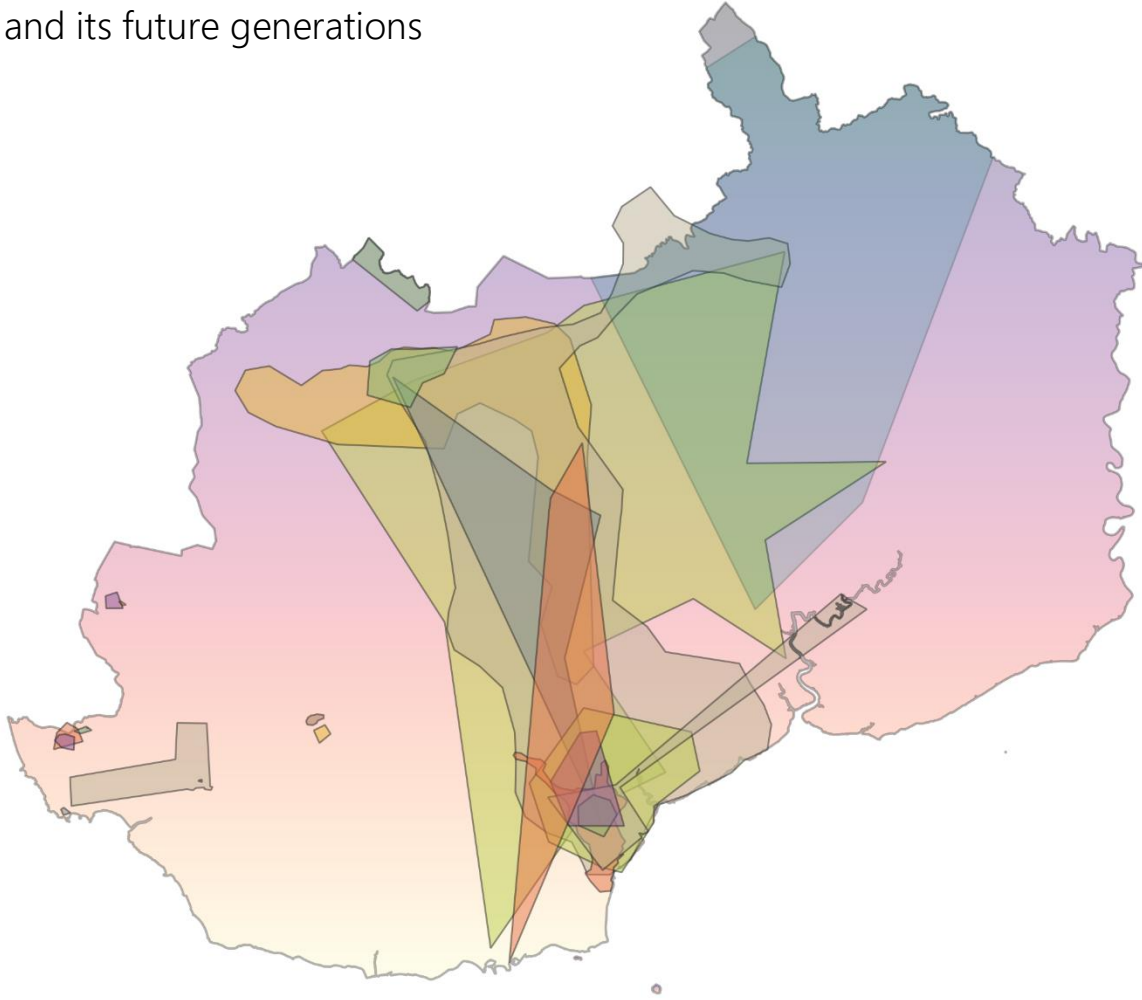# REGENERATIVE CITY-REGIONS?

a case study of

Cardiff Capital Region

and its future generations

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Summary

City-regions have gained popularity among academics, politicians and policy-makers alike, promising a better scale to encompass the interconnections between places and people, formerly separated by administrative boundaries. Yet, city-regions are still underpinned by a narrow economic rationale which prioritises policies for economic growth, competitiveness and agglomeration, often disregarding larger problematics of equity, distribution and environmental issues. This is happening despite a long standing call from scholars who have been looking for more holistic ways to define, study and understand city-regions.

The current project can be situated among the aforementioned efforts, aiming to portray city-regions as complex, nested ecosystems, where a variety of actors, initiatives and possibilities to shape the developmental agenda exist. To this end, the research has bridged between three different literature strands – progressive regionalism, collaborative governance and regenerative development – to create an integrated conceptual framework. This tripartite lens was applied on a single empirical case study, Cardiff Capital Region, which was analysed from its inception until June 2018. The case study's legislative context led to a further conceptual refining, adding a focus on the role that future generations – today's young people – could play in city-regional development.

Employing mixed methods, the research engaged politicians, policy-makers, academics, practitioners, as well as university and college students, helping to shed light upon the city-region's emergence, its evolution (both as process – the governance structure, and policy – choice of projects and investments), and the variety of narratives and stakeholders co-existing in the city-region. Besides, the research showed the effects that the funding model had on the format, actors and governance structure, as well as the windows of opportunity to redefine priorities towards a more progressive, collaborative and regenerative city-region.

Glossary

CCR	Cardiff Capital Region
CCRCD	Cardiff Capital Region City Deal
CCRB	Cardiff Capital Region Board (CCRCD)
CU	Cardiff University
CUCRE	Cardiff University City-region Exchange
CUMG	Cardiff University Metro Group
DC	Design Circle
EGP	Economic Growth Partnership (CCRCD)
ESB	Employment and Skills Board (CCRCD)
FGC	Future Generations Commissioner
FGCO	Future Generations Commissioner's Office
G&CC	Growth and Competitiveness Commission
GVA	Gross Value Added
insiders	Actors officially involved in Cardiff Capital Region (council leaders, council executives, or members of the different city-regional bodies)
IWA	Institute of Welsh Affairs
LA	Local authority
JC	Joint Cabinet (CCRCD)
NAW	National Assembly for Wales
outsiders	Actors who have interacted with Cardiff Capital Region, yet are outside of the formal governance structure
PMO	Programme Management Office (CCRCD)
PSB	Public services board
RBC	Regional Business Council (CCRCD)
RD	Regional Director (CCRCD)
RPB	Regional Programme Board (CCRCD)
RTA	Regional Transport Authority (CCRCD)
TA	Thematic analysis
T&FG	Task and finish group
TfW	Transport for Wales
UKG	UK Government
WFGA	Well-being of Future Generations Act
WG	Welsh Government
WIF	Wider Investment Fund

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1 Introduction

1.1 A preface to a complex story

Once upon a time, a handful of people understood that the things they had in common were more important than those which had historically divided them. These men and women, who happened to also hold significant political power within local and national governments, decided to work together to improve their area: the South Eastern part of Wales, United Kingdom. They had been struggling with similar problems and anyway, former administrative boundaries were losing relevance for the local inhabitants who regularly crossed them for work and leisure, too. Their union became official in March 2016, when they signed a so-called *city deal*. This fresh collaboration was branded 'Cardiff Capital Region' – a name that would hopefully awaken a novel identity and help overcome an industrial past and some antagonistic relationships.

Looking for guidance and inspiration, its creators studied other city-regions in the kingdom, and were strongly directed by the national government whose aim was to become more globally competitive. The report which paved the way for the city-region set a straightforward plot, and its commissioner, Edwina Hart, confessed: 'I based this report, and I wanted it done, purely on the economics of how to achieve jobs and investment, which is what we need' (National Assembly for Wales, 2012).

And so, the numerous official characters involved made it their mission to create jobs and attract investment in Cardiff Capital Region. The UK Government was going to provide some of the funding, but also test progress regularly, using measures which have meanwhile become infamous. This Government was mostly interested in the number of jobs created and the increase in gross value added. And, while illustrations of the city-region's economic activity showed a steadily ascending line (Welsh Government, 2019, p. 26), Cardiff Capital Region's leaders pledged to accelerate this growth of goods and services, convinced that it was a holy grail that would eventually trickle down benefits to everyone.

Since its inception, various people have tried to contribute to Cardiff Capital Region's story, which is expected to unfold at least until 2036. Some of these non-official narrators saw city-regions as more than purely economic establishments, and proposed a variety of narratives to demonstrate this. Some recognised that while goods and services can be indispensable for people's well-being, human production and consumption habits put a heavy burden on the other ecosystems in the city-region (Stockholm Environment Institute and GHD, 2015).

Ultimately, the environmental destruction would also affect people as indefinite economic growth is difficult to imagine on a planet with finite natural resources.

Yet, other storytellers announced enthusiastically that Cardiff's popularity was growing, being one of the most attractive cities in the UK (Cardiff Public Services Board, 2017, p. 14), so more and more people would be calling this area 'home' in the following 20 years (Welsh Government, 2019, p. 6). It meant that the city-region should be preparing to accommodate a larger population and a growing need for public services. This was already problematic, as showed by those narrators who depicted the tragedies of people who were not necessarily thriving: people who lost their homes and ended up sleeping rough (Statistics for Wales, 2019), or increasing numbers of children whose families could not afford to raise them and entrusted them to the care system (BBC, 2019).

These various narratives, which have been shaping individual and collective imaginaries, are intricately connected. Indeed, the more popular stories have had a greater chance at influencing Cardiff Capital Region's development, yet there is increasing recognition that a variety of issues, as well as more imaginative pathways are surfacing. Places are based on nested stories and dismissing this complexity, telling fragmented truths, is no longer serving anyone. When a story focuses solely on the lack of jobs, for instance, then a logical plot stage appears to be a 'job creation programme'. Yet, if the writers conceive this stage in isolation from other narratives, the bigger picture is lost and consequences become invisible. Both the writers and the characters are then exposed to unanticipated impacts. An employment programme might help reduce unemployment, yet if it leads to 'in-work poverty' and contributes to a polluting industry with negative effects that span across the world, does it really bring a happy ending for the city-region?

A plot twist – such as a new city-regional collaboration – offers tremendous opportunities to affect change, join forces to tackle common problems and ensure more people thrive within the planetary boundaries. Indeed, Cardiff Capital Region's story is based on some irrefutable arguments, such as the fact that the transport system has been long needing an update, or that pockets of extreme deprivation require immediate attention. Nonetheless, the city-region's raison d'être, as well as its development pathways have been contested, especially by characters who would have wanted to play a more important role in defining the course of action, yet have so far not been allowed.

Fortunately, it is still early days for Cardiff Capital Region, and its plot can be enriched. The following pages aim to do just that: uncover a complex city-regional story, with various

prominent characters, as well as less visible ones, whose voices, needs and aspirations will hopefully become more noticeable. At the same time, this thesis suggests that new metaphors have the power to inspire mind-sets shifts from growth, neutrality and competitiveness, towards well-being, regeneration and collaboration. Thus, without claiming to feature every important issue, this research is an anthology of stories that show both the opportunities and the barriers in creating a more progressive, regenerative and collaborative city-regional agenda.

The next parts of the introduction clarify this project's[1] rationale, its manifold aims and the approaches which helped writing an alternative story for Cardiff Capital Region.

1.2   Research rationales and aims

British city-regions – delineated primarily on workforce commuting patterns – have been established to fulfil economic functions and turn UK into a nation of globally competitive agglomerations. Their funding model – growth, city or devolution deals – have both enabled their existence, and severely limited their scope. Depending on narrowly conceived targets, such as the number of jobs created or GVA[2] increases, the city deal approach determines city-regional leaders to see wider social, cultural, political or environmental programmes as secondary to economic growth.

Unsurprisingly, this approach to define and develop city-regions has been widely criticised. By now, both the academic and the policy-making world have called for richer definitions and understandings of such complex territories, as well as the reconsideration of measures of development. The *progressive regionalist literature* pointed out that city-regions are also rich socio-ecological spaces, not just socio-economic ones (Pezzoli, Williams, & Kriletich, 2011). Instead of assuming that economic growth will eventually reduce inequality and clean the pollution it creates (Raworth, 2017), progressive regionalists demanded direct action to address environmental degradation, social injustice and poverty.

Aligned to this, a different body of thought identified city-regions as a suitable scale for *regenerative development* – a paradigm that suggests it is possible to tackle different

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[1] In referring to this thesis, the words 'project', 'research' and 'research project' have been used interchangeably throughout the manuscript to avoid repetition.

[2] GVA stands for Gross Value Added and is a measure used to estimate the total output of an economy. At macro level, it is calculated by adding taxes and subtracting subsidies of the total GDP (GVA = GDP + subsidies on products - taxes on products). Although widely employed, such measures have been lately criticised even by international organisations such as OECD, European Commission, and the World Bank who have been using them for a long time.

interrelated problems by increasing humanity's positive impact on the planet (Girardet, 2015). Its advocates considered that mere sustainability was no longer enough to solve the multiple, interconnected planetary crises, and challenged the anthropocentric worldview (du Plessis, 2012).

A principle shared by the two aforementioned disciplines is the need for diverse knowledges and multi-scalar collaborations, to ensure solutions are co-created and benefits are spread among people and places. This premise allows to infer that city-regions are highly dependent on their *governance* arrangements – or, in simpler words, on who gets to collaborate, decide and act upon what.

The current research draws on these different ideas and is strongly inspired by the latest global uprisings. While various city-regional arrangements are increasingly leading to democratic deficits (Beel, Jones, & Jones, 2018; Jonas & Moisio, 2016; Lyall, Wood, & Bailey, 2015; Prosser et al., 2017), the past couple of years have seen waves of protests and activism. Often led by 'unusual suspects' such as young people, women and indigenous people (Shabbir, 2019), they are highlighting similar issues to the ones theorised by progressive regionalism and regenerative development scholars, and are demonstrating that today's democracies are in a dire need of more *collaborative governance* approaches.

Based on these premises, the current research sets four intertwined research aims:

(1) *Theoretically*, the thesis demonstrates the synergies between three different literature strands (progressive regionalism, collaborative governance and regenerative development) and studies the intricacies of collaboration and regeneration at city-regional level.

(2) Bridging between literatures, the research formulates and applies an integrated *conceptual* framework to study an empirical case, creating an antidote to the narrow conceptualisation of city-regions.

(3) The framework is tested in a real case study, Cardiff Capital Region, where the *empirical* explorations are split in various stages. First, the research looks at the official plans and strategies, and analyses city-regional leaders' aims and aspiration for Cardiff Capital Region. Then, it tries to highlight other voices, demonstrating that there is a plethora of people and ideas that could (or might already) be contributing to a richer story. Among them, the research focuses especially on future generations – today's young people who will have to live the longest with the decisions taken on their behalf.

(4) In interacting with all these different actors, the thesis tests various research methods, including traditional, as well as visual and creative approaches. The distinctive *methodological* framework generated rich results that have already been disseminated through conventional outputs such as academic articles and blogs, as well as innovative ones such as photo essays and an exhibition, a video, and most importantly, a children's story (see Annex 1).

The research started in April 2016 and investigated the evolution of Cardiff Capital Region from its inception until June 2018. The empirical work was conducted in parallel to the literature review stage, allowing to refine the conceptual framework and to consult other literatures when needed. The breadth of data collected sheds light upon the emergence of Cardiff Capital Region, its development (both as process – the governance structure, and policy – choice of projects and investments) and its stakeholders' aspirations for the future. These inquiry lines are considered in the context of the Well-being of Future Generations Act. This Welsh piece of legislation, which is akin to the regenerative development paradigm, makes Cardiff Capital Region a well-suited case study (further detailed in 3.2) where conflicting narratives demonstrate the intricacies of city-regional development.

1.3   Why this research matters

As mentioned, this research project started in April 2016, a month after Cardiff Capital Region (CCR hereafter) signed a city deal with the British and Welsh Governments. This synchronicity has had both negative and positive effects. The difficulties engendered by the 'live research' activities have been a great source of frustration and time lost. A city-region 'in the making' translated into limited and/or conflicting information, both in the written sources found, and in the discussions with the city-regional leaders, increasing the need for multiple fact-checking. The efforts to contact them have been closely documented (see Annex 6a), as this turned out to be a finding in itself. The novelty of the city-regional establishment also meant that most interactions with 'outsiders' of CCR would unavoidably start with an explanation of what the city-region is. While this was initially a barrier in working with youth, it also led to an innovative methodology which relied on visual and creative methods to establish a common language between the young participants and researcher.

Along with the aforementioned hurdles, the overlap also offered the opportunity to study events as they happened, and to get a realistic image of the 'battlefield' around creating such an institution. This confirmed that city-regional development has an evolving learning curve, is a process, not an event, and understanding its complexity requires a longitudinal outlook. For

this reason, the empirical analysis (Chapter 4) starts with a brief historical account of South East Wales and the various attempts to foster regional collaboration, initiated by a variety of actors. Without this *longue durée* depiction of the city-region, the story would have been incomplete. Thus, one of the biggest accomplishments of this research project might be that it is, at the time of writing this introduction (January 2020), the most comprehensive study of Cardiff Capital Region. The research condenses significant information regarding CCR's development, its leaders and their aims, the tensions created by the city deal approach, as well as the co-existence of alternative, sometimes conflicting narratives within the same territory.

In analysing the city-region's evolutionary process, this research employs an interdisciplinary theoretical, conceptual and empirical approach. This novel way of studying city-regions responds to the pressing calls to consider such establishments in all their complexity (Beel, Jones, & Jones, 2016; Kipfer & Wirsig, 2004), as both socio-economic and socio-ecologic spaces (Pezzoli, Hibbard, & Huntoon, 2009). For this scope, the trilateral conceptual framework helps to highlight the urban–rural interdependencies (Pezzoli et al., 2011), and surpass the 'economic reductionist readings of agglomeration' (Beel et al., 2016, p. 518). Furthermore, it revives the academic debate around the 'world of regionalisms' proposed by Jonas & Ward (2002, 2007a, 2007b), consolidating the normative claims and theoretical assumptions of what progressive city-regions might look like.

Evolving within a larger network which studied *sustainable place-shaping*[3], the project – initially called 'Sustainable city-regions', contributes to expand both the field of progressive regionalism and sustainability science. Since throughout the literature scoping phase it became obvious that the 'regenerative development' paradigm was better aligned with this project's moral compass, it was preferred to the concept of 'sustainable development' (more on this in section 2.3.1). As a relatively new approach, regenerative development requires case studies to test its relevance and feasibility in practice. This research offers potential pathways and some examples, while recognising that regenerative action is still rather limited and often happens at much smaller scales. Although the national well-being legislation provides a supportive legal context for regenerative development, CCR's case demonstrates that implementing the act is particularly difficult at city-regional level, relying on a different worldview, political will and institutional capacity.

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[3] SUSPLACE was a Marie Curie Innovative Training Network which gathered 15 early stage researchers, 6 universities and 7 non-academic partners, with the aim of exploring the potential of sustainable place-shaping practices.

Last but not least, this research raises awareness regarding projects and people who are less likely to play a prominent role in city-regional affairs, despite being directly affected by decisions taken on their behalf. Their initiatives constitute 'regionalisms from below' (Kipfer & Wirsig, 2004, p. 231) and some of them are seeking to disrupt the current trajectory. In unravelling them, this thesis responds to Morgan's (2014, p. 315) critique for the lack of attention paid to the state-civil society dimension in the debates on European city regionalism. In his opinion, overstressing the inter-governmental dimension might result in deepening the democratic deficit, due to insufficient 'community-based spaces of deliberation' and 'greater influence of elites on policy-making at the local level' (Rodríguez-Pose, 2008, p. 1041). To this end, the research investigated the modes of governance emerging in the Welsh context, and engaged with an array of direct and indirect stakeholders, including persons who come from outside the official, institutionalised domain of planning and politics (Groth & Corijn, 2005, p. 506). Thus, the research responds to the need to analyse collaborative ways of governance in complex settings, aiming to reveal the extent to which city-regions can accommodate a multiplicity of actors and voices, as well as the types of partnerships formed (Cole, 2012, p. 4).

1.4 Thesis structure

This thesis consists of eight chapters. After this introductory one, the second chapter presents the theoretical studies which inspired, informed and helped situate this research. The limited previous experience in sustainability and regional studies, as well as very little knowledge of the British context determined a humble intellectual exploration. Although a variety of fields and sources have been consulted, three main bodies of thought have played a key role in the conceptual framework: progressive regionalism, collaborative governance and regenerative development. The three are linked to show the potential encompassed by city-regions, as complex socio-economic and socio-ecological spaces, that can foster inclusive collaborations and support regenerative action to enhance, instead of exploit, the variety of resources they rely on. The final section brings together these literature strands, revealing how the framework guided specific empirical questions and methodological choices.

Chapter three presents the methodology adopted to reach the aims of this research, opening with an acknowledgement of the philosophical stance which influenced the research methods and the interpretation of the data collected. The following sections discuss the case study choice, explaining CCR's suitability for this research. The methods employed are presented as three groups to differentiate between the traditional ones, the visual ones, and an immersive

research experience. Further on, the chapter introduces the data analysis methods and process, to reveal how findings have been abstracted from data. The final part talks about the shortcomings of this thesis, some of which might become future lines of inquiry.

The forth chapter is the first empirical one, providing a longitudinal outlook of city-regional development in South East Wales. This view is essential to understand the various tensions existing in the current CCR: between different local authorities, between local authorities and the two governments, and between various pathways for development. The end of the chapter elucidates how the city-region was both made possible and stunted by the city deal agreement which prescribed its agenda and governance arrangements.

The next chapter is split in three sections which emulate the conceptual framework. Sub-chapter 5.1 resumes from the previous investigation of the effects of the city deal and offers a detailed account of CCR through the lenses of progressive regionalism. Then, 5.2 is an attempt to map the city-region's governance structure, including both the official actors – the 'insiders', and the 'outsiders' who have tried to pierce through this rigid institution. Without necessarily assessing their success in altering the existing city-region, this section highlights the grassroots interventions which are offering alternative narratives, attempting to overcome some of the deficiencies in the current approach. Furthermore, sub-chapter 5.3 introduces the *Well-being of Future Generations Act*, the Welsh legislation that could potentially nurture regenerative action. Unfortunately, the research shows that having laws is not enough, and that implementation depends on many factors, including will and know-how, as well as a convergence of success indicators – currently missing when comparing CCRCD and the Act. The final subchapter discusses all the key findings and reflects on the trilateral approach used.

Building on the idea of future generations, Chapter 6 zooms into the research done with young people. After explaining this choice, the different methods employed in working with youth, as well as some of the core findings, are discussed. Despite a limited research sample, some results might make valuable lessons for the city-region. Then, the second part focuses on the wider issue of youth engagement in CCR, demonstrating that city-regional leaders hold a variety of opinions on this subject. Recognising the difficulties to recruit and work with young people, the final part problematizes engagement, analysing the personal endeavours to complete this research, both with youth and city-regional leaders.

Chapter 7 discusses the research achievements, tackling questions related to the conceptual framework. The first sections summarise the core arguments and research contributions made by this research. Then, the chapter explores how the framework guided the research and helped

to understand the case study, before reflecting on the insights added by the empirical experience and how these helped to refine the conceptual framework. Building on all these findings, four design principles for regenerative city-regions are formulated. The end of the chapter discusses some limitations and outlines potential future research challenges.

Finally, the epilogue, reflects on some of the main events that have shaken the world since April 2016 when this project started, and which in hindsight, represent an endorsement for the research directions taken.

2 Literature review – framing the regenerative city-regional development

This chapter provides the theoretical context which informed, inspired and provoked this research. The first three parts review the key literature strands used, while the fourth part concludes by presenting the conceptual framework built on the theoretical synergies identified.

Socio-economic AND socio-ecological spaces

The first part introduces the city-region concept and its origins. Then, it highlights the many ways in which academia has studied and interpreted city-regions, focusing in particular on the progressive regionalist body of thought. Although city-regions are, in practice, still underpinned by a reductionist economic narrative, there is a growing call to articulate larger problematics. Progressive regionalism plays an important role in this respect, focusing especially on issues of social equity and sustainability, largely disregarded in the past (Pezzoli et al., 2009, p. 336). Moreover, since this study is based in the UK, this section also introduces the origins and characteristics of city deal arrangements that support British city-regional projects.

Collaboration, not competition

Aiming to contribute to the literature on progressive regionalism by developing a holistic research direction, the present study adopts a multidisciplinary lens, connecting city-regionalism with two other literature strands: collaborative governance and regenerative development. Thus, the second part captures the essence of the theoretical debates surrounding collaborative governance. While acknowledging the messy and context-dependent nature of collaboration, these pages demonstrate that the success of a city-regional project is intrinsically tied to its actors and their capacity to pursue shared goals. After exploring general features of collaborative governance, the attention turns again towards British city-regions, uncovering the structures and issues created by city deals. The last section offers a less common perspective – that of young people – who until recently were often invisible or considered politically apathetic. The latest actions for climate, which have been led by youth, have changed this perception, making a strong case for more youth engagement in formal governance structures.

Beyond neutrality and sustenance. Regeneration!

Then, the third part explains how the discussions in progressive regionalism would benefit from adopting a regenerative lens, to encourage more ambitious policies and practices which go beyond neutrality or mere sustainability. Despite its elusiveness, this paradigm offers an

aspirational agenda which has already been associated with the city-regional scale (Girardet, 2010). Conceding there is no regenerative city-region per se, yet, the last part discusses some positive examples from around the world.

