact of the partnership activity to local residents?

These questions are reflected in the presentation of the case studies in this article. However, the article represents only an attempt to point out in a rather introductory way the impact of partnership functioning in the context of European urban governance. As a consequence, the outcomes of the ‘*desk top*’ research give only general insights and they do not go in detail about each country in the EU. Additionally, what exists in one country does not necessarily apply to the rest of the EU countries. In this respect one has to be aware of particular national legislations, policies and financial resources that can create opportunities and obstacles for action.

### ***Concluding Remarks***

There has been an ongoing debate about the utility of whether to look at partnerships in their national context or in connection with the reforms the EU Commission introduced in 1988. In this light, there are contradictory points of view on the issue (Anderson, 1990; Marks, 1996; both cited by John, 2001). The EU requires local authorities to be consulted over the implementation and monitoring of the Operational Programmes of each partnership project (John, 2001). However, this does not seem enough to promote the partnership approach in European urban governance, as this context is not the arena where influential practices and behaviours are likely to emerge (John, 2001). It could be argued that this is also the outcome on the debate from the case studies provided that only three out of eight partnership arrangements

seemed to be well connected with the EU system of funding and determined to develop significantly their action towards a pan European network of local economic and social prosperity.

In relation to the added value partnership action offers within the European urban governance context, the term added value should be first defined for the purposes of this article. Two approaches to added value are considered as more appropriate. Firstly, partnerships can produce added value in terms of new resources, strategic capacity and the belief that collaboration is inherently good (Davies, 2001). The second approach, according to Davies again, is related to how local actors understand and value the partnership working and if they could achieve the same outputs without partnerships. Regarding the first approach to added value in relation to the four aspects of partnership working mentioned in the main body of the article, it could be argued that the Tallaght Partnership offers more added value in comparison with the Swedish local partnerships. This is because the Tallaght Partnership had a wide representation of partners that brought new resources, potentially better strategic capacity – because of the outward look of the partnership – and most importantly effective collaboration.

The significance of collaboration is also examined in relation to the second aspect of partnership working. The Marienburg project adds value to the notion of collaboration as similar understanding of policy issues and shared aims between the partners indicated effective common work producing successful outcomes. The small number of partners might also affect the functioning of the partnership for the better. With respect to the issue of power, it could be argued that The Bristol Initiative adds

considerable value regarding all the aspects of added value. This is because of the innovative approach the partnership followed and hence brought a new 'aura' in the construction of collaborative schemes in the city of Bristol. Even in the case of leadership the partnership attempted to follow a new approach nominating the establishment of a private sector representative as the leading figure of the partnership, something relatively unusual for partnership arrangements. Finally, regarding the aspect of policy-making and implementation Paul Partnership and Rotherham Economic Partnership offer little of added value as in both cases partners cannot bring invaluable '*inputs*' because of serious problems in the organisational structure of the partnerships.

In relation to the added value that is judged against the understanding of partnership aims and the views of the local actors as to whether the same achievements could be possible without the contribution of partnerships, it could be argued that the case partnerships with a '*European*' outlook can adapt better to the difficulties. This is because they '*found it easier*' compared to the rest of the case partnerships who had mainly a more inward look in terms of selection of partners, collaborative capacity, issues of power and, policy-making and policy delivery. It sounds perhaps attractive to argue that the partnership tradition is strong in the European urban governance because it legitimises policies, which favour actors who are already powerful enough to implement them. However, when it comes to bring in other actors who do not have the same financial and policy capacity the task is not of the easiest. It is then when the reality of bringing multiple worlds together does not seem to work overtime.

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