The final part brings together all these arguments, showing that a trilateral conceptual framework can support city-regions in becoming 'more inclusive of environmental, social and cultural aspects, putting an emphasis on quality of life rather than on economic growth' (Axinte, Mehmood, Marsden, & Roep, 2019, p. 118)[4]. The theoretical synergies are summarised in Figure 2-2, while Figure 2-3 shows how the conceptual framework has guided the empirical research. Although mainly addressing academics in the field, the findings might appeal to practitioners and policy-makers, too. The framework provides a set of principles to guide and improve policy formulation and implementation, and can be used as an analytical lens through which to investigate and assess city-regional policies and practices.

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[4] The key points in this literature review have been included in the paper 'Regenerative city-regions: a new conceptual framework' published in *Regional Studies, Regional Science*, 6(1). For the sake of simplicity, the article is only cited once, here.

2.1 Part 1: Beyond city-regions as mere economic spaces. Progressive regionalism

2.1.1 Cities, regions, city-regions

The following paragraphs summarise the origins of the city-region concept, the assumptions that determined its spread, as well as the theoretical and conceptual divides among academics. Interestingly, some of the narratives found in the early academic writings are still very present in the political and policy-making circles researched in the empirical section.

In the end of the 90s, Scott (1999) declared that regions are gaining primacy at the expense of nation states, not only as economic powerhouses, but also as political ones. However, the 'rise of regions' coincided with the resurgence of another spatial scale: cities (Harrison, 2012, p. 1245). As urban areas clustered an increasing number of people and activities, socio-economic disparities and problems created by growth and agglomerations became more apparent too. Since the capacities of national governments to tackle these issues 'from above' was limited, *city-regions* gained traction among politicians, policy-makers and academics as an ideal scale for devolution and policy making.

The city-region concept was not new, and although still equivocal, some scholars identified its roots in the works of Dickinson – 1964 (Harrison, 2007), Fawcett – 1919, and Benett – 1985 (Rodríguez-Pose, 2008). Irrespective of its coinage, scholars talk about two simultaneous processes that further explain the revival and spread of city-regions: (i) globalisation, which led to a continuous intensification of flows and interactions, and (ii) the recognition that place-specificity continues to play an important role for socio-economic development and that geography is not dead (Harrison, 2007; Rodríguez-Pose, 2008; A. Scott, Agnew, Soja, & Storper, 2001).

In spite of their popularity, city-regions might be one of the most complicated territorial and administrative scale to define and contain within boundaries. Features such as history, nature, culture, religion or politics have all been used to legitimise their borders, albeit rarely without contestation (an aspect particularly visible in the empirical chapter). To this day, the city-region concept lacks a uniformly agreed definition (Rodríguez-Pose, 2008, pp. 1028–1029, identified at least nine). Adding to this vagueness, depending on the part of the world, the term has sometimes been used interchangeably with others such as *metropolitan areas*, *conurbations*, *world* or *global cities* (Rodríguez-Pose, 2008, pp. 1028–1029).

Like its origins, meaning, and geographic span, the role of a city-region and its associated policies vary widely, and so do the ways in which academics have studied them. The *new regionalism*

literature strand is the one that revived city-regional debates, declaring city-regions 'the motors of the global economy' (A. Scott et al., 2001, p. 5), engines of growth and innovation (Harding, 2007; A. Scott, 2001) and an ideal scale for governance to acquire competitive advantage in the global knowledge economy (Allan, 2011, p. 7).

These ideas, inspired from *New Economic Geography*, have been criticised by now for oversimplifying contextual factors, overlooking historical trends and patterns, as well as socio-cultural and environmental aspects, and proposing one-size-fits-all approaches (Beel et al., 2016; Hassink & Gong, 2019; M. Jones, 2015). Nonetheless, new regionalism continues to be reinforced by other promoters of 'metromania'– a label given by Morgan (2006) to criticize metro-centric economic policies that enforce agglomeration – such as policy-makers (the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, the European Union), consulting firms and popular media outlets (Morgan, 2016). As the empirical section will show, the UK Government remains a strong supporter of these ideas too.

Nonetheless, academics have widely debated this rather narrow conceptualisation of city-regions (for an extensive account see Beel et al., 2016), and opponents highlighted the need for academic and policy discussions to take a more critical approach and articulate larger problematics (Kipfer & Wirsig, 2004, p. 730). To fulfil this gap, a parallel body of thought coalesced under the name of *progressive regionalism*. It is this subdivision of the city-regionalist literature in which the current research is situated.

Since the city-regional literature has already been reviewed in various accounts (Allan, 2011; Beel et al., 2016; Jonas & Moisio, 2016; Jonas & Ward, 2002; Rodríguez-Pose, 2008; K. Ward & Jonas, 2004), the following parts focus primarily on studies that share characteristics of 'socially and economically progressive new regionalism' (Kipfer & Wirsig, 2004, p. 728). Besides a review symposium which laid the foundations of progressive regionalism (Kipfer & Wirsig, 2004), and a following symposium which helped consolidating it (Pezzoli et al., 2009), there are various studies which do not necessarily label themselves as progressive, yet share a common aim: to study city-regions as complex, nuanced establishments.

2.1.2   City-regions: socio-economic *and* socio-ecological spaces

As Weir & Rongerude (2007, p. 1) said, 'one reason for regionalism's popularity is that it means so many different things to different people'. Progressive regionalism, too, is a wide field and its boundaries are often difficult to outline. This heightens the need to clearly explain what *progressive regionalism* signifies in the current research.

The following paragraphs discuss how different scholars operationalised the term *progressive*, and the variety of research done under this umbrella[5]. While acknowledging the theoretical advancement, the end of this section suggests that progressive regionalism requires insights from two other literature strands, collaborative governance and regenerative development, to overcome some of the literature gaps identified. In particular, this section shows that while progressive regionalists have long argued for more democratic city-regional establishments, as well as more socially equitable outcomes, the focus on environmental aspects has been relatively limited. Most often, when environmental sustainability has been studied, research has tended to focus on specific sectors, with few examples of a comprehensive outlook (the work of Ravetz, 2000, counts among exceptions, albeit supporting sustainability and not necessarily regeneration). The conceptual framework discussed in the end of the chapter represents the theoretical contribution that this research made to the field of progressive regionalism.

As mentioned, progressive regionalism emerged as a reaction to the frequently prompted narrative that city-regions are (or should become) drivers of growth, and policy must focus on (further) transforming them into competitive agglomerations. Indeed, as the case study will show too, the agglomeration-focused developmental narrative tends to monopolise city-regional debates, limiting the possibilities for other visions to surface, unless they are deemed to contribute to (a particular type of) economic growth. In fairness though, some scholars acknowledged relatively early the negative effects of agglomeration policies – including potential decline in quality of life and environmental destruction (A. Scott et al., 2001, p. 16) – yet assumed that local governments would be able to overcome them:

> *'To be sure, large-scale urban or regional growth also brings in its train a*
> *variety of negative externalities that in the absence of remedial action*
> *would usually set in motion any number of locationally centrifugal*
> *tendencies. What we almost always observe in response to this situation,*
> *however, is regulatory action on the part of local authorities in order to*
> *bring such externalities under at least approximate control, and thus to*

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[5] As the literature continues to expand every day, it seems more useful to highlight the works that guided the current research, rather than trying to give an extensive account. Furthermore, since the conceptual framework created calls for a holistic perspective of city-regions, this review is informed by various categories of city-regional studies, without necessarily mentioning their origins (e.g. Clark & Christopherson, 2009, talk about investment and distributive regionalism; Waite & Bristow, 2018, mention technical/functional, economistic, and political dimensions within city-regionalism; Scott, 2018, differentiate between logics of agglomeration and growth, governance and policy, and postcolonial studies questioning the city-region concept).

unleash new rounds of urban growth and development.' (A. Scott, 2001, p.
819)

However, in reality, local governments often relied on trickledown economics to redistribute benefits, and economic growth to clean the pollution it created (Raworth, 2017a, p. 24)[6] – and unsurprisingly, both approaches showed limited results. This is a reason why, by and large, progressive regionalists have been explicitly concerned with issues of social equity (Pezzoli et al., 2011), governance and sustainability (Provo, 2009, p. 368), both as a means to expose shortcomings in city-regional approaches and to offer alternative pathways.

In the American context, Kipfer & Wirsig (2004, p. 730) took issue with the limited narratives regarding the role of city-regions and advocated for 'sustained critical investigation as well as situated (and less economistic) analysis'. In their review symposium, the authors talked about a '*socially and economically* progressive, or *community-based* new regionalism' and summarised three main points for future research strategies: (i) to uncover everyday life and collective action that can support 'regionalism from below', (ii) to embed concrete policy actions in critical urban theory, so as to critically reflect on the relations and uneven effects of regional projects, and (iii) to consider progressive regional projects as 'transitional steps that may open up opportunities for more fundamental transformation' and radical social change (Kipfer & Wirsig, 2004, p. 732). This thesis, and in particular the empirical work analysed in 5.2.3, is a response to these calls.

Wheeler (2002), another American writer, described similar characteristics, albeit identifying his research under the brand of 'new regionalism'[7]. He called for a holistic perspective which can integrate spatial planning with environmental, equity, and economic goals, emphasising that these regional needs can only be met by building social capital and strengthening the role of civil society.

A few years later, the *Journal of Planning Education and Research* hosted a symposium issue which consolidated some clear normative values for progressive regionalism. Without denying the diversity of practices and narratives, Pezzoli et al. (2009) stated that a progressive regional programme should concentrate on reducing the 'root causes of poverty, social injustice and environmental degradation'. To achieve these aims, places should be understood through their

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[6] In *Doughnut Economics*, Kate Raworth debates these issues at length, debunking the assumptions behind the Kuznets Curve and the Environmental Kuznets Curve. These two hypotheses suggest that inequality and environmental destruction need to first get worse, and after a certain tipping point in economic development, they start decreasing.

[7] As further explained, 'new regionalism' is often interpreted differently in the British city-regional literature which criticises it for supporting competition- and agglomeration-focused policies without enough exposure of their detrimental effects.

territorial specificities as well as their 'complex and multi-scalar flows of material, energy, and knowledge resources'. This was a recognition that city-regions do not function in a vacuum, but are interconnected and influenced by neighbourhood, local, national and global levels.

These progressive regionalists aimed to study city-regions as both socio-economic and socio-ecological spaces. While 'socio-economic' is a relatively common concept within city-regional literatures, 'socio-ecological' deserves some clarification. In this research, a socio-ecological understanding of the city-region resonates with WRI's definition of a bioregion: 'a geographic space that contains one whole or several nested ecosystems. It is characterized by its landforms, vegetative cover, human culture, and history, as identified by local communities, governments, and scientists' (World Resources Institute, 1996, p. 4). This definition is compatible with progressive regionalists who state that 'civically engaged research, critical theory and collective action' should accompany decisions for future development (Pezzoli et al., 2009, p. 337).

In this sense, Clark & Christopherson (2009) state that for city-regional policies to achieve progressive goals, they must fulfil two functions simultaneously. First, they should ensure that the economic wealth generated is distributed equitably. Second, city-regions should 'build an institutional framework that supports civic participation and representation' (Clark & Christopherson, 2009). Bridging between the benefits brought by both *investment* and *distributive regionalism*, these scholars suggest some practical approaches that overcome silo thinking. Progressive policies should target the labour market as a whole, not only high-skilled jobs in advanced technologies[8], allowing a city-region to develop based on its intrinsic values instead of emulating strategies that worked in other places. Furthermore, city-regional governance should foster multiscalar coalitions, recognising that policies are formulated at a variety of geographic scales.

This last idea is reinforced by other research (Provo, 2009; Swanstrom & Banks, 2008; Weir & Rongerude, 2007) which shows that multilevel political power, and not participation in regional fora per se, can ensure that low-income neighbourhoods benefit from development. In the context of American transport politics, Weir & Rongerude (2007) demonstrated that deprived communities are (i) affected by decisions taken at several levels, and (ii) lack the power to influence decisions even when they are allowed to participate in regional fora, unless they can use some legal threat or strong regulatory policy levers. This raises important questions regarding the role of civic participation in city-regional venues, the ways in which city-regional

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[8] This idea strongly resonates with the concept of *foundational economy* which refers to investment in an 'economy that meets every day needs by providing taken-for-granted services and goods such as care, telecommunications or food' (Adamson & Lang, 2014, p. 16).

governance structures can ensure they represent the least well-off, and that equity concerns are placed on the top of political agendas.

In spite of these concerns, city-regionalists have long advocated for enhancing democratic practices and establishing 'effective forums of popular participation' (A. Scott, 2001, p. 822) to ensure broader inclusion in city-regional fora. Sites (2004) has investigated the potential of grassroots participation to lead to 'sustainable, redistributive metropolitan regimes'. His study confirms that although effects can sometimes be limited, increasing public involvement in (re-) forming city-regions could heighten democratic practices and shape the path towards a 'comprehensively progressive' region.

Certainly, none of these ideas was revolutionary in itself, yet city-regional development had lacked such an integrated approach and failed to conceptualise city-regions as both socioeconomic *and* socioecological spaces (Pezzoli et al., 2009, p. 339). Progressive regionalism encouraged, thus, both academic and policy-making circles, to seek 'solutions that are networked, systems-oriented, globally-minded, ecologically sound and holistic' (Pezzoli et al., 2011, p. 336).

It is also worth mentioning that several British city-regional studies support analogous arguments to the ones above, without necessarily labelling themselves as *progressive*. In fact, Ward & Jonas's (2004, p. 2121) early call to treat city-regions as more than 'sites of exchange, innovation, development, and competition' coincided with the first symposium on progressive regionalism in the US (Kipfer & Wirsig, 2004). These scholars raised awareness about the need for regionalists to unpack issues related to social reproduction, redistribution, politics and conflict.

Looking at Greater Manchester, Beel, Jones, Jones, & Escadale (2017) made the case for civil society actors to be strongly represented in city-regional governance structures. These stakeholders' expertise and innovative approaches have better chances at filtering down economic development to places and people previously left out. More critically, Etherington & Jones (2009) have questioned the usefulness of the city-region as an administrative level. They showed that the competitiveness model increases uneven development, and certain levels of inequality can even hinder growth (a conclusion also reached by Beel et al., 2017; Benner & Pastor, 2015a, 2015b).

Also focusing on Greater Manchester, Ravetz (2000) conducted a wide-ranging study of what a sustainable city-region could mean by using a multi-sectoral, systems-thinking approach. He highlighted the complexities and contradictions present in any development plan, yet argued

that the city-regional scale, if supported by national and international levels, is essential in striking a balance between social, economic and environmental goals for current and future generations. Instead of defining a blueprint for sustainable development, this work emphasized the need for 'building vision, creating synergy, managing complexity and resolving conflict' (Ravetz, 2000, p. 276).

In Wales too, researchers have taken issue with the limited rationale for city-regional development, phrased around agglomeration and competition (Bristow, 2010; Morgan, 2006b; Waite & Bristow, 2018; Waite & Morgan, 2019). Attempting to move beyond 'a normative plea', Waite & Bristow (2018, p. 2) created a three-level framework (micro-meso-macro) to identify key moments that would allow a more pluralistic city-regional agenda to emerge. The authors stated that pluralism could be framed within progressive regionalism – which they defined as 'a form of regional policy based on an embrace of democracy, leading to greater spatial and territorial justice and equity' (Waite & Bristow, 2018, p. 5).

Still, the reality is that in the UK, city-regional development is largely dictated by the so-called *city deals*. In a study of English devolution, Etherington & Jones (2016, p. 386) claimed that the current framework of the deals agreed between city-regions and the UK government will only exacerbate the 'deeply historical problem of uneven growth', leaving disadvantaged groups voiceless. This was further confirmed in the case of Wales where, although influenced by some specific factors (e.g. Welsh Government and a legislative context which favours well-being), the deal-signing process was deemed as technocratic and elitist (Beel et al., 2018).

It is precisely *city deals* that the following section explores. Experience from around the UK helps understanding the origins and the effects of establishing and governing city-regions through such arrangements, while also supporting the evidence presented in the empirical chapter.

2.1.3   City-regions and city deals: A British tale

The following paragraphs discuss the specificities of the British city-regional context, given by the deal making approach. The first part offers an overview for city deals, the actors involved, origins and continuing spread of this phenomenon. As the literature on city deals continues to expand, the second half reviews the most relevant arguments and critiques for the current research.

> *'Cities are the engines of economic growth and they will be critical to our*
>
> *economic recovery. However, to create the new businesses, jobs and*

development that the country needs, local leaders need a step change in

the way in which they support economic growth on the ground. The

Coalition Government will be working with different cities over the coming

months to make a series of deals that will transform the way in which local

leaders drive economic development.' (HM Government, 2011, p. 7)

The paragraph above signals the UK Government's intention to devolve decision-making powers, responsibilities and financial means to smaller administrative scales, following the UK Localism Act 2011. As a result, Whitehall negotiated and agreed deals[9] aimed at increasing productivity, driving economic growth and reducing inequality across regions.

Thus, a city deal is a bespoke arrangement between the UK Government and a number of local authorities[10] which have agreed to collaborate, forming a city-region[11]. In Wales and Scotland, the devolved governments are also involved, adding more complexity to the governance structures. These two- and three-partite partnerships negotiate a certain budget towards which they contribute with various amounts of money, and agree on a particular course of action.

The UK's high centralisation was the background for this economic, political and territorial re-scaling. Early promoters of devolution, such as the Centre for Cities think tank, deemed that without sufficient autonomy and increased financial powers, urban areas would not able to fulfil their full economic potential. Decentralisation was the only way forward for the UK and city-regional devolution should focus on the main urban areas, starting with Greater Manchester and Greater Birmingham, since these were the largest ones (Marshall & Finch, 2006). An agglomeration logic was also supported by LSE academic circles that believed the UK should 'stop jam spreading' funds (Overman, 2013) by investing a little bit everywhere to rebalance territorial inequalities. Instead, the Government should look to improve conditions in more successful cities, allowing any additional growth to eventually trickle down.

These ideas materialised in one way or another between 2011-2012 when the first wave of city deals were signed between the eight largest English cities outside London and the central government (M. Ward, 2018, p. 5). In 2012, a second wave brought 18 more city deals in England, and only from 2014 and 2016 on, Scotland and Wales were able to access this funding stream.

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[9] For the sake of simplicity, the differences between city deals, growth deals and devolution deals will not be detailed here.

[10] Some deals might involve other local bodies in the negotiation, e.g. Local Enterprise Partnerships.

[11] Despite some name variations (e.g. Greater Manchester Combined Authority, Greater Birmingham), the aims and functions are similar.

'City Deals, which have presented growth as a central objective, and which cultivate competitive bidding between cities for larger funding and policy settlements, further embrace competitiveness as the guiding principle for intra-UK economic development policy.' (Waite & Bristow, 2018, p. 5)

The citation above reflects the narrative underpinning city deals. There is a clear link with the early academic writings on city-regionalism, which saw city-regions 'as a vital platform of competitive advantage and generative growth in the global economy' (Storper, 1997, as mentioned by A. Scott et al., 2001). Still, as said, these works also warned about the increased inequity that competitive-based interventions lead to (A. Scott et al., 2001).

While they primarily underlined inter-regional imbalances, the same can be said about intra-regional effects of competition, with city deals focusing on funding the so-called key growth sectors, such as finance or high tech (Jonas & Moisio, 2016, p. 3). Recent research conducted in Cardiff Capital Region by Crawley & Munday (2017) demonstrated though, that standard industrial classifications go unquestioned, as a legacy of earlier regional institutions. This leads policy-makers to select some industrial priorities while ignoring others 'that are of future interest but remain poorly identified'. These findings call for a much more thoughtful assessment of what city-regional communities might need in the coming years, while also clearly identifying the winners and losers of competitive-based policies.

In fact, in a report called 'Democracy: the missing link in the devolution debate', the New Economics Foundation (NEF) analysed the arguments for devolution from a range of documents published between 2011 and 2015 by the central government, local governments, think-tanks, and civil society groups. NEF found that although growth was the most prominent outcome supporting devolution (41.6%), it was poorly discussed. In particular, there was minimal reference to (i) austerity or structural problems affecting the UK economy, (ii) a more equitable distribution of growth benefits as reflected in living standards, (iii) improved working conditions, pay and job security besides the promised increase in levels of employment, and (iv) the way in which growth affects environmental sustainability (Lyall et al., 2015, p. 5).

Moreover, Lyall et al. (2015) demonstrated that city deals – created to boost economic growth – have rarely been formulated to prioritise environmental protection[12], or at least to pursue a

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[12] In the abovementioned study, NEF found that only 0.8% outcomes supporting devolution related to environmental sustainability.

low-waste, decarbonised version of economic development and directly address climate breakdown concerns (F. Scott, 2012).

Jones et al. (2017) talk about a continuing assumption that environmental emergencies can be solved through technological development, despite mounting evidence that innovation often leads to problem shifting. An example are electric cars which can indeed contribute to lower carbon emissions, yet their production puts pressure on other resources (such as lithium, copper and cobalt, materials often sourced through unethical supply chains), and do nothing to ease road congestion (Amick, 2018). Besides, the assumption that economic development is automatically represented by growth is another aspect criticised by British academics (Lang & Marsden, 2017; Pike, Rodríguez-Pose, & Tomaney, 2017; Raworth, 2017) and will be further scrutinised in the empirical chapter.

Last but not least – and particularly important for this thesis – city deals have done little to marry democracy, participation and sustainability issues, and to allow individuals and communities to shape the future of their city-regions[13]. As the next sections will detail, this research is inspired by the regenerative paradigm, positing that our societies need, in fact, a change in worldview to reposition humans among (and not on top of) the other ecosystems. This could lead to lifestyle changes, halt consumeristic habits and resource depletion. Certainly, such changes are lengthy, thorny processes, and regenerative development requires ongoing participatory and reflective processes, surpassing top-down, technocratic processes (Francesch-Huidobro, 2015). In this sense, collaborative governance can offer pathways for city-regional development (and city deals) to become more inclusive and more socio-ecologically sensitive. The following part focuses on collaborative governance, while also being influenced by interconnected literature strands such as participation and engagement.

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[13] Nonetheless, there has been some progress in the past year, possibly determined by the Extinction Rebellion and Fridays for Future global movements which have urged governments to take clear action to reduce biodiversity loss and avoid climate breakdown. See, for example, initiatives such as Low Carbon Swansea Bay in Swansea Bay City Region or Climate Ready Clyde in Glasgow City Region.

2.2   Part 2: Beyond exclusive and elitist city-regions. Collaborative governance

Many of the current governance institutions are overpowered by the 'myriad of worsening ecological, social and economic problems' (Orr, 2013). City-regional establishments are an opportunity to dismantle traditional hierarchies and silos, redefine goals and search for effective ways to achieve them. Collaborative processes that bring together public, private and non-profit stakeholders to develop solutions for shared issues can offer pathways for a more efficient governance of city-regional collective affairs (Francesch-Huidobro, 2015).

The following sections present some of the key points debated in the collaborative governance literature strand. The current research employs the notion of *collaborative governance*, although 'empirical phenomena alike' (Plotnikof, 2015, p. 64) are sometimes called *empowered participatory governance* by Fung and Olin Wright (as cited by Briggs, 2008, p. 37), *participatory governance* by Fischer (2010), or *deliberate collaborative governance* by Gollagher & Hartz-Karp (2013).

Thus, similar to progressive regionalism, collaborative governance has been used in a variety of studies, with scholars offering a long list of interpretations. The first part introduces the two definitions which supported the empirical work, the reasons behind this choice, as well as some general principles. Then, the following part talks about the trade-offs of collaboration, particularly at city-regional level. The third part looks specifically at the British context, where city-regional governance structures are largely dictated by city deals, attracting criticism, while also leading to some encouraging experiments. The last part focuses on a specific category of people who are often targeted by, and rarely influencers of public policies: young people. sThe conclusion vows that collaborative governance in a progressive city-region needs to adapt to and engage its future generations – working directly with them, and not just for them.

2.2.1   Collaborative governance: what, who and how

> *'To collaborate means to "co-labour", to work together to achieve common goals.'* (Carlson, 2007, p. 10)

City-regions entail not only spatial reorganisation, but institutional reforms, too. The new governance structures leading them are based on voluntary partnerships between different local authorities, as well as other private, public and civic actors. These arrangements can take many forms, and although governance (as a progression from government) already alludes to a new form of decision-making in the provision of public goods, it does not necessarily specify the

kinds of politics it encompasses (Fischer, 2010, p. 2). In the current research, it is *collaborative* governance that seems to offer promising directions in creating more progressive and regenerative city-regional agendas.

Before delving into this potential, two different definitions of collaborative governance which have guided the current research are introduced. The conceptual framework was initially inspired by the first one, yet the specificities of the empirical study were better reflected in the second one[14]. After citing both, this section discusses their conceptual differences.

According to Ansell & Gash (2008, pp. 544–545), collaborative governance is:

> *'a governing arrangement where one or more public agencies directly*
> *engage non-state stakeholders in a collective decision-making process that*
> *is formal, consensus-oriented, and deliberative and that aims to make or*
> *implement public policy or manage public programmes or assets.'*

As a response, Emerson, Nabatchi, & Balogh (2012, p. 2) define it as:

> *'the processes and structures of public policy decision making and*
> *management that engage people constructively across the boundaries of*
> *public agencies, levels of government, and/or the public, private and civic*
> *spheres in order to carry out a public purpose that could not otherwise be*
> *accomplished.'*

Both these definitions agree on the *what* question: collaborative governance requires arrangements, processes and structures with the aim to achieve a public goal. However, scholars' response to (i) *who* and (ii) *how* differs. The first definition (i) emphasises the role of public agencies as initiators, and considers the participation of non-state actors in collaborative arrangements essential. Besides, (ii) it specifically requires discussion and deliberation with citizens, not just their 'mere consultation' (Ansell & Gash, 2008, p. 544). In contrast, the second definition (i) goes beyond strictly formal, state-initiated arrangements, allowing for any kind of multi-partner structures. Thus, for Emerson et al. (2012, p. 3), all types of 'partnerships among the state, the private sector, civil society, and the community, as well as joined-up government and hybrid arrangements such as public-private and private-social partnerships and co-management regimes' count as collaborative governance. While it can encompass civic

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[14] The second definition allows classifying Cardiff Capital Region's governance structure as collaborative, without sacrificing a critical assessment of actors and processes involved.

engagement, these authors believe that (ii) the format and extent of citizen participation varies substantially according to each project.

The realities encountered during fieldwork determined me to consider both variations in analysing Cardiff Capital Region, since one of the few converging points in the literature is that there is 'no theory of collaborative governance per se' (Morse & Stephens, 2012, p. 566). The concept is more of a broad frame that groups various processes which are contingent to specific local conditions and can only be studied empirically.

Besides these two conceptualisation, a simple and visually telling way to represent collaborative governance practices is along a spectrum. Carlson (2007) – inspired by Arnstein's (1969) famous ladder of public participation – defined four categories on this spectrum, ranging from informing (through fact sheets, websites, open houses, community education campaigns), consulting (public comment, focus groups, surveys, public meetings, world cafes), engaging (workshops, deliberative polling), and finally collaborating (citizen advisory committees, consensus-building, participatory decision-making). While Carlson recognizes the utility of consultation and engagement processes, she highlights that unlike collaboration, these two approaches do not involve decision-making power for non-state actors since government leaders reserve this prerogative.

The same author summarised six principles of collaborative governance, and some of them also feature in the empirical chapter as points of debate. Briefly, these are: transparency and accountability (discussions should be visible for the larger public and there should be mechanisms to ensure parties fulfil their commitments); equity and inclusiveness (presence or representation of diverse interests); effectiveness and efficiency (processes should be designed to produce practical outcomes); responsiveness to public concerns; forum neutrality; and consensus-based decision making, instead of majority voting if possible (Carlson, 2007, p. 10).

Certainly, such processes are not always possible or even desirable. Different studies have thoroughly documented the benefits and challenges posed by collaborative governance, and these trade-offs are presented in the next section.

2.2.2   To collaborate or not to collaborate? The trade-offs

Collaborative modes of governance offer a number of advantages. Different studies mentioned the success in creating more efficient and effective programmes that are people oriented, attuned to local conditions and have the capacity to adapt and respond to emerging issues

(Collinge & Gibney, 2010; Fischer, 2010; Healey, 2005). Despite being a time-consuming process, once stakeholders achieved consensus, collaboration can save valuable time and energy in the implementation phase (Ansell, 2012; Ansell & Gash, 2008; Carlson, 2007).

According to Ansell & Gash (2008, pp. 561–562), the rewards promised by collaborative strategies also encompass new partnership between former adversaries, fruitful relationships between the public sector and individuals, as well as innovative experiences of collective learning and problem-solving.

Some of the other benefits identified are interdependent and, as the case study will show, fluctuate over time due to changing circumstances (e.g. leadership). An enhanced inter-institutional dialogue – when well-documented and inclusive, or at least representative of the larger public – can lead to greater transparency, accountability as well as legitimacy (Emerson et al., 2012; Fischer, 2010; Francesch-Huidobro, 2015; Gollagher & Hartz-Karp, 2013; National Policy Consensus Center, 2007).

While all the characteristics above can, in principle, revitalise 'citizen participation in democratic political and civic life' (Gollagher & Hartz-Karp, 2013, p. 2348), the democratic character of collaborative governance remains debatable. Papadopoulos (2012) questioned some of the qualities above-mentioned, saying that collaborative governance is not *immune* to democratic deficit. For instance, these structures are not always inclusive or representative enough, diminishing pluralism. Moreover, in contrast to some of the above-mentioned scholars, Papadopoulos (2012, p. 6) argues that mechanisms of collaborative governance can lack codification, and thus visibility, which creates problems of transparency and accountability. When externals cannot identify the basis for some decisions or the responsible persons behind them, insiders can easily evade taking responsibility. However, following Carlson's (2007) first principle, a well-designed collaborative process should be visible to the public eye, diminishing the chance that people escape commitments or responsibility.

Besides this more nuanced account of collaboration, there is a long list of difficulties that stakeholders need to overcome. Generally, the larger number of stakeholders, the bigger the chance that collaboration becomes problematic. Thus, in the case of complex geographies, such as city-regions, deterrents can easily multiply. Investigating the Stuttgart region, Frank & Morgan (2012, p. 15) have shown that 'metro-governance is more of a political art than a technocratic exercise', yet that ignoring civil society can prevent even well-conceived projects from materializing.

One of the main problems identified is that often, neither the civic nor the governmental institutions are prepared to open up to collaboration. 'The existing civic and governmental infrastructure – the web of relationships, practices, habits, procedures, and processes' (Gollagher & Hartz-Karp, 2013, p. 2345) does not offer a space for meaningful engagement between inhabitants, organizations, private and public bodies. Although authorities have sometimes considered public consultation as forms of collaborative governance, the role of non-state stakeholders must be more than simply ceremonial: communication and influence should go both ways (Ansell & Gash, 2008). In this regard, Ansell (2012, p. 499) considers that while consultation is simply a gauging of public opinion, public hearings alone should not be included in the category of collaborative modes of governance either since they are typically neither consensus oriented, nor deliberative.

Thus, societies need a new 'civic space' to allow all these different stakeholders to come together and deliberate about issues, ideas and potential actions. Indeed, this entails a certain transfer of power from the authorities' side, translating into a de facto loss of monopoly on decision-making for the state which becomes an 'authority manager' of public goods (Papadopoulos, 2012, p. 512).

At the same time, collaboration translates into a shared responsibility for the outcomes, meaning that all parties have to take responsibility. In addition, participation and engagement are, unquestionably, both a matter of competence and sufficient incentive. A common constraint for citizens is their lack of expertise in highly technical problems (Ansell & Gash, 2008, p. 551), as well as the impression that their perspectives and experiences are not useful. However, as the following chapter will emphasize, the pathways to regenerative development require different types of knowledge, and in order for citizens to participate, they have to see that their effort and time are worth investing (Fischer, 2010, p. 5; Flinders et al., 2015).

Despite the extensive number of variables on which it depends, collaborative governance remains widely regarded as the most appropriate means for solving wicked problems (Fischer, 2010; Francesch-Huidobro, 2015; Goldstein, 2012; Gollagher & Hartz-Karp, 2013; Healey, 2005; Henton, Melville, Amsler, & Kopell, 2005). Depending on numerous actors, it is contingent to historical, political, social, cultural and economic contexts, as well as personalities, motivation and hierarchies of power. This does not mean that higher administrative levels or systems that are more complex should abandon it, but rather invest more work in finding the appropriate form and ways of organization. Without giving specific instructions, Papadopoulos (2012) is

optimistic that 'problems can be corrected by a design ensuring that collaborative forms of governance are representative, accountable, and coupled with democratic institutions'.

The following section embeds these arguments in the British context, aiming to capture the ways in which research has evaluated and tried to influence city-regional governance.

2.2.3 Who collaborates in British city-regional governance structures?

Generally, city-regional governance structures require a great deal of coordination, both vertically (between local, regional, national and supranational institutions) and horizontally (between public–private–civil spheres). This should, nonetheless, allow for pluralism and better interaction in the decision-making process, as well as a more flexible, multi-agency framework (Rodríguez-Pose, 2008, p. 1034).

Yet, as discussed in 2.1.3, city-regions in the UK revolve around deal-making approaches. These arrangements create specific governance structures which include the UK Government and regional governments in Scotland and Wales, local authorities and sometimes other local institutions. City deals are seen as an 'embodiment of the 2011 Localism Act, which sought to devolve more decision-making powers from central government back into the hands of individuals, communities, and local authorities' (P. Jones et al., 2017, p. 1). However, several studies have resonated with the findings in this dissertation, showing that, in fact, the Whitehall's role remains central (Beel et al., 2016; Etherington & Jones, 2016, 2017; Jonas & Moisio, 2016) in shaping city-regional projects and 'spatial imaginaries' (Etherington & Jones, 2017, p. 8). As the case study will show, in CCR's case, the UK Government can halt funding if indicators are not met, while the Welsh Government retains significant control by handling the city-region's largest project, the Metro. Furthermore, despite the success metrics set by the UK Government, city deals' achievements have not been rigorously evaluated, making it difficult to understand whether city-regions are making progress (P. Jones et al., 2017), even in the limited way 'progress' is measured, where and for whom.

> *'The devolution debate could go one of two ways. It could roll on in the*
> *backrooms of Westminster leading to opacity, confusion, and potentially*
> *falling public support for the policy. Or it could be brought into the open,*
> *where there will be space for criticism and consideration of the downsides*
> *of devolution, as well as discussion of its potential to transform and*
> *strengthen our towns, cities and democracy.'* (Lyall et al., 2015, p. 7)

Unfortunately, the first option highlighted in the quotation above seems to be characteristic of British city-regional governance structures. There is growing concern not only among academics, but also amid scrutiny bodies and independent organisations that decision-making powers are held by a select number of actors, particularly from elitist business and political circles (Beel et al., 2018; Etherington & Jones, 2016; Harrison & Heley, 2015; Jonas & Moisio, 2016; P. Jones et al., 2017; Lyall et al., 2015). These city-regional representational structures – created through city deals – are deemed closed and opaque (Etherington & Jones, 2016; O'Brien & Pike, 2018; Prosser et al., 2017), effectively restricting other stakeholders, such as the third sector (Beel et al., 2018) from participating in these processes or from contesting them (Lyall et al., 2015). The consequence is that British city-regions become exclusivist, depoliticised spaces where lines of accountability are difficult to trace (P. Jones et al., 2017).

The absence of public involvement both in negotiating deals, and in further developing city-regional agendas has led some researchers to question the functioning, sustainability and legitimacy of these new governance structures (Prosser et al., 2017). To overcome this democratic deficit, Democracy Matters – an alliance of university researchers and civil society organisations, organised a series of Citizens Assemblies in Southampton and Sheffield. Their action-research was 'underpinned by a strong belief that the long-term sustainability of any *devolution revolution* (…) demanded popular support and strong democratic roots' (Flinders et al., 2015, p. 2).

This experiment is particularly relevant for the aforementioned debates because it highlights the importance of involving citizens in discussing issues of public concern (supporting, thus, the claims of Ansell & Gash, 2008), even in a complex city-regional context. While the space does not allow for an extensive analysis of methods and outcomes, it suffices to say that Citizens Assemblies are one of many mechanisms which can contribute to a more collaborative governance structure, having significant potential to lead to a better informed city-regional agenda. Flinders et al. (2015, p. 3) showed that despite some hurdles in recruiting participants, citizens 'are ready, willing and able to take part in participatory and deliberative forms of democratic practice in relation to complex policy issues' and 'want to feel part of *the revolution in devolution* and not simply to have change imposed upon them'. As the case study will show, Cardiff Capital Region has also incited many people's imagination, showing that non-state actors are interested in contributing to their city-region's development.

Yet, as mentioned, the Democracy Matters alliance encountered some difficulties in ensuring that the participants were representative for the entire city-region. In particular, younger people

(18-25) and adults with potential childcare responsibilities (36-45) declined the invitation to participate and were underrepresented in these Citizen Assemblies. This aspect becomes a significant concern considering that city-region city deals are 20-30-year long agreements, affecting in particular the lives of younger and future generations.

The current study has tried to overcome this gap in city-regional collaborative governance and the next section summarises the theoretical underpinnings which inspired the research aims and methods.

2.2.4 A missing link: young people

According to Flinders et al. (2015), the 'democracy gap' has been closing for some segments of the society (the elderly and the wealthier whose voting presence has become more frequent and reliable), and widening for others (younger people and deprived individuals). Unfortunately, this situation leads to a 'spiral of democratic decline in which the political system understandably responds to those sections of society most likely to vote, while the young and the poor become ever more convinced that democratic politics has little to offer them' (Flinders et al., 2015, p. 7).

Indeed, young people might have become vote-apathetic (Agger, 2012; Collin, 2015) and the Brexit referendum has often been used as an example[15]. However, instead of blaming youth for disengaging from traditional politics, a growing body of research is studying young people's chosen spheres of political action – such as protests, advocacy, rallies, online campaigns, etc. (Agger, 2012; Chou, Gagnon, Hartung, & Pruitt, 2017; Collin, 2015; Farthing, 2010). The literature highlights that in order to understand youth's expression of citizenship, alternative spaces, channels and contexts must be recognised (Beale, 2008, p. 165), since youth actions 'have transcended the polling booth' (Farthing, 2010, p. 185). The current global environmental campaigns – Fridays for Future[16] and Extinction Rebellion – have been incited and led by young people. They are a compelling justification to allow youth voices to stand up and protect what they consider important, using whatever means they choose.

This then raises serious questions for city-regional collaborative governance structures – especially in the UK where young people (certainly, among many other categories), have been largely absent from planning and decision-making. As mentioned, this age group has, probably,

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[15] The initial turnout was estimated at 36% for people aged between 18-24, yet further investigation showed an almost double figure: 64% (Helm, 2016).

[16] Also known as School/Youth Strike for Climate.

the longest future in the society, offering it at least morally, the right to participate in shaping it. Besides, planning for the future could direct authorities away from political mandate short-termism towards long-term planning (Chawla, 2002, p. 3), a consideration consistent with the regenerative development paradigm. Last but not least, young people could acquire a whole range of skills and information related to their environment and the way it is managed or constructed, possibly increasing their presence and contribution to their communities.

Various international agreements – such as the *Convention on the Rights of the Child*, *Agenda 21* and *Habitat Agenda* – recognise the right of children and youth to participate and make their voices heard in issues that concern them. Despite this, few governments and local authorities make sustained efforts in engaging young people in governance. Nonetheless, there have been cases when young people have been treated 'as competent citizens and active participants in the institutions and decisions that affect their lives' (Wang, 2006, p. 152). This represents a major step because the focus shifts from seeing children and youth not only as a group with special needs, but also with particular potential and insights (Chawla, 2002; Wang, 2006).

The idea is not to privilege specific groups instead of others – so the participation of young people should not be seen as a zero-sum game – but rather to enlarge the array of actors that get involved in governance and achieve a more inclusive city-regional agenda. Unquestionably, a specific age group is also extremely diverse in character, but adapting engagement tactics based on age can constitute a point of departure (Flinders et al., 2015).

However, Farthing (2012) condemns the idea that participation is an intrinsically good thing, highlighting the need to ask more critical questions, such as why do we engage young people? In this way, normative judgements about 'what are good things for young people and what a good society looks like in the first place' (Farthing, 2012, pp. 91–92) can surface. Inspired by her, this research has had a twofold empirical aim related to youth: not only (i) to find more meaningful ways of engaging young people, but also to (ii) understand if city-regional leaders consider youth engagement possible and valuable at city-regional level, and why/why not. These questions and their underpinnings are further detailed in the methodological chapter, and answered in Chapter 6.

For now, it suffices to say that the aforementioned youth movements have played a definitive role in pushing political elites to reconsider priorities, or at least to acknowledge the climate emergency. With banners saying 'if the climate was a bank, it would be saved by now', 'systems' change, not climate change' or 'if you'd be doing your job, we'd be in school right now', young people 'took to the streets in an estimated 185 countries to demand action' (Laville & Watts,

2019). Across the globe, leaders' responses have varied widely. Even within one country, such as Wales, answers have been contradictory: on the one hand, halting plans for a road, while on the other hand, celebrating an SUV factory opening (further discussed in 5.3).

Yet, as mentioned, this research is inspired by a much more ambitious paradigm, supporting regeneration, beyond mere sustainability and neutrality. As Wahl (2016) said, having degraded not only the environment, but also our social and cultural systems, we need to do much more to restore and enhance ecosystems and community health. The next chapter explores this regenerative paradigm, looking at the different fields in which it has been used. Afterwards, the discussion brings together the three bodies of literatures discussed, demonstrating the utility of a new conceptual framework to analyse city-regional development.

2.3 Part 3: Beyond cities as engines of growth. Regenerative city-regions

As a concept, *sustainability* has had a tremendous evolution since the late 20th century when it first appeared. Expanding well beyond academia, it became an orthodoxy for discourses in the spheres of public, private and third sector. Despite its broadly accepted connotation, 'sustainable' has been overused, interpreted, redefined and measured in various ways. More often than not, a certain dimension has been emphasized at the expense of others, lacking holistic approaches and generating unanticipated problems (e.g. the economic pillar before anything else in the case of city-regions).

Without denying certain accomplishments, some academics and practitioners have moved the debate from *sustainability* to *regenerative* development, in a context where the planet's natural resources are being depleted, social inequalities are staggering and the wealth gap is constantly growing. The current research integrates ideas from the regenerative literature, positing that city-regional projects are a suitable scale for pursuing more aspirational approaches.

The following section outlines the origins and evolution of *regenerative development*. Then, the second part explores the various studies which employed this paradigm, diversifying its application fields. Finally, the chapter discusses some of the complications in applying regenerative approaches in reality, especially within complex city-regional governance structures. Overall, this brief account serves as a base for Part 2.4, which discusses the trilateral conceptual framework for this research.

2.3.1 From sustainable to regenerative: a paradigm shift

To explain the difference between *sustainable* and *regenerative* approaches, this section focuses firstly on Du Plessis's work (2012). The scholar describes the co-evolution of two contemporary sustainability paradigms, one in public policy and the other in the private sector. In her view, both are inherently flawed because they do not challenge the status quo, maintaining a dysfunctional, exploitative human–nature relationship 'which created the crisis in the first place' (du Plessis, 2012, p. 2). In the first case, international institutions negotiate an 'idealistic' vision of sustainability and create public policies that are dominated by a Western system of values. In the second case, the business sector strives to advocate for 'ecological modernization', seeking profit yet staying eco-efficient. Both lead people and organisations to define certain limits and then try to live within these limits, which in effect translates into 'determining how much damage can feasibly be inflicted' (du Plessis, 2012, p. 7). While this is better than nothing, nature and humans remain pure factors of production or economic commodities.

'Sustainable Development is a half-vast approach to vast problems. Its
purpose, to make life on this planet sustainable, is a noble disguise for the
maintenance of the status quo. When the status quo includes hundreds of
millions of acres of degraded to destroyed farmland and levelled rainforest,
depleted to exhausted fisheries and aquifers, toxics choked streams,
decreasing biodiversity, and a changing climate, sustainability is simply not
acceptable. In short, sustainable development (…) does not set the bar high
enough. We can, and need, to do better than just sustain the
unacceptable—or accept the present as the best we can do.' (Gabel, 2005,
p. 1)

The alternative, third paradigm suggested by du Plessis (2012) is regenerative development. Being a holistic approach, it advances from minimal or neutral environmental impact to creating positive effects for a 'mutually supportive symbiosis' between the built, cultural and natural environments. Having degraded not only the environment but also our social and cultural systems, we need to do much more to restore and enhance ecosystems and community health (Wahl, 2016). Thus, considering the multiple crises that societies go through today, it is no longer sufficient to sustain or remain 100% neutral.

Gabel (2005, p. 2) further accentuates the difference between (i) *sustainable* and (ii) *regenerative* by formulating two questions: (i) 'How can we solve this problem in such a way that we sustain or do not hurt the underlying support systems?' vs. (ii) 'How can we solve this problem in such a way that we improve the capacity of the underlying support systems?'. Similarly, Reed's (2007, p. 676) representation of environmentally responsible design (Figure 2-1) is particularly useful to highlight the transition from conventional practices that maintain the same status of the system (which might already be degenerated), to green, sustainable (a neutral approach), restorative, reconciliatory and ultimately to regenerative – that repositions humans and nature as equal parts of the system. These levels should be read as a progression towards a holistic approach, and not as exclusive of one another.
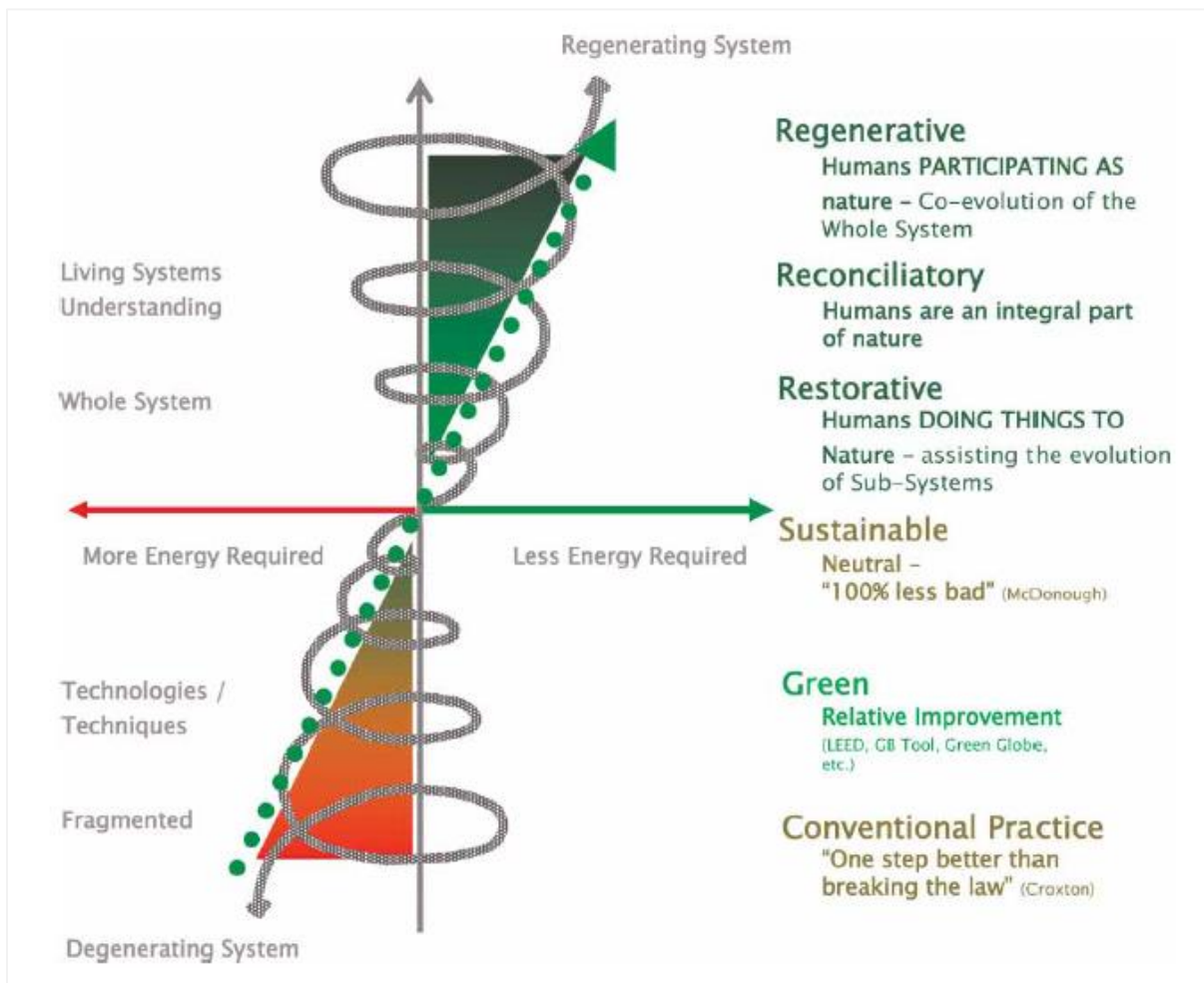
Figure 2-1: Trajectory of environmentally responsible design

(Source: Girardet, 2007)

Such ideas are not necessarily new, albeit they have only recently started to feature in mainstream circles (e.g. World Future Council, UN Habitat). While the regenerative paradigm has antecedents in a variety of disciplines[17], its origins are often associated with John Tillman Lyle, who authored a comprehensive handbook for designing regenerative systems in 1994 (du Plessis, 2012; Mang & Reed, 2012). According to Mang & Reed (2012, p. 6), Lyle drew ideas from multiple domains. He was inspired by Bill Mollison's permaculture manual, which contained a hierarchy to assess the outcome of potential actions (ranging from degenerative to generative and regenerative), as well as by Robert Rodale's call to change the patterns of land use in order to renew and regenerate agricultural resources, instead of simply exploiting them.

Pamela Mang and Bill Reed further developed Lyle's ideas, together with other permaculture adepts, planners, architects and sustainability practitioners who formed the *Regenesis*

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[17] From Ebenezer Howard's garden cities in urban planning, to Ludwig von Bertalanffy's systems thinking in biology (Mang & Reed, 2017, p. 4).

Collaborative Development Group (RCDG) in 1995. Although the body of literature now offers a variety of definitions, this research builds on the RCDG's interpretation. The group considers that 'the emerging field of regenerative development and design marks a significant evolution in the concept and application of sustainability' because instead of minimising the damage on the environment, regenerative development seeks ways that can generate mutual benefits for all ecosystems (Mang & Reed, 2012, p. 3).

Furthermore, regenerative development 'recognizes that humans, human developments, social structures and cultural concerns are an inherent part of ecosystems, making humans integral, and particularly influential participants in the health and destiny of the earth's web of living systems (Mang & Reed, 2012, p. 15). Indeed, humans can 'participate as partners or as exploiters' (Mang & Reed, 2012, p. 15), thus regenerative approaches require a change in the anthropocentric worldview that commodifies and exploits nature, as if the planetary resources are there to cater for the ever-growing human needs (du Plessis, 2012; Foss, 2012; Girardet, 2010; Mang & Reed, 2012). Reducing this human–nature dualism allows to see humans as part of nature – just another ecosystem among the many. Through this non-hierarchical lens, people can learn to co-evolve and create a harmonious relationship with the places they inhabit, acknowledging that any action will produce multiple interactions and effects (Cole, 2012).

Certainly, these authors mark a paradigm shift, from sustainable to regenerative development. The following part brings further conceptual clarifications, exploring the different application fields for regenerative approaches.

2.3.2   Regenerative development – a holistic approach

As mentioned, the regenerative paradigm emerged within design, architecture and planning practitioners, and by now, has gained popularity within numerous other circles. Herbert Girardet's work for the World Future Council advanced the notion of regenerative cities and is particularly important for the current research. A *regenerative city* develops a restorative, mutually enhancing relationship with the natural systems that sustain it (Girardet, 2010), reconsidering the division between the rural and the urban. Thus, the city-regional scale becomes a suitable setting for regenerative action.

The literature on regenerative cities acknowledges that cities may well be at the forefront of development but they have always relied on resources coming from outside their administrative boundaries (Girardet, 2010). In other words, even if cities remain the *engines* of progress (A. Scott, 2001), their *fuel* is outsourced. Therefore, the relationship with this hinterland – whether

it is in close proximity or spread around the world, must be restored and nourished (Girardet, 2015). Indeed, most cities' socioecological footprints have overcome boundaries and spread globally, being 'embedded in dense and multi-layered networks of local, regional, national and global connections' (Swyngedouw & Heynen, 2003, p. 899). Besides, processes of urbanisation with afferent economic functions and environmental transformation are now clearly visible in the so-called countryside as well, turning it into an *operational landscape* which supports urban growth elsewhere (Brenner & Mares, 2015).

These urban–rural linkages have also been underscored by the New Urban Agenda (UN Habitat, 2017), and, coming from an influential international agency, played an important role in raising awareness among national, regional and local actors. However, the agenda promoted development through growth as a necessity, ignoring the fact that scientists have found little evidence that growth can be decoupled in the long-term from energy, material use and environmental impacts (J. D. Ward et al., 2016, p. 12). Moreover, it continued to endorse place competition, without acknowledging that this model inevitably creates winners and losers, often failing to reduce inequalities.

As an alternative, the emphasis of the regenerative paradigm on overcoming the traditional urban–rural divide offers the 'countervailing vision that can challenge the metro-centric bias that takes the hinterland for granted' (Pezzoli et al., 2011, p. 17). At the core of a regenerative city lies the model of urban metabolism (adopted from Wolman, 1965), differentiating between an existing state – linear metabolism, and a desirable one – circular metabolism (Girardet, 2010, 2015). In the former, resources are inefficiently used, and the waste produced is further externalized. Circularity in natural systems, on the other hand, exemplifies how waste can be reconverted into nutrients.

Furthermore, in a regenerative city, sectors such as transport, food, energy, water and waste, as well as important key social aspects related to governance, participation and engagement, are integrated. The sustainability argument has often treated these issues in isolation. The result was a fragmented vision that prevented a real understanding of the crises currently affecting the world, their underlying causes and the relations that determine how systems function (Foss, 2012). Foss (2012) created a powerful metaphorical analogy: having some healthy, sustainable organs might not be sufficient for the entire body's survival, let alone well-being.

Thus, regenerative development promotes systems thinking, which Mang & Reed (2012, p. 2) define as a way to conceptualise and understand the world through 'interrelationships rather than things, (…) and patterns, rather than static snapshots'. Nonetheless, while taking a

relational approach, regenerative development acknowledges the importance of place since all processes occurring are influenced by bioregional and cultural particularities (Foss, 2012). Thus, place is conceived in harmony with Massey's (1993, pp. 66–68) reasoning: places are not introverted areas with boundaries but 'fluid constructions of particular relational assemblages in certain environments and specific moments'. It becomes obvious then that regeneration cannot mean going back to a certain state from the past since the world is constantly changing and new relationships are forming. Instead, a regenerative city-region tries to rely and build on existing local resources and assets as much as possible, while constantly developing a beneficial relationship with the surrounding areas (World Future Council/Energy Cities, 2014).

Boselli (2016) makes further conceptual clarifications. He emphasizes that the regenerative development approach is different from urban regeneration discourses and schemes that have narrowly focused on the physical environment. The latter, sometimes used as governmental measures for re-differentiation, caused evictions and displacement through gentrification (Cameron, 1992). Thus, conscious of the negative connotation the term 'regeneration' may invoke, Boselli (2016) describes four types of fundamental actions encompassed by regenerative development: (i) resource regeneration, which allows switching from linear to circular flows; (ii) natural capital and ecosystems regeneration, including urban agriculture and enhanced ecosystem service infrastructure within the urban area; (iii) regeneration of built spaces, densification to avoid sprawl and significant improvement for the citizens' life quality; (iv) community regeneration by strengthening the involvement of local individuals, communities and businesses in decision-making processes and management activities within the city. In this case, policy-makers create an inclusive framework for collaboration that encourages 'the informal sector, local youth and marginalized groups' to participate actively as well.

Consequently, the regenerative approach highlights the idea that change cannot happen without collaborative governance and the active engagement of local stakeholders. Sustainability issues are indeed 'wicked problems' characterized by ambiguous and tangled traits that are difficult to define and solve (Gollagher & Hartz-Karp, 2013; Rittel & Webber, 1973). Even if authorities design perfect policies or strategies, they cannot implement, maintain or adapt them without the help of all actors affected. In the end, the behaviour of the end users can determine the success or failure of a certain plan.

Gollagher & Hartz-Karp (2013) assert that to reach a systemic response, disparate stakeholder groups must not only come together for discussion and decision-making but also take responsibility and be accountable to the other. Moreover, because of the wide range of

sustainability problems, it is necessary to integrate 'universal knowledge with knowledge particular to the social, ecological, and historical circumstances of actual places' (Gollagher & Hartz-Karp, 2013, p. 2346). In addition, achieving regenerative development requires combining this intrinsic wisdom, often embodied in people and places, with the expert knowledge developed by modern science and technology. All these requirements have been mentioned in the previous section too, highlighting the potential in collaborative governance to realise them.

The quote below is a suitable summary for the paradigm's aspiration, while also pointing to the challenges to operationalise regenerative approaches. The following chapter presents in detail those challenges.

> *'Regenerative development is characterized by a global and long-term perspective and approach that builds our capacity for qualitative growth. It values and needs input from all stakeholders; is transparent so that everyone can see how they win and what they might need give up to gain a greater good; sees problems and needs as markets for social and economic entrepreneurs; and utilizes design that relies on doing more with less to accomplish its ends. It is focused on the vision of what is desired, not what is expedient. Driven by that vision of the ideal, rather than reacting to what is thought possible given current limitations, regenerative development is in tune with nature, with what the world wants, and with the resources and technology that can take us there.'* (Gabel, 2005, p. 9)

2.3.3   Already happening or utopia?

While the body of literature abounds in inspirational ideas and uplifting quotes, it also acknowledges that for the moment, regenerative development remains highly aspirational. Its holistic nature requires a different worldview – which places humans among all other ecosystems, the widespread involvement of different stakeholders and types of knowledge, and a shared intention to contribute to a common good[18].

Regenerative development entails a multitude of transformations in the existing developmental pathway. The long-term framework in which it operates does not align to current political

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[18] It might appear that concepts such as 'common good' or 'public interest' are under-problematised in this research. However, as emphasised so far, this project supports approaches that allow to co-create definitions, deliberate and choose developmental pathways through consensus. Christian Felber's work and his initiative, *Economy for the Common Good*, have had a great influence in this sense.

programmes, fast economic returns or even societal expectations. Especially in the current British city-regional frameworks, development is tied to economic growth, and generally measured through GVA increase. Besides, personal development is most often connected to capital accumulation and possession, while the 'unit of reference for the benefit of an action is the individual self' (Banet-Weiser & Castells, 2017, p. 10) who competes with other individuals for personal gains.

The paradox is that current growth models are highly dependent on finite natural resources whose exploitation and depletion have become one of the biggest threats, both to growth, and humans' survival. Thus, we are starting to see that there are, indeed, limits to growth (as Donella Meadows suggested almost 50 years ago) which our economies and societies must respect to prevent further ecological catastrophes. A wide range of alternative development metrics (e.g. measuring well-being, happiness, resilience, circularity, etc.) and economic models (such as the commons, sharing economies, alternative currencies, cooperatives, etc.) exist, but they have not yet coalesced into a robust movement that can overthrow current consumeristic, degenerative logics.

The Future of Cities Forum (Woo, 2014) showed some examples of regenerative practices such as the planning process for the transformation of an old freight yard in Altona, Hamburg (as an example of socially inclusive participatory approach), or the symbiotic industry in Kalundborg, Denmark, where each company's waste is reused by another in order to close the resource loop and also reduce costs. Raworth (2017) also talks about companies that support a more regenerative and redistributive economy through their activities, empowered by an increasing global trend to develop enterprises that are socially and environmentally sound.

In the UK, a small-scale example of regenerative action is *Down to Earth*, a social enterprise from South West Wales. Down to Earth combines traditional and modern sustainable building methods and materials for commercial construction projects, and has recently won the 'Most Sustainable Venue in Wales' award for one of its locations. The company works with 'hard to reach' and disadvantaged groups and individuals, and, besides alleviating poverty, it helps workers transform their own lives through hands-on activities and outdoor-based programmes designed to enhance well-being. Collaborating with researchers, the project has clinically proven to help with depression, anxiety and quality of life, and is now part of Wales's social prescribing programme (Down to Earth Project, 2019). Using a holistic approach for development, Down to Earth contributes to regenerating both the places and the communities involved.

Among city-regions, there are some encouraging examples, although it is impossible to speak of a regenerative city, per se. Metropolitan Copenhagen is a good case in point. Its local authorities pledged to become the world's first CO_2 neutral capital by 2025, while Denmark (whose official brand has become *State of Green*) intends to be independent of fossil fuels by 2050 (City of Copenhagen, 2014). Copenhagen's leaders mention that their ultimate goal is to improve the citizens' quality of life by using green economic activities. This includes actions to further develop green mobility and reduce traffic congestion (the capital city being already famous for its outstanding cycling infrastructure and comprehensive pedestrian zones), improve water quality (harbours have been depolluted, allowing swimming and transforming the waterfront into popular areas for living, entertainment and tourism) and reduce energy use (using district heating that integrates renewable sources such as surplus wind energy, geothermal energy and biomass to replace fossil fuels, but also district cooling which is partly cooled with cold seawater).

The latest world-acclaimed development is CopenHill – a piece of public infrastructure with multiple roles. Primarily, the power plant can transform 440,000 tons of waste into clean energy (electricity and district heating) for 150,000 homes annually (Crook, 2019). Then, the building's green roof was designed with a ski slope, running and hiking tracks, while the façade includes a climbing wall. Some activities are free of charge for people, effectively turning an invisible piece of green infrastructure into a social centre.

Besides, Copenhagen is confident that although it will take time, solutions will be found to transform the already improved waste management system into a resource management system. In addition, since 40% of Denmark's CO_2 emissions come from buildings, there is a stringent need to reduce energy consumption and the strategy adopted tries to ensure energy efficiency over the entire life cycle of a building for both new constructions and old, retrofitted structures.

An aspect repeatedly mentioned in Copenhagen's strategies is the importance of behaviour change and community commitment to achieve shared objectives. Denmark is famous for strong grassroots activism[19] and without doubt, there have been certain measures which proved unpopular in the beginning, yet for which innovative solutions were found. A good example are the strategies used to gain public support for wind power by creating community-owned facilities and using local skills. The Wind Turbine Cooperative (Middelgrunden, Copenhagen) owns half of the wind turbines and over 8500 local community members have purchased shares

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[19] For a brief overview, see Axinte (2017).

(City of Copenhagen, 2014, p. 24). Besides, demonstration tours were part of a public awareness campaign aimed at convincing residents that the noise impact is minimal compared to the benefits of wind power. The cooperative model has spread today to other countries such as Germany, Netherlands and the UK.

In spite of all these outstanding developments, Copenhagen is far from being a regenerative city. In general, the Danish diet includes a large amount of animal products, and Denmark has one of the highest levels of meat consumption per capital at global level (Bruno et al., 2019). This plays a key role in greenhouse gas emissions, as studies estimate that a 'third of the human influence on climate change and land use is related to dietary choices and to the food production chain' (Bruno et al., 2019, p. 490). Furthermore, this happens in a context where significant shares of the population (especially ethnic minorities, as well as young and older groups of inhabitants) are affected by socio-economic problems. Land value and rents are constantly increasing, causing rapid gentrification, income polarization and creation of ethnic enclaves (Elm Larsen & Hornemann Möller, 2013). Other commonly associated issues such as unemployment, health problems (especially related to alcohol and drug abuse) and homelessness affect the socially segregated, poorer areas. In this respect, Copenhagen has yet to find comprehensive solutions for all its inhabitants, to become a liveable city for everyone, not only for the wealthy groups who can afford the price.

Indeed, Copenhagen's case proves that transforming the regenerative paradigm into reality comes with great challenges, including behaviour change. However, it also shows that political will, strong leadership and collaboration with grassroots groups – effectively combining different types of knowledge and experiences – can lead to alternative pathways for development, prioritising quality of life within planetary boundaries.

Thus, Copenhagen's example supports the conceptual framework underpinning this research. As the first part showed, city-regions are currently one of the most important administrative levels and, at least among academics, there is a growing agreement that more progressive city-regional agendas should overcome a purely economic rationale. At the same time, city-regions are also leading to new governance models, and the second part explored key issues in the collaborative governance literature. Finally, the third part demonstrated that *sustainability* has become obsolete considering the current interrelated socio-economic and environmental issues, and suggested the transition towards a regenerative development model. After exploring each of these three concepts, the following chapter highlights their theoretical synergies and introduces the project's conceptual framework.

2.4   Part 4: A new way of analysing city-regions

While searching for theoretical concepts, this research has not only endeavoured to find literature strands that could explain the empirical phenomena studied, but that could also be inspirational for the project's main aim: to understand whether city-regional development could become more inclusive of social, cultural and environmental aspects, and overcome the primary reductionist economic logic. Three different bodies of thought appeared suitable, albeit incomplete on their own. For this reason, the main theoretical contribution has been to build a trilateral conceptual framework, based on the synergies between progressive regionalism, collaborative governance and regenerative development.

Fused together, these different fields of research create a robust structure, allowing to thoroughly understand the empirical context and address the research gaps identified, while also offering conceptual and methodological tools to explore and interpret data.

The following section describes the synergies between the three concepts, while also acknowledging some of the limitations. Then, the second part offers an explanatory map of this thesis, showing how the conceptual framework steered the formulation of research questions and the choice of a mixed-method research approach.

2.4.1   The trilateral conceptual framework

Figure 2-2 outlines the framework's key aspects. The columns show the synergetic philosophy, focus, framework, setting, actors and extent. These are the angles on which regenerative development, collaborative governance and progressive regionalism – summarized in separate rows – share commonalities. These connections highlight possible pathways towards regenerative city-regions, emphasising at the same time the aspects that need to be included in a new research agenda.

PHILOSOPHY	FOCUS	EXTENT		FRAMEWORK	SETTING	ACTORS
Equitable and sustainable development at city-regional scale	Eradicating root causes of poverty, social injustice, and environmental degradation	All-inclusive development, beyond competitive policies and sectors	43 PROGRESSIVE REGIONALISM	Increasingly globalised world, with complex and multi-scalar flows of materials, energy, and knowledge	Regions as socioeconomic and socioecological spaces where the rural-urban divide is reconsidered	Stakeholder involvement, state-society synergy, collective action
Constructive collaboration across public, private and civic spheres for deliberation, policy making and implementation	Local empowerment, decentralisation of decision-making processes and of power	Multiplicity of actors, from all societal segments	COLLABORATIVE GOVERNANCE	Collaboration between stakeholders and levels of governance (vertical and horizontal)	Complex and dynamic institutional environments	Mutual engagement between public and private actors, shared responsibility for decisions and enactment
Regeneration rather than sustenance of already deteriorated environments	Attention to place and creation of conditions for all forms of life to thrive	Holistic approach, regeneration of resources, natural capital and human ecosystems	REGENERATIVE DEVELOPMENT	Interrelatedness of all ecosystems, including the human ones	Reconnection between cities and their hinterlands; Places as unique setting of multiple interactions	Engagement and commitment of all human beings; co-evolution of human and natural systems in partnership

Figure 2-2: Conceptual framework

Despite their different underlying philosophies, the three concepts have compatible guiding principles. Hence, a progressive city-region, where equity and sustainability are fundamental ambitions (Pezzoli et al., 2009), would need to redefine its goals to support the regeneration, rather than the sustenance of already degraded systems and resources. Its success would require constructive collaborations between the different private, public and civic spheres. As Raworth (2017) argues, the economies we design should be regenerative and distributive by design, instead of waiting for growth to level or clean things up.

In the same way, the framework shows that combining the three notions' foci can lead to a holistic vision aiming to eradicate the 'root causes of poverty, social injustice and environmental degradation' (Pezzoli et al., 2009, p. 337). Today's problems are often interlinked and dealing with them requires one to steer away from a mere human-centred development strategy towards a socio-ecologically sensitive understanding of places.

Concurrent in their extent, the three concepts aim for universality, a wide inclusion of all (human and non-human) stakeholders, and all spheres for development. We need to change our perspective on what the economy is, acknowledging it is embedded in the society, which, in

turn, is nested within the environment[20] (Giddings, Hopwood, & O'Brien, 2002). At the moment, environmental and social standards are often sacrificed in the quest for profit. Besides, scholars have long argued for a recognition of the different forms the economy takes and the types of labour, transactions and resources involved (see, for instance, the work of feminist economic geographers Julie Graham and Katherine Gibson, as well as sustainability scientist Angela Moriggi). This can depict a richer picture of human beings – as social, adaptable and collaborative creatures, rather than rational economic ones (Raworth, 2017).

Furthermore, each concept operates in a relational framework, acknowledging multiple variables and non-linearity. From this point of view, progressive city-regions are conceived as elements of a world of 'complex and multi-scalar flows of material, energy, and knowledge' (Pezzoli et al., 2009, p. 337). Similarly, the regenerative paradigm draws attention to the necessity of understanding the socioecological environment in all its intricacy to define pathways for development. Collaborative governance, by definition, places an emphasis on the multitude of stakeholders involved at different interconnected levels.

The three notions share an affinity for the setting and the actors as well. Certainly, the governance regime of a city-region is intricate and dynamic and 'as institutional infrastructures become more complex and interdependent, the demand for collaboration increases' (Ansell & Gash, 2008, p. 544). Collaboration is therefore essential to create progressive city-regions by building on both the socioeconomic and the socioecological relations shaping it (Pezzoli et al., 2011, p. 339). A city-region is not only defined by the population's daily commuting trips but also by a particular combination of land, vegetation and water, among many other elements. Bringing to the surface a wider range of interdependencies between urban and rural areas could reduce the disconnection between city-regions and their hinterlands. As a result, policies and projects would be balanced and better distributed across to avoid zero-sum games. Finally, an approach to a progressive city-region would put places and people at the core of all processes, recognizing that leadership and responsibility needs to be shared, while distributed and integrated across scales.

Surely, this framework has shortcomings, too. The three concepts are represented in their ideal embodiments, whereas real cases expose the compromises which happen in reality. Besides, the concepts' qualities of being elastic and adaptable to different environments can also turn

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[20] Representing sustainability in the form of three/four concentric circles or pillars is misleading because it confers equal positions for each sector – leading in practice, to political prioritisation for the economy, as well as a lack of systemic understanding. Furthermore, it conceals that in reality, the economy is a social construction and is entirely dependent on the environment (Giddings et al., 2002).

them into elusive realities. As discussed, city-regions are spaces that have to accommodate contested interests and that deal with complex problems. The multi-layered political, legal, socioeconomic and environmental systemic circumstances which define city-regional dynamics and actions 'shape the overall quality and extent to which a collaborative governance regime is developed' (Emerson et al., 2012, p. 6), as well as its regenerative capacity to leave more value than it takes.

Nonetheless, despite these limitations, the reconceptualization of city-regions as spaces for regenerative development through collaborative governance offers new perspectives. The ideas were already available in the different literature strands, yet their combined effect and potential for empirical application have never been highlighted before. Indeed, unlike some other progressive regionalist proposals (Beel et al., 2017; Joseph Rowntree Foundation & Bevan Foundation, 2017), this project suggests that *growth* is not a sine-qua-non condition[21] for city-regional development, and neither is competition. Instead, it advocates that an agenda designed based on collaborative principles and regenerative aims has higher chances to reduce the disparities between 'winners' and 'losers', without exhausting the resources it depends on.

Thus, by capitalizing on the synergies of three bodies of thought, this integrative conceptual framework can be used to study, understand and improve policy processes and practices. It is not a programme that can be implemented, but rather a standard that could guide the formulation and enactment of policies at city-regional level.

2.4.2   Applying the framework in a real case: Cardiff Capital Region

The paragraphs above have highlighted the theoretical synergies shared by the three literature strands which informed and supported this project. The following part presents an overall guide for the dissertation, summarising how the conceptual framework was applied in the empirical research.

As Figure 2-3 shows, the conceptual framework led to the formulation of the following empirical questions, explored in the context of Cardiff Capital Region (CCR), in Wales:

1.   What are the narratives driving the city-region and to what extent are both socio-economic and socio-ecological issues prioritised?

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[21] There have been others questioning growth and among the ones who have been most influential in this research, Lang & Marsden (2017) and Raworth (2017) deserve to be mentioned.

2. How is the city-regional governance structure designed and to what extent are collaborations enabling a more progressive agenda?

3. What are the opportunities and impediments for city-regional regenerative action and how do current collaborations influence it? And to what extent can future generations affect city-regional development?

PROGRESSIVE REGIONALISM

⇒ WHAT ARE THE NARRATIVES DRIVING THE CITY-REGION AND TO WHAT EXTENT ARE BOTH SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND SOCIO-ECOLOGICAL ISSUES PRIORITISED?

CHAPTER 5.1.

⇒ HOW IS THE CITY-REGIONAL GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE DESIGNED AND TO WHAT EXTENT ARE COLLABORATIONS ENABLING A MORE PROGRESSIVE AGENDA?

CHAPTER 5.2.

CARDIFF CAPITAL REGION

REGENERATIVE DEVELOPMENT

COLLABORATIVE GOVERNANCE

⇒ WHAT ARE THE OPPORTUNITIES AND THE IMPEDIMENTS FOR CITY-REGIONAL REGENERATIVE ACTION AND HOW DO CURRENT COLLABORATIONS INFLUENCE IT?

⇒ TO WHAT EXTENT CAN FUTURE GENERATIONS AFFECT CITY-REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT?

CHAPTER 5.3. & CHAPTER 6

⇒ HOW DOES THE INTEGRATED FRAMEWORK ALLOW A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF THE EMPIRICAL CASE STUDY?

CHAPTER 7

METHODS

Desk research ■
Quantitative analysis ■
Participatory & peripheral observation ■
Semi-structured interviews ■
Web-mapping ●
Photovoice ●
Secondments □

Figure 2-3: Dissertation map - conceptual framework, research questions and methods

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Each of these questions is revealed in a separate chapter, mirroring the structure of the theoretical sections. To paint a holistic picture of Cardiff Capital Region, the thesis includes a historical account of city-regional development in Wales – a perspective needed to understand many of the city-region's current features. Besides, CCR is analysed in the context of the *Well-being of Future Generations Act* – a piece of legislation which could support regenerative development. The empirical observations reveal, though, the discontinuities between the objectives of the well-being legislation and the city-regional realities.

Furthermore, having a legislation which protects the rights of future generations, it becomes particularly relevant to see the city-region through this perspective. Thus, zooming in on the youth question, the thesis examines the relevance of the city-regional scale for young people. The use of creative methods allowed an investigation into the youth's sense of the city-region and the fit between their aspirations and the city-regional project. Personal reflections on the engagement challenges – both in the case of the city-regional leaders, and of young people – crystallise in a sober scrutiny of engagement, in terms of time, effort and outcomes.

Finally, the last question enables a critical assessment of the conceptual framework created, and is dealt with separately in the discussion (Chapter 7). This grounded application of the initial framework uncovers opportunities and barriers for regenerative city-regional development. Unquestionably, the study is not an extensive investigation, in the sense that it would have been impossible to map all different collaborations which exist in South East Wales. Instead, the thesis aims to give a flavour of the possibilities that city-regions host, as soon as the governance structure opens to other ideas and stakeholders.

Like in any other dissertation, the scope of research has been restrained to a certain period of time (2016 – June 2018) and to a particular group of stakeholders. There are, however, many fruitful lines of inquiry for future research and a particularly interesting one would be to continue the longitudinal investigation of CCR, once the project and the governance structure mature. Another research challenge – initially envisaged for this project, but which proved to be too ambitious at the time – would be an exercise in visioning, by bringing together various stakeholders of the city-region (of all backgrounds and ages), to create alternative scenarios for development.

Nonetheless, employing the trilateral conceptual framework, this thesis offers a comprehensive study of Cardiff Capital Region. The following chapter explains the methodology which allowed this research to accomplish its aims, highlighting the research philosophy, case study approach, the mixed-methods used and the data analysis process.

3   Research methodology

The following pages discuss the methodology that helped completing this research. The project studied the foundation and evolution of a new spatial and administrative scale (a city-region), the direct and some of the indirect stakeholders, the effects for the area and its inhabitants, as well as the potential factors which could alter the official or conventional strategies, ultimately looking for regenerative pathways for development. Using a case study approach, this in-depth exploration of a specific phenomenon aimed to contribute to wider debates on progressive city-regionalism and regenerative development.

Conducted within a Marie Curie ITN that sought 'pathways for sustainable place-shaping', the project's aim had loosely been predefined to 'study the intricacies between the different sustainability dimensions at city-region level'. Hosted within the Sustainable Places Research Institute of Cardiff University, the funding agreement outlined the scale, location and a general direction for the study. Largely, any theoretical and methodological choices were permitted, as long as they were well-argued. The advantages of being part of an innovative training network included access to training activities and events (Annex 12), as well as two work placements (see 3.3.3) which have clearly influenced this project's course.

The research focused on a single case study and although conducted in the context of the conceptual framework, the exploration has been empirically-driven, adjusting to the realities encountered. Even so, as the three literatures emphasise co-creation and the multiplicity of knowledges and actors, the conceptual framework had at least two empirical consequences: (i) it supported an intention to broaden the understanding/definition of city-regional stakeholders; (ii) led to a search for more participatory research methods.

The goal has been to portray the complexity of a city-regional establishment, using both primary and secondary data. Contextual and associated information was sought in a variety of sources since 'the pathway that leads to any event can be seen as a succession of events that are contingent on each other in this way' (Becker, 1998, p. 51). Thus, the research design was flexible and employed a mixed-method approach.

The rest of this chapter discusses in detail the research philosophy, the case study approach and the suitability of the city-region chosen, the methods used to generate empirical data, and the techniques employed to analyse the diversity of information gathered.

3.1   The philosophy behind the research design

While this research has mostly been inductive and data-driven, there are certain theoretical positions and values which influenced the research design and the interpretation of the findings. Indeed, asserting that the researcher can 'simply give voice' to their participants is naïve (Braun & Clarke, 2006), since the information collected, edited and deployed to formulate arguments is contingent to one's ontological and epistemological positions.

Generally, this exploration can be situated within what Furlong & Marsh (2002) call *modern critical realism* or *contemporary realism*[22], positing that the world exists independently of our knowledge or interpretation of it[23], yet our interpretations or understanding affect outcomes[24]. These scholars suggest that our knowledge and the theories that influence us are imperfect, and a research's aim is to make 'inference to the best explanation' (Hollis & Smith, 1990, as cited in Furlong & Marsh, 2002, p. 30) both about the 'external reality' and the 'social construction' of it.

Correspondingly, this research is underpinned by a belief that reality is created and understood through social constructs such as language, stories, meanings, discourses or artefacts, yet there are aspects which exist and evolve outside of human influence. Still, the way these aspects are inferred is entirely dependent on the observer. Furthermore, structures play a role in constraining or facilitating behaviour, yet 'reflexive agents can interpret and change structure' (Furlong & Marsh, 2002, p. 31). Thus, this thesis focused on a specific socio-political phenomenon and tried to deconstruct and understand its genesis, the narratives and actors that shaped it, as well as the tangible outcomes for the area and its inhabitants. Simplistically put, this research studied how a number of actors in various positions of power have redefined administrative boundaries, altering at the same time the priorities for their areas. This group chose commuting patterns to define boundaries (although other criteria, e.g. an ecosystem or a landform such as a river, could have been employed using an alternative rationale), and economic growth as the main objective. Their actions led to a 'new reality' – named Cardiff Capital Region – which entitles certain people and excludes some other from decisional fora, legitimising at the same time specific actions and projects. Furthermore, the empirical

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[22] There is certainly little agreement over ontological categorisations and names. For instance, a similar stance was called 'materialist social constructivism' by Daniel Hausknost during a lecture at the *Alternative Economic Systems Summer School 2019*. Hausknost explained that while parts of our realities are socially constructed, human actions have visible and quantifiable effects, which then can be studied, interpreted and explained in various ways. Regardless of the appellation, it seems important to acknowledge how these underpinnings affect the methodological choices and the research findings.
[23] Resembling a positivist ontology.
[24] Coming closer to an interpretivist position.

exploration zoomed into a group of stakeholders who are targets and recipients of city-regional policies, yet have limited (if any) windows of opportunity to influence those policies: youth. This project asked young research participants to define their 'own' city-regions (further explained in 3.4.2.) and the results showed a myriad of interpretations for this concept.

The philosophical positionality is assumed and reflected in the flexible research design that adapted according to major or unexpected findings (further explained throughout this chapter). Besides, like critical realists who 'accept the utility of both quantitative and qualitative data' (Furlong & Marsh, 2002, p. 31), this research used a mixed-method approach that helped to contribute to theory construction, rather than testing a specific theory (Dey, 1993).

It is important to mention that at times, this study has touched upon politically sensitive issues and some of the research participants have asked for confidentiality. Thus, this thesis is characterised by a conscious attempt to practice empathy and balance between individual anonymity, and depoliticisation – a failure to identify the actors and the interests which lead to certain events and decisions at city-regional level. As Marcuse (2015, p. 154) rightly says:

> *Is it 'cities' that have a crisis? Is it 'cities' that compete? Is it 'cities' that have policies? (…) 'Cities' have a spatial meaning, they are places where things are done, they have legal definitions, quantitative and qualitative characteristics. But a city in this sense is not an actor; a city does not compete, pass legislation, shelter the homeless – city governments do, more exactly the power structures dominating city governments and their economic activities, do these things.*

Thus, although the thesis talks about institutions, local authorities or governments, there is full recognition of the power hierarchies and the human agency present in the city-region and beyond. Concurring with Jonas & Ward (2007, p. 172), this research aimed to highlight that city regions are not 'an autonomous force of global economic and political change' and have no degree of agency separately from the actors involved. Furthermore, in line with the aforementioned scholars, the study tried to identify the politics and struggles unfolding at different scales, acknowledging that city-regions do not function as discrete entities without influence from other processes and actions of other spatial levels.

3.2 The case study approach and case selection

Set up in the real world and attempting to understand complex phenomena, the project took the form of a case study. Although often criticised for being difficult to replicate and lacking generalisability, the case study approach has nevertheless gained its reputation for the potential to develop deep analyses and robust arguments (Allan, 2011, pp. 70–71). Besides, as Yin (2013) highlights, case studies are particularly appropriate to answer 'how' and 'why' questions in researches conducted in contemporary, real-life contexts and situations, when the researcher cannot control behavioural events. All these different aspects matched the project's empirical aims.

Thus, this research strategy allowed an in-depth investigation of a socio-political process of territorial re-scaling, namely city-regional development. Although city-regions have been established all around the world, including the UK, this investigation of Cardiff Capital Region yielded first-hand information regarding a novel, and thus under-researched example.

The case study choice was largely determined by the Marie Curie ITN funding agreement. Although the initial project description referred to the two Welsh city-regions, CCR and Swansea Bay City Region, the slow developments within the latter led to a single case study. It would have been possible to choose another city-region and conduct a comparative analysis, yet the difficulties encountered during the empirical stage (e.g. insufficient and unreliable data available on CCRCD, leaders' inaccessibility, slow process of finding and recruiting young people), did not leave any time, resources or energy to include a second case study. Nonetheless, CCR proved to be a particularly thought-provoking city-region where the complexity of the governance structure, the existence of a national well-being legislation, as well as the insurgence of various alternative city-regional proposals provided a fertile ground for research. Besides, the mixed-method approach allowed various rounds of triangulation, leading to insightful and robust research findings.

Furthermore, the non-academic partnerships within the SUSPLACE ITN had a major influence on the research design and outcomes. The three-year project included two three-month long secondments, out of which one within the Welsh Government (WG). Initially, the WG representatives tried to secure a secondment within the city-region department. As the process proved too complicated and lengthy, further connections were made with the Future Generations Commissioner's Office. Undoubtedly, this immersive experience (detailed in 3.4.3.) channelled the project's orientation and helped to situate and understand the city-region within the wider context of the well-being legislation.

The following paragraphs describe the methods chosen to conduct fieldwork and the ways in which the different types of data yielded were used in empirical chapters.

3.3   Multiple research methods

The aim of this section is to offer an overview of the ways in which data has been collected in this project. In studying Cardiff Capital Region, the research relied on mixed-sources of information (primary and secondary data) and mixed-methods. The following three subsections differentiate between traditional methods, creative methods and the immersive research experience. Each of them explains the choices made and how different combinations of data informed different parts of the thesis. Annex 1 offers details regarding the fieldwork timeline, the data collected and the resulting outputs.

3.3.1   Exploring the city-region – traditional research methods

Data was collected using three types of traditional research methods: (i) desk research of both qualitative and quantitative information; (ii) observation, peripheral and participatory; (iii) interviews.

3.3.1.1   Desk research

Any Marie Curie early career researcher is required to have not been residing in the host country within the last 3 years before the funding agreement commences. This sometimes translates into limited preliminary familiarity with the case study context for the researcher. Since this was the case in the current project too, a relatively long time was dedicated to learning and understanding the history of South East Wales, its culture and how some narratives (e.g. 'valleys as deprived, left behind places', 'creative Cardiff', 'valleys vs. coast', etc.) had become so powerful. This scoping phase took part in the beginning of the project (April 2016), and was conducted through desk research (document analysis, which continued throughout the entire empirical phase, and statistical analysis), as well as exploratory interviews.

Among the documents consulted, a primary source constituted the official papers published by the city-region, local authorities and the two governments. These comprised both statutory acts and non-statutory publications such as development strategies, different studies, consultations and reports, as well as quantitative and GIS data. Such sources helped to understand the general legal and discursive context characterising Wales, and a list with most important ones for this project is provided in Annex 2.

As Cardiff Capital Region had just signed the city deal when this research began, the information available was scarce. CCR's website was not regularly updated and for a long time, the official minutes taken during city-regional meetings were only published on the individual local authorities' websites. Finding them often took unnecessarily long. Even so, these documents revealed very little about the internal dynamics within the governance structure, therefore they were cautiously used. In general, texts are not neutral and besides serving a certain purpose, can encrypt power relations while portraying them as something natural or self-evident. It was thus crucial to read them 'critically, justly and against the grain of common sense' (Doel, 2016, p. 2019).

Besides the official documents, secondary sources such as online media, independent reports and academic articles have been complementary in understanding 'three overlapping types of context – geographical, historical and socio-economic' (G. Clark, 2008, p. 59). They provided alternative interpretations of the city-regional approaches and policies, from people who were outside of the governance structure. In the absence of any public engagement, they have been one of the few sources to understand how CCR features in the public realm.

Thus, documentary analysis was conducted throughout the entire fieldwork, until June 2018, because the opportunities for other research methods have been quite limited, too (further explained in the interviews and participatory observation sections). The analysis of both official and unofficial sources has been used throughout chapters 4, 5.1, and 5.2, in conjunction with other types of data.

Besides the qualitative information consulted, this research also relied on quantitative analysis. The combination of geographical scale and particular focus on youth meant that any statistical information would have to be aggregated and analysed from scratch. Since this seemed essential to understand the major characteristics of young people living in South East Wales, this phase lasted approximately 4months and culminated with a report (Annex 3). 'Cardiff Capital Region Youth Profile' was published in May 2017 and was shared within academic and policy-making circles. The main findings have informed section 6.1.1.

3.3.1.2   Observational methods

As the information available regarding CCR was limited, any potential meeting or event which could offer more insight into its developments was sought. During such occasions (Annex 4), both peripheral and participatory observation was used.

Observation allows the researcher to 'watch activities unfold in front of their eyes' and record their remarks in field notes, drawings, photographs, voice recordings or other types of tangible evidence (Cook, 2018, pp. 167–168). This ethnographic method is often used in conjunction with document analysis and interviews, supporting data triangulation. Besides, the researcher can gain additional insights lost in written sources (body language, unrecorded utterances, etc.) or 'controlled environments' (Allan, 2011).

However, Yin (2013) advises to consider that some instances might still be 'staged', especially when the encounter is pre-scheduled (such an instance has been recorded during an official meeting and is discussed in 5.3.3). Thus, the concept of *peripheral observation* is preferred to that of *non-participant observation*, as, indeed, the simple presence of the researcher in a certain environment gives him a role and disturbs or alters dynamics (Laurier, 2016, pp. 171–172). In general, all meetings and events organised by Cardiff Capital Region or the local authorities involved, allowed note taking and noticing, with minimal direct involvement.

In contrast, meetings and events organised by 'outsiders' have landed themselves to participatory observation and full engagement into discussions and activities. In particular, activities within the Cardiff University Metro Group and those organised by the Design Circle have been excellent occasions to observe alternative visions for city-regional development through debates, study trips, charrettes and envisioning exercises. More than anything, participating in these events confirmed the initial 'gut feeling'[25] that beyond the political arena, individuals and groups are interested in the unfolding of the city-region and given the opportunity, would contribute in shaping it.

Nonetheless, both types of experiences have been vital in formulating this project's main findings, and they are thoroughly analysed in Chapter 5.2.

3.3.1.3   Semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured interviews played a key role throughout the entire empirical stage. Within a case study, such social encounters allow a researcher to obtain specific information on the topic of interest (Yin, 2004), providing rich sources of qualitative data.

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[25] This assumption was mostly formed based on the literature reviewed, but also by attending various hustings before the National Assembly for Wales Elections in 2016. Although not directly connected to Cardiff Capital Region, such events were new to me. I was pleasantly surprised with their popularity among local inhabitants and the breadth of subjects debated, coming from a country where *democracy* has only been instituted in the past 30 years, and where both the government and the inhabitants are still grappling with it.

The exploratory phase included 12 preliminary interviews conducted with academics and experts in city-regional development and/or public policy, as well as two interviews with representatives of CCRCD Programme Management Office. Compared to the other traditional methods used, they provided a faster and more efficient introduction to the main socio-political and economic issues in CCR. Each preliminary interview revolved around some key themes, while containing specific points of discussion according to the interviewee. These meetings have only been recorded through note taking, to maintain a more intimate and relaxed atmosphere. For the same reason, interviews were conducted in places where the participant could feel comfortable, either neutral spaces like cafés, or the interviewee's work place. Furthermore, preliminary interviews have often helped to gain access to events or to contact further key stakeholders.

Furthermore, 26 interviews were conducted with 30 stakeholders (certain organisations or local authorities were represented by more than one person). These discussions had a firmer structure than the preliminary ones (interview prompts are provided in Annex 5), but again, they adapted to each case, including open-ended questions or tangentially-connected issues. Participants were both *insiders* – council leaders, council executives, or members of the different city-regional bodies, and *outsiders* – direct stakeholder who have interacted in one way or another with Cardiff Capital Region.

A full list of participants in provided in Annex 6a. Since obtaining interviews might have been one of the biggest challenges in this research, the last column in this annex gives details about the effort put into securing each meeting. Although only some of the interviewees asked for full confidentiality, the identity of all interview participants is protected and any potential references have been concealed throughout this thesis.

Needless to say, the information gathered in this stage has been instrumental to gain a clearer understanding of who the actors behind the city-regional project are and what motivates them to participate. Besides, the variances between people working for the same stated aim, as well as the different discourses among insiders and outsiders, offered copious amounts of information. Indeed, interviews filled numerous gaps left by document analysis and observation. They allowed to apprehend the intricacies of the governance structure, as well as the issues which lead to closed and atomised groups working independently. Last but not least, these discussions have been the only source into the topic of youth and their potential engagement in city-regional affairs. All the empirical sections rely partly, on the data gathered through semi-structured interviews.

3.3.2   Exploring with youth – creative research methods

The following pages discuss the second category of research methods used. The first part reflects on some shared characteristics and issues, while the second part presents the methods selected.

This research aimed to study the multiplicity of narratives existing within, and engendered by the creation of a city-region, in order to uncover the potential held by city-regions to nurture regenerative action. Set in Wales – a country that aims to protect the interests of its future generations – this project was inspired by the legislative context, and tried to operationalise the concept of *future generations*[26]. Considering that Cardiff Capital Region is a 20-year long scheme, the first future generations affected by it are actually the young people living in South East Wales today. Thus, doing research *with* future generations and not only *for* or *about* them, became an important aim.

However, initial conversation with partners from the Welsh Government revealed that this topic was a relatively blind spot, particularly at city-regional level. In particular, two questions stood out and guided this project: (i) who are the future generations and to what extent are they enabled to contribute to city-regional development? and (ii) are there any windows of possibility in the governance structure to engage youth, and which methods might be attractive for participants, while also yielding meaningful results?

To ease the selection procedure and escape some of the administrative and ethical difficulties of working with youth under 16, the age group was narrowed to 16-24[27]. Besides, although in other contexts youth refers to persons aged 15-24 (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, n.d.), the statistical data available in Wales (for instance from the National Survey) had different band ages. Thus, the choice also facilitated the aforementioned quantitative analysis.

Nevertheless, as soon as the exploratory phase began, it became obvious that most people (not only young ones) had never heard of Cardiff Capital Region and were not familiar with the concept of a city-region either. Thus, after the initial screening of potential methods (which included classic and walking interviews, participatory mapping, Photovoice and participatory scenario development), only two were finally selected: web-mapping and Photovoice. Both of

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[26] Chapter 6.1 will bring further clarifications for this choice.
[27] Research that involves children and young people requires special consideration. However, in the United Kingdom, only persons under 16 years of age are classed as children. A representative of the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights and a Cardiff University Research Governance Officer have confirmed this aspect. This simplified the procedures since young participants' written consent was sufficient, without any written consent from parents, guardians or those in loco parentis.

them are participatory visual research methods, as they require participants to generate visual data (Lorenz & Kolb, 2009) in the form of maps and photographs. Their strength lies in the capacity to shift the power differential between researcher and participant, as the latter can be in control of their contribution. Popular among researchers working with youth (Driskell, 2002; Wang, 2006; A. L. Ward, Freeman, & McGee, 2015), these two visual, creative methods seemed most suitable in allowing participants to apprehend the concept of a city-region, elicit their own interpretations and obtain insights into their lived experiences without being too prescriptive.

These two methods were chosen for their potentially attractive features for young people, and were a conscious step away from surveys or classical interviews which can easily become tedious. Besides being more pleasant for the researcher too, these methods tested whether indeed, young people were not necessarily politically or socially apathetic, but rather vote-apathetic (Agger, 2012; Collin, 2015), as previously discussed in 2.2.4. Both methods employed technology and allowed creative or less conventional answers and interpretations for the issues discussed, giving participants significant freedom of choice.

Although initially retained and included in the fieldwork planning, participatory scenario development workshops proved too complex to organise. They would have required the presence of a variety of stakeholders of various ages and backgrounds, months of preparation and additional assistance for facilitation[28], without any guarantee of attendance. As Flinders et al. (2015) discovered during their citizens' assembly exercises, 'democracy costs', and organising such events depends on a team effort, and not just one person.

Moreover, two caveats need to be mentioned. First, the 'participatory' nature of this research is relatively limited. In a fully participatory project, the participants would be involved throughout all stages, from choosing the topics, to selecting methods, analysing data, formulating conclusions and choosing the dissemination format (Driskell, 2002; Wang & Burris, 1997). Although this was the initial intention, it became unfeasible given the long time needed to recruit participants, and all the other tasks and outputs required within SUSPLACE. As such, while every single workshop was flexibly moulded depending on the participants, the main topic, the data collection and analysis methods, as well as the dissemination formats were predefined.

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[28] The limited word-limit in this thesis does not allow an extended discussion of all the issues reflected upon during fieldwork. These include the often taken for granted skills required to conduct certain types of research (e.g. facilitation, deep listening, or empathy) or the researcher-participant relation (which can often become an extractive one when participants feel they have not gained enough in exchange for their contribution). Fortunately, these topics have often been debated within SUSPLACE in formal trainings and workshops (see Annex 12), as well as informally among researchers and partners. Various publications available on the ITN's official website deal with these topics and some ideas have been drawn from the current research.

Participants, were, of course, in full control of their contributions and the conclusions formulated during each occasion, participating in knowledge creation via research (Driskell, 2002, p. 98).

The second caveat, also discussed in 6.1.2., is that if adopted by the official leadership of Cardiff Capital Region, these two methods would probably not be enough on their own to make the governance structure more 'collaborative', since they lacked a scenario building, visioning, planning or deliberation component. The second part of the literature review chapter discussed at length the necessary features of a collaborative process (Ansell & Gash, 2008; Carlson, 2007), emphasising the deliberative quality through which different actors discuss and decide upon issues of public interest. Furthermore, to yield meaningful results, such deliberations would have to be part of a long-term approach and not singular cases (Driskell, 2002, p. 22).

In spite of these limitations, the two types of workshops have been successful in engaging participants, helped them to get familiar with the concept and logic of a *city-region*, and elicited their perspectives on the areas where they live. The two methods used are further discussed separately below, after a brief presentation of participant selection.

3.3.2.1   Participant selection

Initially, this project aimed to recruit 8-10 persons from each local authority in CCR. These numbers proved too ambitious and the goal became to recruit as many as possible, paying more attention to the quality of interaction, rather than numbers. This makes the results illustrative of possibilities, and not necessarily representative (Yin, 2004). The issues encountered in recruiting participants are further discussed in 6.2.3, and a list of all participants is included in Annex 6b.

Without any established connections in Wales, the first major hurdle has been to connect with persons and organisations that could facilitate reaching young people. A thorough screening of all youth groups, youth forums, clubs, organisations, and some schools was followed by countless emails, phone calls and visits to discuss the project. While some of the adults contacted have been extremely helpful, others acted as gatekeepers. Nonetheless, in two cases – Caerphilly Youth Forum and Bridgend College – participants were recommended by their officer and teachers. In all other cases, recruitment relied on personal connections and snowballing.

In trying to show appreciation for the time and effort invested in this research, young people have been compensated with certificates that proved their contribution, snacks and beverages during workshops, as well as vouchers for cultural venues (offered through a raffle).

3.3.2.2   Web-mapping

Maps embody a wealth of information, well beyond their functional spatial indications, and often represent the 'worldview and particular interests of dominant powers' (Literat, 2013, p. 198). So how would the map of a city-region change when some of its young inhabitants would be asked to draw it? This was the fundamental question that lead to a series of web-mapping[29] workshops.

The web-mapping method was inspired by various projects which employed participatory mapping (Dennis, Gaulocher, Carpiano, & Brown, 2009; Headrick Taylor & Hall, 2013; Literat, 2013), and is a variation of cognitive/mental mapping, a technique developed by Kevin Lynch (Lynch, 1977). Besides harnessing individuals' knowledge, such methods invite participants 'to take an active stake in the visual representation of their spatial environment' (Literat, 2013, p. 199). Thus, web-mapping workshops elicited young people's perceptions of their (personal) city-regional span, and of the assets and liabilities within them. In simple terms, participants created online maps of their *own* city-regions, marking also the significant places within those boundaries.

These workshops aimed to gather young participants' depiction of their personal geographies without being an obtrusive investigation. Each session allowed participants to explore their region's online map, reflect on their experiences within their city-region(s) and superimpose their personal layers and pointers.

All sessions used laptops or computers connected to the internet and participants created an online map using the map creation feature in *Google Maps*. Their participation required no previous knowledge and only basic computer skills, which all attendants had. Each person received a step-by-step written guide (Annex 7) and continuous assistance, and every session started with defining and discussing the concept of *city-regions*. Participants were instructed to think of their city-region as the area that expands beyond their hometown, where they might

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[29] Headrick Taylor & Hall (2013, p.66) use the term *counter-mapping* for practices which allow residents of an area to map assets in their areas and based on them, 'make personally relevant claims to public resources for the future development of a community'. Since the current research was more limited, the name *web-mapping* is preferred.

travel occasionally (for leisure, shopping, education, medical services, etc.) and to which they felt connected in some way. They were also told that boundaries did not have to be very precise, that each map is a personal artefact and no answer was wrong.

After inputting general information (name, age, place of residence), each participant had to complete three tasks: (i) mark the boundaries of their city-region based on the aforementioned discussion; (ii) mark places of personal significance which they appreciated, indicating in a comment why; (iii) mark place they disliked and would like to see change, explaining why and how.

Workshops varied in length, depending on the number of attendees and their familiarity with the topic and tool used. After finishing the mapping task, each individual presented their contribution and the groups discussed briefly the differences and similarities between results. As expected, web-mapping showed that individual city-regional boundaries take a myriad of forms, challenging the relevance of the official ones, particularly in the context of extremely limited public engagement.

3.3.2.3 Photovoice

Photovoice is a method developed by Wang, Burris, & Ping (1996) to reveal lived experiences and empower people, particularly marginalised ones, to voice their needs and take part in shaping their environments. Photovoice has three main goals: (i) to enable people to record and reflect their community's strengths and concerns; (ii) to promote critical dialogue and knowledge about important issues through group discussion of photographs; and (iii) to reach policymakers (Wang et al., 1996, p. 1391).

Photovoice seemed thus, the perfect research method to bridge between young people's lived experiences and city-regional leaders. In the current project, it was designed to build upon the web-mapping workshop, and most participants attended both. The aim was to elicit youth's aspirations for their city-region, and so participants were asked to photograph aspects which make life worth living in their city-region, aspects which they would like to see change, and a traveling experience. Each questions required two photos, yet people often took more. These instructions and other ethic-related issues were discussed at the end of the web-mapping session and each participant received a briefing email, too. After completing the task, each person wrote captions for their photos and returned everything by email. Then, the group met to present and discuss results. These focus groups did not have a predefined structure as they

depended on the visual outputs. Nonetheless, as certain topics re-emerged, it has been possible to form key themes.

These workshops too, varied in length depending on the number of attendees. Although initially designed to follow precisely the Photovoice nine-step strategy (see Wang, 2006), the method was condensed to reduce the number of meetings, and thus, the risk of tiring participants. The reality is that although recruitment was the most difficult part, commitment was also fluctuating and was sensitive to weather, exam periods, or simply personal events. Nonetheless, the compromise found attracted 29 participants and yielded rich findings. Indeed, this exploration validated Wang's (2006, p. 152) view, showing that young people can be 'competent citizens and active participants in the institutions and decisions that affect their lives', and visual methods which allow a more creative form of expression are useful engagement tools.

Workshops have been successful in terms of research results and engagement, yet this project failed to reach policymakers and accomplish Photovoice's last goal. Despite various blog posts, a photo essay (Annex 8), a video[30] and an exhibition held in November 2018 in Chapter Arts, Cardiff – all shared widely with various contacts in CCR, there is no proof that city-regional leaders have taken notice. This is, probably, this project's most regretted failure.

3.3.3   Immersive research experiences: secondments

As mentioned, the funding agreement for this project included two 3-month secondments: one within the Welsh Government, and the second within Royal HaskoningDHV (RHDHV thereafter), a Dutch multinational consulting firm on sustainability. Since the former has had a major impact on the research design and results, and the latter has helped in enlarging horizons, they are reflected upon separately from the other empirical experiences.

Although the two secondments have been very different, both have been instrumental in this project. As already mentioned, the first one ended up within the Future Generations Commissioner's Office (FGCO), and not the city-region's department, and it has been a fruitful collaboration[31]. The summer spent working with the FGCO facilitated many connections, offered access to information unavailable otherwise, and allowed an insider's perspective into the relationship between this office and the CCRCD.

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[30] *Engaging youth in city-regional development*, January 2019, Retrieved at [shorturl.at/fly67]
[31] I am aware that this immersive experience and the level of familiarity contains a risk of bias within the findings. However, the research used various sources and data was triangulated, attempting to limit any potential shift in positionality.

Chapter 5.3 and some smaller parts throughout the entire empirical section have used the knowledge gained through the secondment. The work experience involved similar methods to the ones aforementioned (data analysis, observation, interviews), and 'opened the door' to some events, informal and/or closed meetings. Certainly, no confidential information has been revealed in this project, yet certain aspects have been instrumental to understand the dynamics and the tensions within the city-region. Furthermore, the secondment represented an opportunity to observe the FGCO's work from within. It was a positive surprise to learn that the Commissioner and her staff strive to embody the Act, constantly looking to challenge business as usual and find alternatives within their operations and management, too.

The second secondment was shorter and much more informal, mostly because it was planned relatively late and coincided with the writing up phase of the PhD thesis. Nonetheless, the partnership with RHDHV led to 10 interviews with experts in city-regional development, transport & smart mobility, and youth engagement (see Annex 6a, Phase 3). These discussions provided a wider international perspective, which although not featuring directly in this thesis, helped to appreciate a range of alternatives developing in the Netherlands and neighbouring countries.

3.4   Making sense of findings: data analysis

This section aims to give an accurate description of the data analysis process. However, it is difficult to distinguish precise steps since it has been an iterative process as the research adapted according to new findings and/or experiences. Furthermore, various SUSPLACE outputs (articles[32], policy toolkit, blogs, etc.) required continuous preliminary analysis, most of which has been included here. Nonetheless, it can be said that the project has often employed technology, not only during data collection, but also for data analysis.

Apart from the statistical analysis (conducted using MS Office and ArcGIS), the qualitative data gathered from both primary and secondary sources has been analysed using a computer assisted qualitative data analysis software, *NVivo*. This software was instrumental in organising the large

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[32] For an extensive collection of articles authored by SUSPLACE researchers and coordinators, see Horlings, L. G., Roep, D., Mathijs, E., & Marsden, T. (2020). *Special feature: exploring the transformative capacity of place-shaping practices*. Sustainability Science, *15*(2).

amount of information gathered, while also facilitating deep levels of analysis through thematic analysis (described in 3.5.2.).

3.4.1 Turning voice into text: data transcription

As mentioned, pilot interviews have been documented through note taking and the same method was used during workshops. Although workshops have also been captured using a voice recorder, the recordings were only used to re-listen to specific parts and verify notes and conclusions. Due to their length, workshop audio files have not been transcribed.

In contrast, all but one other interviews have been recorded. They lasted between 20-70 minutes, with most ranging around 45 minutes. These audio files have been transcribed using the *F4transkript* software, in an intelligent verbatim style (light editing to omit stutters, repetitions, etc.), yielding 185 pages of transcription.

Handling sensitive data

All research participants (in interviews and workshops) have given their written consent and agreed with the use of their data for research purposes. All young people, preferred to have their names mentioned and not be made anonymous, to be able to demonstrate their participation in the project. While most adult interviewees did not have any preferences, three interviewees expressed a strong desire to have their identities protected. For this reason, all the 14 interviewees who were/are directly implicated in CCRCD have received pseudonyms. Their data has been treated as C2 Classified (confidential). Two interviewees have also requested to see and verify the excerpts written based on their information in order to avoid damaging their/their organisations' image. The remaining 15 interviewees' identity is only revealed when it can be deduced from the context or if they have specifically asked for their names to be mentioned.

The interview transcripts have been anonymised, removing any potential words or phrases which could reveal the identity.

3.4.2 Data analysis method and process

Among the various methods available for qualitative analysis, this research relied on thematic analysis (TA) to 'identify, analyse and report patterns (themes) within data' (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 79). As mentioned, both data collection and analysis were only loosely guided by the theoretical and conceptual interests in the topics of progressive city-regionalism, regenerative

development and collaborative governance. In general, an inductive approach was preferred, trying to avoid preconceptions which could guide the results.

The method of thematic analysis was preferred because it is a flexible, relatively easy to learn method for less experienced researchers. Besides, it can be used to interpret large bodies of data (including visual data) and offer a 'thick description', while also yielding insights accessible to an educated public and/or policy-makers (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

However, thematic analysis shares similarities with other analytic methods and it is important to highlight the differences. Like *grounded theory*, it requires an inductive and iterative technique to identify and connect categories and themes within data (Guest et. al, 2012, p. 12). Unlike grounded theory, TA does not implicitly ask researchers to produce a theoretical model of the phenomena grounded in the data. Furthermore, unlike *narrative analysis*, TA searches for 'certain themes or patterns across an entire data set, rather than within a data item' (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 81).

Another comparable analytic method to TA is *content analysis.* The main difference is that CA tends to focus on more micro levels and often provides frequency counts. In TA, themes are not necessarily quantified, although they can be. In addition, the unit of analysis tends to be more than a word or phrase, which is typical for CA (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 98).

Finally, critical TA overlaps in many respects with *thematic discourse analysis* which requires attention to the constructive role of language and to the multiple and shifting meanings around social objects (Taylor & Ussher, 2001). However, TA is considered a far more accessible method due to its clearly defined set of procedures.

Thematic analysis involves the following steps (Aronson, 1995; Braun & Clarke, 2006): (i) getting familiar with data, (ii) generating initial codes, (iii) searching for themes, (iv) reviewing and refining themes, (v) naming themes, (vi) writing valid arguments informed by related literature. These steps were followed, and after transcribing and annotating data, two cycles of coding led to themes. Saldaña (2009, p. 3) defines a code as 'a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data'. Open coding helped to develop initial interpretations, through 'in vivo' codes (taken directly from the participants' answers, e.g. transparency, growth, etc.) or descriptive codes (Saldaña, 2009, p. 70).

While part of the analysis, codes differ from themes, which are often broader units of analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 88). To illustrate this difference, the following example is useful. The

money secured through the city deal was emphasised repeatedly in documents issued by Cardiff Capital Region, and the media related to it. While the documents consulted did not give any indication that this might be a contentious issue, the topic came up in every single interview with insiders. Thus, the code 'budget' was separated from the initial wider code 'city deal', and after several rounds of iteration, it became part of the 'equality between local authorities' theme. These findings were then used in Chapter 5.2 to discuss the governance structure and the tensions within.

The process was relatively easier for the data generated during workshops because of two reasons. First, each session included a dialogue which helped to highlight and summarise the key themes. Although the visual outputs played an important role, the discussions they elicited counted more in this research, so the analysis relied mostly on them, and not on the visual information. Second, as discussed, the initial aims related to youth engagement (in terms of number of participants, interaction with city-regional leaders, and general exposure) had to be trimmed. Thus, this topic received the same amount of attention as the other topics explored in this research, without becoming the structuring or defining one.

3.5   Concluding remarks and a few regrets

To summarise, this project aimed to study the potential for regenerative development embodied at city-regional level. For this, the research looked for the multiplicity of voices and actions which could counterbalance the reductionist economic rationale which defines current city-regional approaches. The research design relied on a single case study and a mixed-method approach in order to achieve the aim. The particular legislative context of the case study selected led to a further empirical question: that of future generations and their potential to influence city-regional development. Thus, this chapter has discussed the methods used to collect and analyse data, as well as the philosophies which determined the research design.

In addition, this chapter touched upon some of the initial aspirations which have probably been too unrealistic to materialise. Reflecting on failures, instead of ignoring them, helps us (and maybe others, too) learn from mistakes. Thus, these final paragraphs will openly deal with the less successful aspects in this project.

As discussed, the initial ambition was to recruit a much larger number of young participants, yet various hurdles led to a significantly smaller sample. In hindsight, this might have been beneficial as workshops benefitted from more preparation and the results collected through in-debt conversations have been extremely rich. On the other hand, enthused by the literatures on

collaborative governance and participatory scenario development, this research relied on a naïve belief that in Cardiff Capital Region, too, it would be possible to gather different stakeholders – including city-regional leaders, around the same table. Some refusals and many more unanswered invitations demonstrated this method's unfeasibility considering the time, human and financial resources available.

This bridge between young people and city-regional leaders was sought through other endeavours, too. Unfortunately, the different outputs produced (report, video, exhibition, etc.), although they might have reached leaders' inboxes, did not seem to enable any 'real world' change. In conclusion, while this research yielded rich academic results, its action-oriented side has been rather limited. However, the recent events through which young people took to the streets to become leaders of action for democracy, climate and biodiversity protection, are strong endorsements that the direction chosen back in 2016 has been the right one.

4 Case study context – a brief history of (city-)regionalism in South East Wales

This chapter aims to trace the story of city-regionalism is South East Wales, identifying the key stages and the complex web of actors that led to the establishment of two city-regions. Setting the context and exploring in depth the background helps to understand the empirical evidence uncovered during fieldwork. In line with other city-regional studies (Harrison, 2007; Waite & Bristow, 2018), this research conceptualises territories as a palimpsest, with thick cultural and political landscapes over which the city-regional layer develops.

The first section shows that regional interdependencies date as far back as the industrial era, even when city-regions were not part of Wales' administrative architecture. The second one demonstrates the fluidity of boundaries and the various administrative reforms, while the third briefly explains the changes brought by devolution and the creation of a Welsh Assembly. The next three parts look at some of the city-regional visions and manifestations, emerging from local authorities, national government, as well as third parties. The seventh section analyses the earliest concrete action in the creation of Cardiff Capital Region, namely the Task and Finish Group created by the minister Edwina Hart. Then, the eighth section shows the main recommendations in the resulting report. Finally, the chapter ends with a scrutiny of the developmental model chosen – formulated around a city deal arrangement. Paradoxically, while the city deal was an impetus for Cardiff Capital Region to coalesce, it was also a prescriptive framework, determining the city-regional narrative and the governance structure.

4.1 Proto-regionalism

Regional interdependences have been noticeable in South East Wales well before the establishment of a de facto city-region. The beginnings are associated with the construction of the Glamorganshire Canal at the end of the 18th century (Allan, 2011; Gooberman, 2018; Morgan, 2014). Together with the subsequent railways, the canal linked the south Wales valleys – where coal and iron industries developed, with the Port of Cardiff.

On the one hand, it is true that 'Cardiff grew on the riches of Merthyr' (MIRR, personal communication, 6 June 2018) and the other valley towns, seeing its economy exploding along with the number of inhabitants – from 1,870 in 1801, to 182,259 in just one century

(Gooberman, 2018, p. 506). On the other hand, 'the metropolis of Wales' (Hooper, 2006, p. 7) facilitated the connection of South East Wales with the rest of the world.

'Cardiff and SE Wales can make a strong claim to have led the global
transition to a carbon economy.' (Eames, De Laurentis, Hunt, Lannon, &
Dixon, 2014, p. 3)

In 1955, Cardiff was proclaimed Wales's capital city and became a commercial, retail and administrative centre (Gooberman, 2018, p. 507). This multifunctionality is one of the main factors that allowed (parts of) Cardiff to recover faster, albeit unevenly, from the industrial decline which stripped the region of its raison d'être. For the entire region, de-industrialisation meant more than economic decline and job losses, determining identity and community ruptures, too, especially with Margaret Thatcher's battle against trade unions (Travis, 2013). Nonetheless, the large amount of UK public spending in Wales was a significant aid in maintaining 'reasonable average standards of living', creating approximately 50,000 new jobs in Defence, Health, Social Services and Education between 1981 and 1995 (Lovering, 1999, as cited in Allan, 2011, p. 128).

Today, Cardiff – 'the economic powerhouse of Wales' – has developed its retail, finance, tourism and creative sectors (Cardiff Public Services Board, 2017). Nevertheless, the city is just as reliant on its hinterland as two centuries ago. The valleys no longer provide it with coal and iron, but rather with 'people in search of a labour market' (Morgan, 2014, p. 309), education, services and events. These irrefutable connections and dependencies should be an important motivation for the current city-region to nurture the hinterland where it draws resources from (Girardet, 2010).

Nonetheless, significant socio-economic discrepancies are still visible not only across South East Wales, but also within Cardiff. Along with the region's distinct geographical features (valleys versus coast), and different political colours, intraregional inequalities have led to various rounds of territorial reforms and plans. These continuous alterations and their associated governance structures which preceded the creation of Cardiff Capital Region are discussed next.

4.2   The many shapes within Wales

Wales has been reorganised multiple times in the past 50 years. More than anything, the next paragraphs, as well as Figure 4-1, demonstrate how territorial boundaries – at all levels – are socially constructed and legitimised by the actors in power. These historical lenses show South

East Wales as a battleground for strategic territorialisation – an argument which will often recur within the analysis of Cardiff Capital Region, as setting up borders has real implications, defining the governance structure, decision-making powers, political agendas, as well as stakeholders.
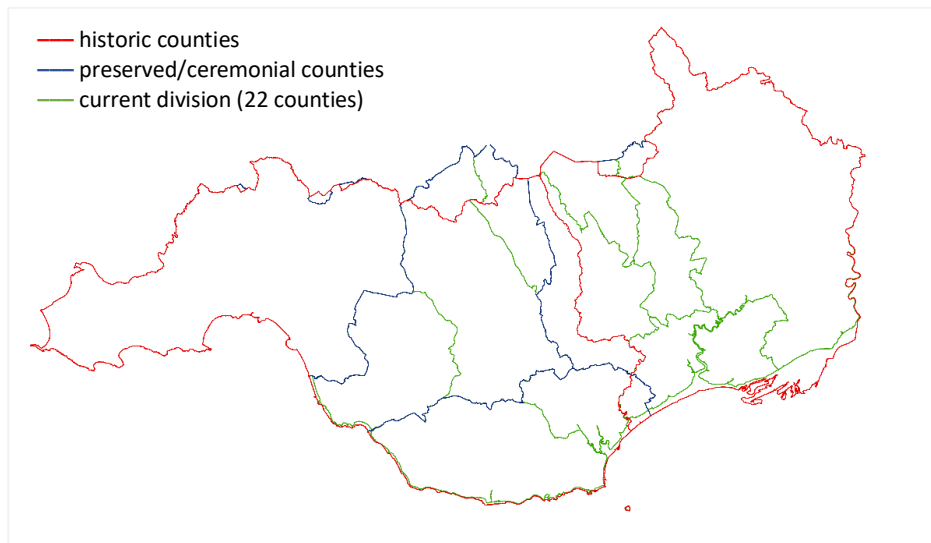
Figure 4-1: South East Wales split in three different ways in less than 50 years

Wales has seen three major administrative reforms at local level. Before 1974, the territory was split into 13 county councils (Figure 4-2). Glamorgan County Council, seated in Cardiff, encompassed three county boroughs (Cardiff, Swansea and Merthyr Tydfil), hosted around 750,000 people, and 'was synonymous with Labour government' (Morgan, 2006a, pp. 31–32).

Figure 4-2: Map of historic counties (until 1974)

The political climate changed significantly following the UK general elections in 1970. The Conservative party which won the elections, reorganised Wales into eight counties, dividing Glamorgan in three: Mid-, West-, and South Glamorgan (Figure 4-3). According to Morgan (2006), the Conservatives' unusual decision to split, rather than consolidate the council, was a case of gerrymandering through which the Tories hoped to take control over South Glamorgan.

Figure 4-3: Map of preserved/ceremonial counties of Wales (1974 – 1996)

South Glamorgan County Council (SGCC) comprised of the districts of Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan. Under this two-tiered administrative system, counties were responsible for large spending functions, strategic services and planning, while districts handled housing, local planning and refuse collection (Morgan, 2006a, p. 33). Besides this hierarchy of attributions and party politics issues (both inter-parties and inside the Labour party), the shared responsibility for economic development and the environment made the relationship of districts and their county authorities even more problematic, particularly in Cardiff and SGCC. SGCC tended to prioritise major development projects, delivering them with little or no consultation of Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan. Perceived as politically influenced and steered by a highways lobby, it clashed with Cardiff's ambitions of becoming an 'environment-led' city (Morgan, 2006a, p. 33).

These difficulties were solved by a new reform, in 1996, when the two-tiered system was abolished based on two arguments: (i) that it was difficult for citizens to understand the responsibilities of each tier, and, (ii) that administrative divisions did not reflect local identities

(Morgan, 2006a, p. 34) – arguments worth keeping in mind since they reflect some of the current critiques of the city-region. Different ideas for spatial reform emerged, and SGCC asked for a 'Greater Cardiff' – that included the Vale of Glamorgan, as this would have made governance and service delivery more coherent. However, in another politically motivated move, Cardiff and the Vale were separated and Wales was divided into 22 local authorities (Morgan, 2006a, p. 34).

Figure 4-4: Map of 22 counties (1996 – today)

This system (Figure 4-4) has been maintained until today, despite various proposals for reorganisation being debated[33] as these unitary authorities – particularly those of South East Wales, are some of the smallest in the UK. According to Allan (2011, pp. 104–105), the impact has been perceived in various ways: politicians claim that democratic accountability improved as local authorities are 'closer to the people', yet the private and third sectors complain about the significant amounts of bureaucratic red tape. At the same time, policy makers and government officials are dissatisfied with the difficulties to strategically coordinate service delivery, while academics criticise increased levels of parochialism.

Nonetheless, the effects of this reform might have been overshadowed by the subsequent change in Wales: the creation of a devolved National Assembly for Wales (NAW) in 1999.

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[33] The latest consultation on this matter closed in June 2018. At the time of research, the Welsh Government was still working on a Local Government (Wales) Bill which would allow voluntary mergers in 2019 (Welsh Government, 2018).

4.3 New powers and new directions

The Welsh devolution referendum was held in 1997 and resulted in a tiny majority favouring the creation of a Welsh Assembly. Initially, the NAW functioned similarly to a corporate body, with the executive and the legislature operating as one. It had very limited legislative power and struggled to position itself between Whitehall and the 22 local authorities (for a detailed explanation see Allan, 2011). Nonetheless, devolution created an additional tier that was now corresponding to a regional scale[34].

Relationships matured gradually, as devolution was understood as 'a process, not an event' (Davies, R., 1998, as cited by Torrance, 2018, p. 4), and in 2006 the NAW acquired responsibility for 20 sectors and governing remits[35] (Cabinet Office, 2018). The Welsh Government (WG) was also formally separated from the NAW, and each institution's roles were clarified. Thus, the WG became responsible for making and implementing decisions, policies and subordinate legislation, while the NAW holds ministers to account, makes laws and represents the interests of the people (National Assembly for Wales, 2018).

In trying to create its own identity, NAW was founded on three guiding principles: equal opportunities, social inclusion and sustainable development. Such a decision was rather ground-breaking 20 years ago, when only two other countries, Estonia and Tasmania, had integrated sustainability principles in their constitutive acts (Williams, 2006). The sustainability agenda[36] progressed over the years and culminated with the *Well-being of Future Generations Act* – a piece of legislation passed in 2016 which requires all Welsh public bodies to put sustainable development at the core of everything they do. The Act has played an essential role in this research and will be explored in detail in Chapter 5.3. At this point, it is important to acknowledge that the sustainability argument underpins some of the divergent narratives for city-regional development which this thesis aims to uncover in the following pages.

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[34] Worth noting that Wales is one of the twelve NUTS 1 (Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics) subdivisions in the UK. This has an impact on EU's classification of regions and the amount of Structural and Cohesion Funds available.

[35] Agriculture, fisheries, forestry and rural development, Ancient monuments and historic buildings, Culture, Economic development, Education and training, Environment, Fire and rescue services and promotion of fire safety, Food, Health and health services, Highways and transport, Housing, Local government, Public administration, Social welfare, Sport and recreation, Tourism, Town and country planning, Water and flood defence, Welsh language.

[36] The Welsh Assembly Government's Sustainable Development Scheme, *One Wales; One Planet*, was published in 2009. It set an intention for Wales to only use a fair share of the earth's resources and make sustainable development the organising principle of the Welsh public sector.

Furthermore, NAW was deemed to have adopted a more collaborative approach to governance than Westminster (Morgan, 2006a, pp. 44–45). The Welsh Local Government Association was created to represent the interests of local authorities, who act as partners rather than delivery agents for NAW. Thus, the overall inter-scalar power balance seems relatively stable, as local governments play an important role in policy development. Although the WG sets national priorities and establishes budgets, local governments have autonomy to spend the funding according to local needs (WLGA, n.d.). However, the relations between Cardiff Council and the Welsh Government have consistently been characterised by mutual suspicion and antagonism (Parkinson & Karecha, 2006). Supplementing the historical antipathy between the valleys and the coast, this aspect adds to the complexities of what is currently Cardiff Capital Region.

According to Allan (2011), the two strong, yet competing discourses that have shaped Wales are sustainability and competitiveness. Regarding the latter, several scholars (Allan, 2011; Bristow, 2010; Bristow & Lovering, 2006; Morgan, 2006a) have analysed Cardiff's trajectory from a managerial to an entrepreneurial city (see Harvey, 1989). These studies have shown that a focus on providing public services and administering components of welfare have been gradually replaced by efforts to enhance the city's ranking and competitiveness at international level, aiming to attract private investment and commodify social and economic life (Allan, 2011, p. 112). At the same time, the Welsh Government has also been criticised for shifting towards a boosterish agenda (Harrison & Heley, 2015) which became particularly obvious with the *City-regions Task and Finish Group* set up in 2011 (explained in more detail in 4.7.).

Understanding this longstanding tension between different discourses and approaches helps tracing the 'nature' of Cardiff Capital Region, including its particularly intricate governance structure. Before studying the city-region in detail, it is worth exploring briefly the plans and proposals that preceded it, in order to apprehend the multifaceted factors and actors that played a role in the South East Wales city-regional development.

4.4 Early 'bottom-up' regional visions and constellations

Just like devolution, city-regionalism should be understood as a non-linear process which engendered and encompassed lengthy disputes and power struggles. This part focuses on some of the most significant early initiatives identified through desk research in secondary sources.

The very first suggestion for economic regional planning in South Wales was probably made by H. A. Marquand and Gwynne Meara who, in 1936, published 'South Wales needs a plan'. They

referred to a *natural industrial region* which was larger than the current city-region, including Swansea and the Eastern part of Carmarthenshire. Interestingly, after setting up the problem and the conditions needed for a plan, the authors devised two different 5-year plans, considering specificities of either a leftist or a rightist leading political party.

More recently, Phil Cooke's report, *Cardiff: making a European city of the future*, commissioned by South Glamorgan County Council in 1992, appears to make one of the first modern proposals for a city-region (as cited in Allan, 2011). The report underlined Cardiff's economic role in the region and the positive effect it could achieve in 'pulling its neighbours along'. At the same time, Cooke emphasised that Cardiff alone could not compete with cities like Amsterdam and Barcelona due to its small size, and it needed to form a metropolitan area. Although the report did not gain political traction and the concept was abandoned for almost a decade, Cooke's ideas underpin the origins of the city-regional paradigm and such arguments are still used today.

In the beginning of the 2000s, several other 'bottom-up' initiatives started appearing, spearheaded by local authorities in South East Wales that sought to legitimise a certain narrative (as identified by Allan, 2011):

- *Cardiff Council's Economic Development Strategy 2001-2006* (2001) was strongly influenced by Cooke's report, supporting a monocentric city-region built on integrated transport infrastructure and knowledge-based economic clusters. Cardiff occupied a dominant role and it was suggested that without the capital city, the valleys would not be able to achieve the much needed economic and GDP growth. However, the strategy acknowledged the interdependence with the hinterland as a supply for workforce.

- the *City of the Valleys* (2001) was an independent report produced by Caerphilly's planner, Roger Tanner, who asked for a polycentric development model in which investment would be distributed across the city-region. Although never carried forward, the report was considered visionary (Morgan, 2006b, p. 309) as it raised serious concerns regarding the impact on sustainability and social inequality of the agglomeration model previously mentioned.

- the *Five Counties Regeneration Framework* (2002) suggested the creation of a sub-region which included Newport, Caerphilly, Monmouthshire, Torfaen and Blaenau Gwent. While this piece of work acknowledged Cardiff's economic performance, it sought to undermine the capital's position, based on its population size. Newport Council aspired to dominate the agenda and become the nucleus of the re-organisation, but did not succeed in convincing 'its hinterland' about the mutual gains. Besides, the

framework failed to acknowledge the interconnection between the five counties and Cardiff – a possible sign of the political tensions which dominated South East Wales at that time. Although funded by the Welsh Government on behalf of the five councils, the framework had no further impact.

In spite of all these efforts, insufficient support from the national level, as well as substantial political immaturity among local councillors repressed the materialisation of any variation of a city-region in South East Wales. Irrespective of the historical functional interdependences, the valleys' politicians feared that city politicians would take hold of the city-regional agenda and transform the valleys into 'a mere commuter belt for the capital' (Morgan, 2014, p. 310). This demonstrates that city-regions cannot be created in institutional vacuums (Allan, 2011, p. 155) and that re-scaling is, indeed, a 'profoundly political exercise' which creates and is created through numerous power struggles (Morgan, 2006b, p. 293).

4.5   Belated 'top-down' initiatives

NAW's first considerable attempt towards city-regionalism came through the *Wales Spatial Plan – People, Places, Futures* (WSP), which was first published in 2004 and updated in 2008. The WSP used 'an emerging evidence base' and was created following extensive consultations across Wales (Harris, 2019, p. 20).

Particularly remarkable for the current research is the mentioning of strategies which allegedly informed the WSP. At local level, these included *Children & Young People's Plans* (repealed with the introduction of the *Social Services and Well-being Act* and the *Well-being of Future Generations Act*), although it remains unclear how these were used. Besides, one of the challenges identified was to 'actively engage more with organisations that represent the interests of groups that are marginalised or harder to reach e.g. children and young people, rural communities' (Welsh Assembly Government, 2008, p. 15).

Besides, the WSP is salient because it tried to incorporate and balance between different discourses and actors previously in conflict. First, the WSP established six *areas* with fuzzy boundaries (Figure 4-5) – an indication that administrative borders should not deter local partners from cooperating on issues of mutual interest or be involved in more than one collaboration (Welsh Assembly Government, 2008, p. 20). Second, it set a vision which integrated the competitiveness argument, while requiring increased attention and support for

deprived areas, reduction of environmental impacts and maintenance of the Welsh identity. Unfortunately, while the vision was clear, the delivery mechanisms were not.
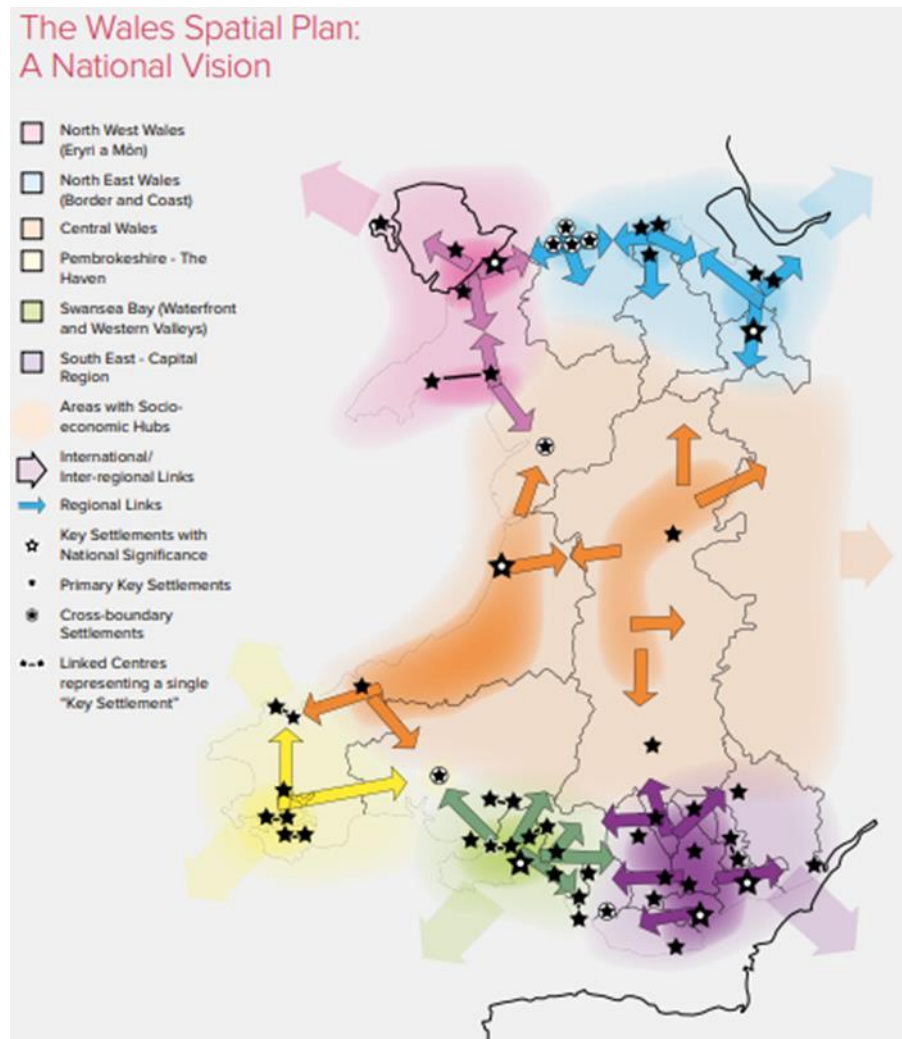
Figure 4-5: Wales Spatial Plan areas

(Source: Welsh Assembly Government, 2008)

As Figure 4-5 shows, the 10 local authorities in South East Wales formed an area called *South East – Capital Region*. Thus, the name was a subtle endorsement for the capital's importance without necessarily reinforcing the polarisation towards Cardiff. While clearly acknowledging the existing interconnections in the region, the WSP distinguished between three *sub-areas*: The City Coastal Zone (mainly around Cardiff, Newport and a few other rural, coastal locations), the Heads of the Valleys Plus (the upper valleys), and the Connections Corridor (the mid-valleys and rural areas). This was a laudable effort to encourage context-sensitive approaches, instead of a one-size fits all solution for the entire area.

Last but not least, it is worth emphasising the measures of success suggested, as they are rather different from the indicators currently used in the CCR (discussed in 5.3.6). The following

elements were to be achieved by the Capital Region (Welsh Assembly Government, 2008, pp. 98–99):

- *A working city-region that can adapt creatively to economic change and innovate to improve;*
- *A learning city-region that grows talent, provides lifelong opportunities and attracts talent from elsewhere;*
- *A connected city-region that aids accessibility for goods and people and encourages sustainable transport choices;*
- *A living city-region that provides a high quality natural and built environment, complemented by high quality green space, promoting healthy, strong communities and a strong civic culture. Achieving a networked environment region will be a key part of this;*
- *A lively city-region that provides a "buzz" in culture, tourism, shopping and leisure;*
- *A low-carbon city-region that reduces its resource use, energy and travel footprint and greenhouse gas emissions;*
- *A well-governed city-region with community involvement and strategic national engagement.*

Despite initially being a success story, the WSP was 'not part of the statutory development plan framework', meaning that 'local development plans would not have to *conform* to it' (Welsh Assembly Government, 2008, p. 1). Further inquiries and reviews criticised the unclear role the WSP would play in land use policy and local level decision-making (Harris, 2019, p. 20). As a result, the WG is presently addressing these criticisms and morphing the WSP into a *National Development Framework* (expected to be approved and published in 2020).

Notwithstanding the criticism, Allan (2011) revealed that the WSP allowed the WG to create a dominant version of city-regionalism which acquired significant political support. *One Wales: One Planet*, the government's vision for sustainable development published in 2009, also reflected the importance of city-region development in Wales. Being more balanced and prioritising equality over agglomeration, the city-regional vision manifested especially in terms of transport infrastructure. As such, the Head of the Valleys A465 and the passenger rail lines received funding, while the M4 relief road remained unbuilt and a hotly debated topic until recently.

4.6 Some city-regional manifestations

Besides the government's top-down and the local authority's 'bottom-up' initiatives, the city-regional potential sparked the interest of third parties[37], too. Several thematic groups developed organically and operated at regional scale: The South East Wales Economic Forum, the South East Wales Waste Group, the South East Wales Transport Alliance, the South East Wales Regional Housing Forum, and the South East Wales Strategic Planning Group. The groups were important in highlighting different strands which required coordination at city-regional level.

In addition, various studies (as summarised in Welsh Government, 2012, p. 35) suggested ways in which a city-region could function in South East Wales in terms of strategic planning (Roger Tym & Partners, 2011 – commissioned in fact by Cardiff Council), governance and economic development (Chapman, 2012), mutually beneficial interrelations between Cardiff and the Valleys (Thomas, 2012), as well as transport planning (Barry, 2011). The latter has been the most influential and 'the *metro* moved from being a crazy idea' (CUMB, personal communication, 7 June 2018) to being the flagship project in the current city-region. Since the metro's first iteration, Mark Barry has earned himself a central position in city-regional debates that surpass the topic of transport. This will be explored in detail in 5.2.3.1.

4.7 Welsh city-regionalism: festina lente?

For the WG to take concrete action, it took another three years from the publication of the amended WSP in 2008. In Morgan's (2014, p. 309) words, 'the political gridlock around the city-region (…) persisted for eight years, from the vision of a "single networked city-region" in the WSP 2004, to the report released in 2012' (see below).

In November 2011, the *Business, Enterprise, Technology and Science Minister*, Edwina Hart, established a Task and Finish Group (T&FG) to 'consider the potential role of city-regions in the future economic development of Wales' (Welsh Government, 2012, p. 4). The T&FG was chaired by Elizabeth Haywood, director of the South East Wales Economic Forum, and involved seven other persons representing a national think tank (Centre for Cities), a private firm, three universities, Cardiff Council, and the WG.

The T&FG published a report in July 2012, stating that the recommendations were formulated based on 'genuine engagement and involvement across Wales' with businesses, academics, local

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[37] These initiatives could also be called *bottom-up*, but they are discussed separately to differentiate between them and the (local) government-led ones.

governments, citizens and other interested parties (Welsh Government, 2012, p. 13). In addition, the group referenced responses to the call for evidence, as well as the literature aforementioned (section 4.6) which favoured a city-region in South East Wales. It is important to highlight the breadth of the collaborations established and the categories considered *stakeholders*, because as the analysis will reveal, this stands in stark contrast with the current development of the city-region.

Although WG led the report, the English sub-national policy context (detailed in 2.1.3) played a significant role – an issue of conflicting multi-level governance. As mentioned in the literature review, the Coalition Government announced as early as 2011 its intention to offer local councils 'greater local autonomy over financial and planning matters' through 'tailored city deals' (M. Ward, 2018, p. 4). Waite & Bristow (2018) consider the Haywood report and the first English city-deal wave to be two distinct policy threads that lead to Cardiff Capital Region City Deal (CCRCD). Unlike them, this research sees the two as intrinsically linked as some of the research participants admitted that, in fact, creating city-regions was not something favourable for the WG. Ceding this much power to a lower regional level could even lead to questioning the government's role (aspect also mentioned by the aforementioned authors in their article). Despite this threat, the WG sought to secure funding for major infrastructure works and believed that a city-deal, as the current zeitgeist, would be the easiest way.

Irrespective of its genesis, the report recommended the establishment of (only) two city-regions in Wales, as there was insufficient evidence that other parts of Wales would benefit from such an approach. The factors weighed were 'critical mass, traffic flows, community identification, existing structures of governance, and the fact that (Welsh) cities contribute less to the economy than cities anywhere else in the UK' (Welsh Government, 2012, p. 4). This last comparison was based on a report from Centre for Cities (2012) which calculated the UK cities' contribution (in terms of GVA) to the regional or national economy. Welsh cities accounted for only 33%, compared for instance, with North West England where the contribution was 72%.

Globally, cities were seen as 'the engines of economic growth, and catalysts for creativity and innovation' (Welsh Government, 2012, p. 5) – a description which clearly resonated with the academic discourse of the new regionalism literature (see A. Scott, 2001). Thus, it was deemed crucial to adopt an approach that would allow Welsh cities to grow and attract private investment and state funding (Welsh Government, 2012, p. 5). Based on recent developments, single authorities in Wales stood little chance in securing infrastructure investment from

Whitehall and a city-regional approach could have speeded up the process (Welsh Government, 2012, p. 40).

Along with these city-centric, agglomerative arguments, the report also highlighted some key strategic issues to be considered, among which stood topics such as spatial planning, community considerations, sustainability and climate change, or branding awareness and tourism (Welsh Government, 2012). According to Morgan (2014, p. 311), the task force's main recommendations were formulated around transport and spatial planning, putting equal emphasis on issues of sustainability, social justice, and economic development. As the next chapter will show, sustainability and social justice are barely featuring in CCRCD, and any other achievement is presented as secondary or instrumental for growth.

In brief, the recommendations for South East Wales and the WG were (Welsh Government, 2012, pp. 8–11):

- to adopt a collaborative attitude and refrain from an antagonistic positioning with the other Welsh city-region;
- to commission further independent work and scenario planning to understand regional economic realities, skills gap, spatial and housing planning needs at regional level;
- to identify suitable and flexible governance arrangements (based on best practices around the world), funding options and tools (including EU), and large scale projects with potential to deliver sustainable economic development;
- to make the *Valleys Metro* the key theme of the city-region and to invest in public transport, while also creating a Passenger Transport Executive/Authority;
- to adopt the name of *Cardiff City-region* instead of *South East Wales City-region*;
- to monitor the impact of the city-region on the surrounding areas.

Although the T&FG stated that city-regions were not the only possible tool for economic development, the group made little explicit reference to potential negative consequences or failed city-regional projects observed around the world. This happened despite a growing body of literature which investigated the effect of city-regional policies (summarised more recently by Beel, Jones, & Jones, 2016; but also in Jonas & Ward, 2007), reinforcing Lovering's critique that city-regional projects might just be 'a set of stories about how "parts" of a regional economy might work, placed next to a set of policy ideals which "might" just be useful in "some cases"' (as cited in Beel et al., 2016, p. 513).

Besides, the report was strongly criticised by Harrison & Heley (2015, p. 1130) who stressed that WG had adopted a city-centric focus which stood in contrast with the more balanced WSP:

'What is for sure, however, is that it is no longer going to be acceptable to conceptualise the rural simply as an appendage hanging on to the coattails of the great modern metropolis if city-regionalism is to succeed as a policy development tool. After all, rural areas appear increasingly to be the 'glass jaw' of city-region policy.'

4.8 A city-region to power the Welsh economy

Despite the academics' criticism and following the T&FG recommendation, in November 2013, Edwina Hart established Cardiff Capital Region and created the South East Wales City-region Board (renamed shortly after into The Cardiff Capital Region Board, CCRB hereafter). CCRB had a mix of 15 members which included directors and senior partners from the private sector, university leaders, and heads of local authorities. Its task was to create a vision for the region and to this end, the board held monthly meetings within each of the 10 constituent local authorities (Figure 4-6) and hosted three workshops and engagement sessions.

Figure 4-6: The ten local authorities of Cardiff Capital Region

Powering the Welsh Economy was published in February 2015, marking the end of the advisory phase of Cardiff Capital Region and signalling the urgency to begin the implementation and delivery phase. The vision was to create 'A globally-connected, great place to live and work — powering the Welsh economy' (Cardiff Capital Region, 2015, p. 6). Four key themes were defined: connectivity through integrated infrastructure, skills, innovation and growth, and identity. Interestingly, while following most of the T&FG's recommendations, this report made no reference to issues of climate change or an intention to nurture low-carbon economic development – although the T&FG had previously called these 'strategic issues' (Welsh Government, 2012).

One of the strongest messages emerging from *Powering the Welsh Economy* was:

> *'While economic growth is spatially uneven, economic development can be*
> *socially inclusive if the Region is well connected (…) an integrated and*
> *strategic transport system will profoundly transform the economic potential*
> *of the Region, advance social inclusion and protect and enhance our*
> *environment. The pivotal role of integrated transport to these three pillars*
> *of sustainable development (economic, social and environmental), provide*
> *the rationale for our belief that the Region's governance journey should*
> *begin with transport.' (Cardiff Capital Region, 2015, p. 5).*

This statement is contentious for the following reasons. It acknowledges that growth policies bear the risk of widening regional disparities. Despite this awareness and instead of devising actions to directly reduce social inequality, the CCRB claims that a well-developed public transport system will bring not only social inclusion, but also economic and environmental benefits. It is worth juxtaposing here Mark Lang's report (2016) that challenged this assumption. Lang found that international evidence was lacking and transport development is not a 'silver bullet' which automatically leads to positive economic and social outcomes. The lesson was that city-regional leaders should address the underlying economic problems and include public transport in a much broader set of actions.

Indeed, the literature review conducted for this research has also showed that the evidence is ambivalent. In fact Wheeler's (2015, p. 104) work goes as far as to suggests that transportation infrastructure might even work against sustainability, if it leads to suburban sprawl or socioeconomic spatial segregation. Besides, although connectivity is mostly seen as neutral or positive (Cochrane, 2019, p. 15), the negative effects it can have on some places – depopulation, or the opposite, overconcentration – are rarely discussed. Nevertheless, in Wales, the integrated

transport system can be, at the minimum, a catalyst for the 'region's governance journey' (Cardiff Capital Region, 2015, p. 5).

Before moving on to the following key event in the development of the city-region, it is important to highlight the involvement of universities, and in particular Cardiff University. One of the academics interviewed stated that Cardiff University played a significant role in 'catalysing the birth of the city-region' as Edwina Hart had asked them to host one of the initial meetings for the ten local authorities. Knowing the barriers that had deterred council leaders (all men at that time, as the interviewee emphasised) from collaborating, they invited the chief planner of Stuttgart city-region to talk about their experience.

> *'He [Stuttgart region's chief planner] said: "it took us a long time to organize ourselves because, you know, there's a hundred and seventy-nine mayors." And you could see that these guys [Welsh councillors], you know... I always use that story only because these guys realized how far they'd fallen behind the rest of... that the outside world wasn't waiting for them to get their house in order. So that was quite an epiphany I think...' (CUKM, personal communication, 30 May 2018)*

Following the example of other city-regions and the T&FG's recommendations, the WG and the ten local authorities had now agreed that Cardiff Capital Region was vital for economic development. However, securing funding from Whitehall was seen as first step to transform the vision into reality. As the T&FG was finishing its report, early conversations around a city deal emerged and a successful bid was submitted in September 2015. At that point, the CCRB ceased existing to allow the governance structure required by the city deal. The following part summarises the essentials of the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal, leaving the next chapter to analyse it in detail.

4.9   The mutation from a city-region to a city deal

The 2011 Localism Act championed by the Cameron government, introduced two 'opportunities for local councils (…) to promote local economic growth': localism and city-regionalism (M. Ward, 2018, p. 5). The latter centred on city deals – bespoke agreements signed between the government and local authorities through which money is allocated to fund specific themes. The deal pinpoints, thus, the governance framework, the budget and the development agenda. The

literature review chapter has already discussed at length the city deal phenomenon (section 2.1.3), supporting a closer focus on CCR's case.

Nick Clegg, then Deputy Prime Minister, launched the approach in 2011, chanting the popular mantra of 'cities as engines of growth' which require investment to speed up the country's overall economic recovery (HM Government, 2011). While being place-specific, all city deals aim 'to give cities the powers and tools to drive local economic growth', to 'unlock projects or initiatives that will boost their economies' and to 'strengthen the governance of each city' (HM Government, 2012 as cited in P. Jones et al., 2017). At national level, they were seen as a solution to counterbalance the development of South East England, through a *Northern Powerhouse* and a *Midlands Engine*.

Cardiff Capital Region was the first of two Welsh city-regions to negotiate a deal, following the model of 28 other English cities and their wider areas, and of Glasgow (M. Ward, 2018, p. 4). In South East Wales, the governance structure includes not only the ten local authorities and Whitehall, but also the WG. This tripartite collaboration signed the *Cardiff Capital Region City Deal* in March 2016. Broadly, the deal followed the recommendations made by the T&FG, having transport development at its core.

Although the city-regional paradigm had been around in South East Wales for a long time, some of the city-regional leaders interviewed considered that it was the CD which enabled the city-region to materialise, practically kick-starting the city-regional process:

> *'yeah, well, the way I'd look at it: the city deal has enabled for the first time*
> *the city-region to have some resources and decision-making processes*
> *behind those resources. I think prior to the city deal, we had various boards*
> *which had no money to use, no real powers over doing anything, so it*
> *started off that process.'* (LAR9b, personal communication, 03 April 2018)

The 10 local authorities comprising Cardiff Capital Region are home to 1.5 million people, with Cardiff and Newport being the biggest cities. The geographic, economic and social makeup is very diverse, raising both opportunities and challenges for 'those charged with finding ways to grow and spread economic opportunities in a truly transformative way' (City Region Exchange, 2017). With raising levels of 'in-work poverty', low educational attainment, childhood poverty, poor health behaviours and shortened life expectancy (Blake, 2019, p. 18), as well as a soaring homelessness crisis, the city-region requires complex, multi-level interventions. However, at the moment, the city-region is led by a city deal which, the next chapter will show, has several limitations.

Certainly, the city deal arrangement marks a new episode in the history of city-regionalism in South East Wales. The following part explores how CCR advanced since 2016 and how the CD shaped its development, turning the two almost synonymous. Using the tripartite conceptual framework, each of the following sections will apply a different perspective to analyse the city-region, both from the point of view of process and substance of policy (CUKM, personal communication, 30 May 2018).

4.10 Conclusions

Supported by the conceptual framework, this chapter studied the interrelations and patterns (Mang & Reed, 2012), as well as the actors and narratives which influenced city-regionalism in South East Wales. As seen, regional interdependencies go back as early as the industrial revolution of the 19th century, when connections between the valleys and the coast were established. Although the nature of the daily interactions has changed significantly, the region's functionality continues to surpass local administrative boundaries.

Understanding this reality, various parties have tried to create a vision and a narrative for development. The numerous plans and reports coming from individual, third parties and local authorities lacked the government's support to materialise. Considering the devolved powers acquired by the Welsh Government, the city-region can be seen as a rather odd level. Nonetheless, the WG responded to the regional call in 2004, yet political struggles and long-time hostilities deterred the development of any collaborations. The different proposals have also shown transitions and tensions between two dominant narratives, sustainability and competitiveness, both within local authorities and WG.

The city deal represents a new stage in Cardiff Capital Region, placing a powerful stakeholder in its centre: the UK Government. Having been less prominent in the Welsh city-regional debates in the past, Whitehall has reshaped this constellation, leaning away from a sustainability narrative. This proves that the nation-state's influence is not diminishing, but rather that it is finding new ways of exercising power (Jonas & Ward, 2007a). As the following chapters will show, this has significantly influenced the governance structure and the flexibility of decision-making. It is thus, important to highlight the effects that the city deal has on the city-region and the next parts will debate this at length. In a nutshell, while the city deal has sped up the South East Wales city-regional process, it has also resulted in a specific developmental model over which local actors have limited authority, and which excludes alternative visions.

5 Cardiff Capital Region

This chapter aims to provide a robust analysis of Cardiff Capital Region, from its conception until June 2018 when the fieldwork stage ended. Operationalising the conceptual framework, each section highlights a different angle while also underlining potential gaps between the theoretical normative aspects of progressive regionalism, collaborative governance and regenerative development, and the empirical observations.

The first section (5.1) explores the general characteristics of the city-region and how it can be situated in the city-regional literature. Features of progressive regionalism act as guidelines in analysing the policy and programmes devised so far, bridging with the following sections. The fieldwork exposed the discrepancy between the limited city-regional agenda and the leaders' wider aspirations for the area. The main question guiding this part is: what are the narratives driving the city-region and to what extent are both socio-economic and socio-ecological issues prioritised?

Part two (5.2) explores the complex governance structure, showing how the city deal has prescribed a certain constellation of actors. Then, using the exploratory work done through participatory and non-participatory observation and interviews, this project brings to light a number of non-governmental actors who tried to engage in the city-regional matters. One of the key learnings here is that these 'outsiders' tried to fill certain limitations of CCRCD (e.g. community engagement, place-based development, accountability and transparency, integrated thinking). This second part answers the following question: how is the city-regional governance structure designed and to what extent are collaborations enabling a more progressive agenda?

These different initiatives can also be associated with the Welsh well-being legislation which forms the backbone of the third part (5.3). Through its goals and principles, the WFGA is akin to the regenerative development literature, nurturing a legislative context which could broaden CCRCD's limited economic rationale, while also enlarging the group of active stakeholders. The central questions here are: what are the opportunities and the impediments for city-regional regenerative action and how do current collaborations influence it? Although connected to it, the second half of this line of inquiry (to what extent can future generations affect city-regional development?) is dealt with separately in Chapter 6, due to the distinct methodology and separate group of research participants.

The fourth and last part (5.4) answers the conceptual research question, reflecting on the lessons learned by employing this tripartite framework, its benefits and limitations.

5.1   Part 1: A progressive city-region?

Supported by the progressive regionalism literature, the following part aims to analyse Cardiff Capital Region's developmental programme which was formalised through the city deal arrangement. For this reason, the empirical analysis focuses on the narratives driving the city-region, putting equal emphasis on both socio-economic and socio-ecological issues (the first question asked in this project).

According to the studies discussed in the theoretical part (2.1), a progressive city-regional programme would focus on reducing the 'root causes of poverty, social injustice and environmental degradation', instead of waiting for this to come as a result of economic growth. The economy and labour market would also be studied in their entirety, building upon place-based characteristics (Horlings, Roep, Mathijs, & Marsden, 2020) while considering the global 'complex multi-scalar flows of material, energy, and knowledge resources' (Pezzoli et al., 2009, p. 337). To formulate policies and strategies, the governance structure would rely on collaboration and seek to expand possibilities for stakeholders to participate or be fairly represented.

Yet, in the UK, city-regional development is closely intertwined with city deal arrangements that prioritise economic growth, giving 'sustainable development per se only limited attention' (P. Jones et al., 2017, p. 5). So how does Cardiff Capital Region City Deal respond to the abovementioned normative principles? As the following sections will show, the city deal has inflicted a particular trajectory for the Welsh city-region, yet signs of a more balanced approach have also started to appear.

This chapter explores the information gathered through document analysis, participatory observation, semi-structured interviews and secondments. While the first section examines the specificities of the city deal, highlighting its repercussions on the city-region, the second part scrutinises the narrow city-regional arrangement. Despite the limitations of the narrative initially constructed, a closer look at the leaders' wider aspirations shows that the city-region could be more than a *growth machine* (Beel et al., 2016). This evidence is presented in the third part. The forth section demonstrates that city-regional insiders have differing opinions regarding the city deal's capacity to be *transformational* (CCRCD, 2017, p. 49), and suggests that a more diverse

range of collaborations might stem in the future under the city-regional umbrella. Finally, the last part reflects on the lessons learned by using progressive regionalism as a lens.

5.1.1   Cardiff Capital Region City Deal

As the previous chapter showed, in South East Wales, the regional question was raised a long time before CCR was created. Even after its consolidation in 2013, CCR continued to lack concrete manifestations until the city deal (CD) was signed in 2016. The CD marked the beginning of a new episode and, according to some of the interviewees, turned the city-region into reality:

> *'I think there's been lots and lots of talk about the city-region. I've got to say, I think the city deal has finally given the city-region something to do. Whereas before that all it was, in my personal view, a collection of different people - the great and the goods, as we say – meeting to talk about the city-region without actually delivering anything. City deal gets something very tangible and very focused for a group of people to deliver.'* (LAR5, personal communication, 26 February 2018)

The deal *secured* a budget of £1.2bn, making it at that time the largest CD in the UK. Over a 20-year period, the contributions would be: £500m from the UK and Welsh Governments each, minimum £120m from the ten local authorities, and over £100m from the European Regional Development Fund. The LAs' contribution was proportional to their population size (see Figure 5-1) – an issue which appeared contentious for some of the leaders interviewed (further discussed in 5.2.2.2).

> *'This City Deal will provide local partners with the powers and the resources to unlock significant economic growth across the Cardiff Capital Region. (…) The City Deal also provides an opportunity to continue tackling the area's barriers to economic growth by: improving transport connectivity; increasing skill levels still further; supporting people into work; and giving businesses the support they need to innovate and grow.'* (HM Treasury, 2016a)

Economic growth is, unequivocally, CCRCD's raison d'être, as the extract above shows. This vision, inscribed in the CCRCD document, meant to empower its signatories to 'work together to improve the lives of people in all communities' and to 'maximise opportunity for all and

ensure to secure sustainable economic growth for future generations' (HM Treasury, 2016a, p. 4).

Like most other British city deals, the CCRCD aimed to achieve its vision by focusing on developing hard infrastructure – following the T&FG's recommendation to make the transport system *the key* theme (Welsh Government, 2012, p. 9). Apart from the upskilling and reducing unemployment theme, the rest of the investment was dedicated to transport infrastructure, innovation and digital infrastructure, supporting enterprise and business growth, as well as housing and regeneration – with a commitment to strategic planning (HM Treasury, 2016a), albeit only on paper thus far.

In terms of budget allocation, £734m were assigned to the South East Metro, with the balance of £495m being made available as the *Wider Investment Fund* (WIF). To date (April 2019), out of the WIF only one other project has received funding – the Compound Semiconductor Cluster (CSC), £38.5m. Two other transport related projects have been agreed 'in principle' – Metro Central (£40m to contribute to the development of the transport hub in the centre of Cardiff) and Metro Plus RTA[38] (£50m for local schemes to encourage modal shift).

Actor		Financial contribution			Allocated for	Outputs
UK Government		**£500m**			**Metro £125m** **WIF £375m**	- 25000 jobs - £4bn private sector investment - 5% GVA uplift
Welsh Government		**£500m**			**Metro**	
Local authorities	Cardiff	**£120m**	23.7%	£28.44m	**Wider Inv. Fund** - CSC £38.5m - Metro Central £40m - Metro Plus £50m - Skills for the Future - Digital Strategy - Regional Housing Investment Fund	
	Caerphilly		12%	£14.40m		
	RCT		15.8%	£18.96m		
	Newport		9.8%	£11.76m		
	Bridgend		9.4%	£11.28m		
	Vale of Glamorgan		8.5%	£10.20m		
	Monmouthshire		6.1%	£7.32m		
	Torfaen		6.1%	£7.32m		
	Blaenau Gwent		4.6%	£5.52m		
	Merthyr Tydfil		3.9%	£4.68m		
ERDF		**over £100m**			**(?) Metro**	

Total city deal budget: £1.2bn
(£5.2bn incl. private sector)

Figure 5-1: Cardiff Capital Region City Deal budget contributions and outputs

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[38] Further information regarding the Metro Plus project was released in March 2019. Although it is outside of this research's time scope, it is worth mentioning that allegedly, each local authority was going to receive £3m to implement schemes in their areas that would accompany the Metro and promote sustainable transport. These schemes have been marked on the map of investments (Figure 5-2).

Other 'in principle' commitments and projects 'in the process of developing their business cases' were: Skills for the Future, Digital Strategy and Regional Housing Investment Fund (Cardiff Capital Region, 2018, p. 35). Besides, the CCRCD website[39] mentioned that WIF was open for applications for projects that 'will improve regional economy', have social and economic impact, and 'leverage at least four times the initial investment'.

As the previous chapter discussed, some researchers were sceptical about the potential for regional rebalancing through infrastructure projects, sometimes even when coupled with upskilling programmes (Adamson & Lang, 2014; Lang & Marsden, 2017; MacKinnon, 2017). Besides, while better public transport can reduce traffic congestion and emissions, it was also found to contribute to urban sprawl (Wheeler, 2015). Furthermore, middle-skill industries (e.g. manufacturing, construction and healthcare), sectors of the foundational economy[40] or aspects of circular economy were not targeted, possibly further reducing the options for lower-skilled persons to participate in the labour market. Also, there was little acknowledgement of the compromises or effects of current investment decisions, despite studies showing that the standard industrial classification used in CCR might lead policy-makers to poorly identify or ignore other areas of future interest (Crawley & Munday, 2017). Adding to that, the city-region's leaders have been equivocal about decoupling economic growth from resource depletion – potentially because this might be impossible, as some research suggests (J. D. Ward et al., 2016), or simply because their environmental awareness remains limited for the moment.

Another essential aspect of the CD is that the money is to be released every five years, after an independent gateway review. The UK and WG need to be satisfied with the investments having 'met key objectives and contributed to national growth' (HM Treasury, 2016a, p. 6). This *national growth* and the city-region's success are measured by the following metrics: 5% GVA uplift, 25.000 jobs created and £4bn inward private investment leverage.

There is a disconnect between the vision and the measurement methods. While the vision emphasises *sustainable economic growth*, inclusivity and equity – suggesting better quality of life and a fair distribution of gains, the indicators measure the quantity of economic growth. As the following chapters show (particularly in 5.3), these indicators do not account for which sectors of the economy grow, and they do not track the distribution of benefits either. These

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[39] The webpage https://www.cardiffcapitalregion.wales/apply/ was accessed in April 2019. Due to its unreliability (both technical errors and a potential political disinterest to maintain it functional), it is hard to foresee if this information is still valid after having submitted the thesis
[40] Although the *foundational economy* concept feature in CCRCD's Business Plan – as a potential suitable approach for the Valleys and some rural areas – no concrete action emerged so far.

measures are also entirely distinct from the sustainable indicators set by the WG back in 2002 (Editorial Team, 2002) and very restricted compared to the current national indicators.

Furthermore, knowing that the indicators are determined and overseen by the central government, it is possible to understand how this devolution and decentralisation attempt, while allowing 'more flexible and localized institutional arrangements' (Jonas & Ward, 2002, p. 378), remains tightly under Whitehall's control. The 'state's ability to direct and steer these new governance mechanism towards what is perceived to in the national interest' has been observed and criticised in other British city-regions, too (Harrison, 2007; P. Jones et al., 2017; MacKinnon, 2017). The CD model, initiated and promoted by the UK Government, demonstrates that the state's role has not changed from being 'the driving force (…) to [being] an enabler, facilitator and catalyst of the governance process, setting up the adequate legislative framework and assisting in institutional and capacity building' (Rodríguez-Pose, 2008, p. 1031). As further demonstrated in Chapter 5.2, the situation is more nuanced in reality, especially in CCR. A more accurate interpretation might be to see the city-region as a national geopolitical project, centrally orchestrated politically (Hodson, McMeekin, Froud, & Moran, 2019, p. 202).

Indeed, although city deals are seen as another form of devolution, the two governments have not necessarily given up power since they are the main funders, Whitehall is the assessor and WG the handler of more than half of the funding. Their roles and influence demonstrate continued political centralisation, limiting the financial capacity and political authority that local institutions would need in order to address local needs (MacKinnon, 2017, p. 153).

In fact, the city-regional leaders interviewed showed some concerns regarding the success indicators. The obligation to leverage private investment determined one representative to state that, in their opinion, people should think of the city deal as a £5.2bn city deal, not £1.2bn. This would promote a different mentality, nurturing an investment mind-set, instead of a dependency culture (CCRCDR, personal communication, 11 June 2018). In fact, since all projects enabled by the city deal have to demonstrate the contribution to the abovementioned indicators, the leaders interviewed assumed a strong stance against people and initiatives that mistook the city deal for a grant.

> *'(…) I think there's a feeling that people can apply like it's a grant, you know thinking that they can spend the money. And we've got to change the language, we've got to change the whole behaviour around it. As far as I'm concerned nobody comes to the table unless they've got something to*

bring. It's about ask and offer.' (CCRCDR, personal communication, 11 June

2018)

This defensive standpoint might be determined by a certain degree of sobriety developed over the years by the actors involved, as further demonstrated by the clear change in discourse. In the initial documents, the city deal was deemed a 'transformative approach' (HM Treasury, 2016a, p. 5), while during interviews, leaders indicated that it should not been seen as a 'silver bullet' (LAR5, personal communication, 26 February 2018) and that leaders needed to manage expectations since the budget was actually not that large.

Since these financial limitations came up repeatedly throughout the research interviews, it is worth dissecting what the deal means in reality. Deducting all the money allocated thus far, the WIF is left with £351m for another 17 years – a bit more than £20.5m/year to benefit the 10 local authorities. To put it in context, Cardiff Council's 2019/2020 budget is over £600m. This is just another compelling reason for which the CCR should not be restrained to the current city deal, and its leaders could consider opening up towards other initiatives (such as the ones explored in 5.2.3), too.

As the map in Figure 5-2 shows, the two bigger projects funded through the WIF (CSC and Metro Central) are concentrated in the two biggest urban centres, Newport and Cardiff. While the Metro Plus project is divided equally between all local authorities, the amount of money is significantly smaller. Both some city-regional leaders, and some outsiders have questioned the city deal's potential to lead to an equal share of benefits. These perspectives will be discussed in detail in Chapter 5.2.
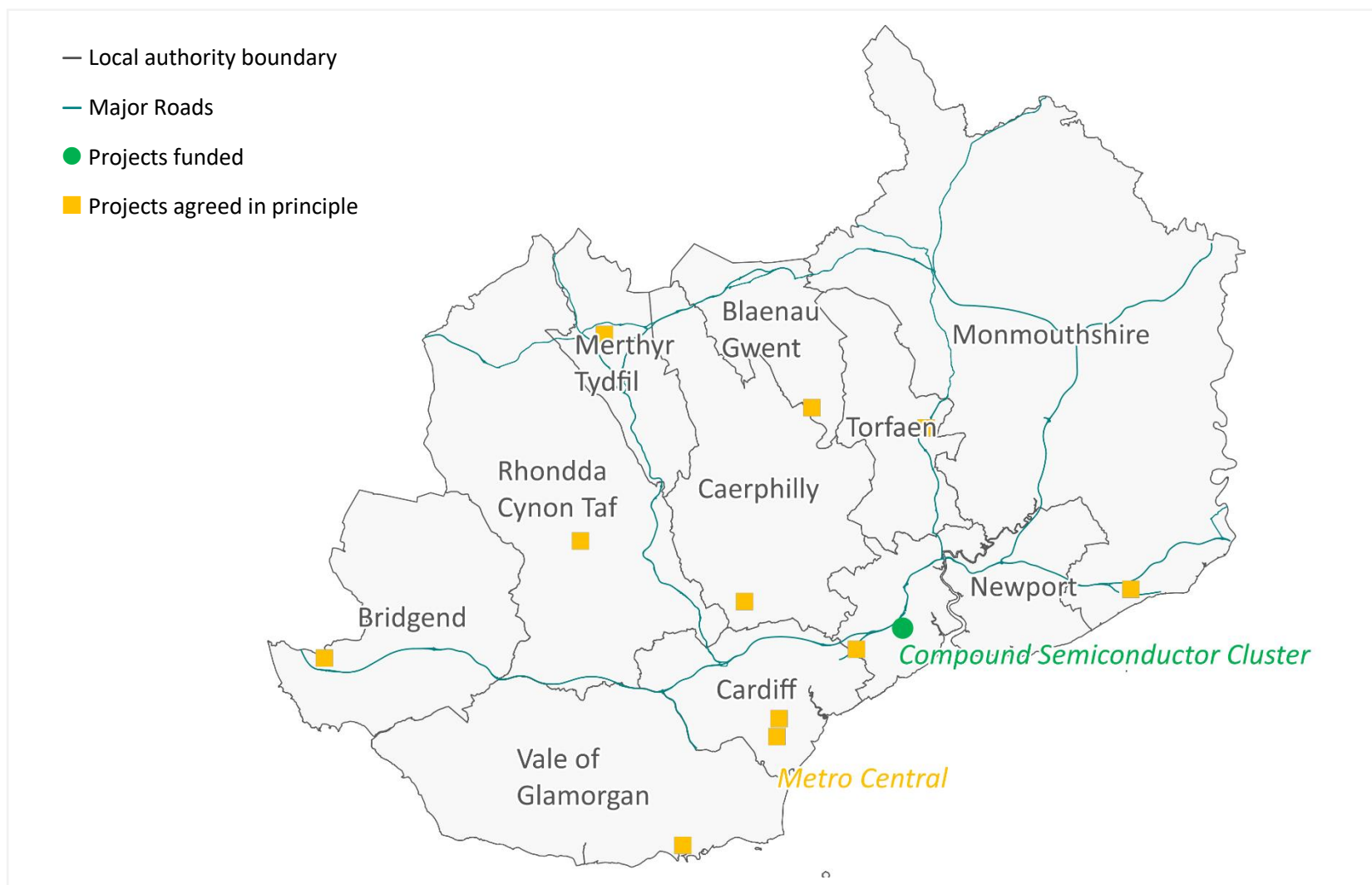
Figure 5-2: Cardiff Capital Region City Deal Wider Investment Fund projects

5.1.2 Undoubtedly, a socioeconomic space

socioeconomic = involving both social and economic matters; (in economics)
used to describe the differences between groups of people relating to their
social class and financial situation (Cambridge University Press, 2019).

Certainly, the CD has given the city-region a clear direction. However, the CD has also monopolised all debates regarding the CCR, making it possible to ask whether this model has, in fact, hindered the city-region from more progressive manifestations – both in terms of governance structure and ways of accomplishing the vision.

City deals have been presented as a 'devolution revolution' (HM Treasury, 2016b) and an enactment of the subsidiarity principle that brings decision-making at the most immediate and relevant level, yet the arrangement has proven rigid and prescriptive. As Chapter 5.2 will show, the CD led to a closed, almost impenetrable system where a handful of people make decisions on behalf of 1.5m people, mostly behind closed doors. Although various grassroots initiatives attempted to engage with CCRCD, their success has been fairly limited thus far. Moreover, some other structures that operate cross-border (such as police forces, health boards, economic development partnerships, etc.) are barely ever mentioned, therefore not acknowledged and not included in the collaboration.

Furthermore, the CD constrained the city-region's policy framework to an economic rationale to which all other aspects seem instrumental. As the first press release (HM Treasury, 2016b) summarised, the CCR aimed to 'improve productivity; tackle worklessness; build on foundations of innovation; invest in physical and digital infrastructure; provide support for business; and ensure that any economic benefits are felt across the region', while the goal is 'a minimum 5% increase in the region's GVA'. The *Growth and Competitiveness Commission*[41] – a group tasked with advising CCRCD how to realise its 'international potential' – made at least two more recommendations which were later forgotten: (i) to establish collaborations across local councils in areas such as tourism, too; and to ensure all city-regional investments are at least carbon neutral (Growth and Competitiveness Commission, 2016).

In one of the few critical papers addressing CCRCD so far, Beel, Jones, & Jones (2018, p. 11-12) have analysed the political actors' statements, as they were published during this press release. The authors note, besides the hierarchy of responses (first UK Government, then WG and finally local authority leaders), the lack of reference to the effects for the people living in the area. The

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[41] Section 5.3.3. comes back to this report and looks at the collaboration with the Commissioner for Future Generations.

main focus is on devolution, the city-region as engine of growth, increased private sector investment, the importance of transport infrastructure and the collaboration between the local authority partners. Scrutinising these statements it is indeed possible to agree with Jonas & Moisio (2016) for whom city regionalism has become a geopolitical experimentation which allows the state to orchestrate international competitiveness. Only the last respondent, Cardiff Council's leader, stands out from the others, declaring that the deal should 'make a real difference to people's lives, improving prospects for all citizens' and 'improve everyone's chances of enjoying a better future'.

Unsurprisingly, some regionalist scholars are sceptical about the deal's potential to reduce the staggering intra- and inter-regional inequality (Beel et al., 2018, p. 5) in the UK:

> *'The agglomerative trickle-down model (Haughton, Deas, & Hincks, 2014),*
> *alongside historic uneven development (Omstedt, 2016) and a stagnant*
> *economy at a national and local levels (Bailey & Budd, 2016), means that*
> *any potential growth will be undermined by a continuing process of uneven*
> *development, which will continue to play out within the city-region*
> *(Etherington & Jones, 2009b).'*

The latest OECD data shows that the UK has the second highest income inequality (from the perspective of the Gini coefficient) among the European OECD countries, after Lithuania (OECD, 2020). At the same time, research suggests that in 2017 the wealth of the richest 1% was 60 times greater to that of the bottom 90%, compared to 1997 when it was only 18 times higher (Gulliver, 2016, as cited in Lang & Marsden, 2017). Throughout all this time, the GVA has been growing steadily, showing only a small decrease after the 2008 crisis (ONS, 2019). This disconnect between growth and distribution is rarely tackled directly in city-regions, despite mounting academic concern (Beel et al., 2017; J. Clark & Christopherson, 2009; Etherington & Jones, 2009; Lang & Marsden, 2017).

While city-regional leaders are aware of the socio-economic inequalities affecting CCR, the local, national and global 'broader processes at work' (J. Clark & Christopherson, 2009, p. 344) have not been spelled out. Thus, the city deal risks becoming just another project which supports inward investment, but 'makes little lasting impact to the communities of the South Wales Valleys' (Blake, 2019, p. 21), and does not empower them to become stewards in their communities' development.

Nonetheless, throughout the empirical research stage, a significant discourse change in terms of ambitions became obvious. While the initial strategic themes have been maintained, the

latest documents issued (such as the Business Plan for WIF and the more recent Industrial and Economic Growth Plan) have started incorporating new concepts, such as 'inclusive growth', 'clean growth' and 'good growth'. The same strategies are even sprinkled with the term 'regenerative', albeit differently used than in this thesis. While the aims seem to have been revamped, the means, or the policy objectives, have stayed the same. Certainly, for the time being it is impossible to assess whether the city deal will actually contribute to these stated aims and if the current governance structure is fit to lead the way. Nevertheless, agreeing that there is nothing fundamentally problematic with the thematic areas chosen in the city deal, several non-CCRCD interviewees have expressed their concerns.

Commenting on the overall narrative for development, one academic thought that the city deal was far too tethered to the conventional development narrative. Despite the leaders' larger aspirations (detailed in the section 5.1.2), the belief that 'fixing the economy will fix everything else' limits the projects and policies devised. Besides, the interviewee thought that the whole of Wales needs to develop collective capacity to deliver what is already part of the national well-being strategy (explored at length in Chapter 5.3). This delivery capability is currently extremely limited, both because of the persons in charge and the austerity and budget cuts seen by local authorities (CUKM, personal communication, 30 May 2018).

Another academic criticised the constricted understanding of 'infrastructure' and the limited consideration to social and public service infrastructure, for instance. Moreover, they believe that local authority leaders should be careful when selecting the type of infrastructure to support, since certain choices made in the past harmed local economies and communities:

> *'Because that [the city deal thematic areas] is kind of old-fashioned Welsh*
> *Development Agency stuff, you know, if we build it they'll come. In some*
> *cases, they did come, in some cases they didn't stay very long: LG! And in*
> *other cases they did come, they stayed and they don't bring much benefit:*
> *Amazon for example in Swansea, employing people on subsistence wages in*
> *horrible working conditions. Arguably helping to undermine the Welsh High*
> *street.'* (CUML, personal communication, 22 June 2018)

Despite these concerns raised mostly in the academic circles, the leaders interviewed had high aspirations for the future of Cardiff Capital Region and a strong conviction that the CD was going to be an effective mechanism to achieve them. The following sections shows that, notwithstanding the city deal's limitations and success measurements, its leaders have a wider definition of a successful city-region. Still, while social equity, a fairer distribution of prosperity

and increased living standards feature high on personal agendas, issues of environmental sustainability are rarely ever mentioned. This supports the observations of Lyall et al. (2015) who concluded that in British city-regions, environmental sustainability (0.8%) and democracy (12.9%) were far less popular among city deal themes, compared for instance with economic growth (41.6%).

5.1.3   How about CCR's socioecologies?

socioecology = the interactions among the members of a species, and

between them and the environment (Cambridge University Press, 2019)*.*

The city deal has had an influential role in shaping CCR's developmental pathway, focusing its agenda on particular socio-economic aspects. These investment choices, important as they are, have few chances in improving 'the lives of people in *all* communities' (HM Treasury, 2016a, p. 4 emphasis added) since at the moment, there is little proof that the city-regional programme is based on a holistic understanding of the complex city-regional system.

Nonetheless, research interviews have revealed that city-regional leaders have aspirations that go well beyond the thematic areas targeted through the CD – coming somewhat closer to the progressive regionalist programme. When asked about their vision for the CCR in 20 years from now, most city-regional leaders gave fairly comprehensive and ambitious answers. For instance, improvements in transport infrastructure (mostly public transport, although road links were also mentioned) were often connected to other developments, especially industrial innovation and an upskilled workforce – improvements which they thought would increase life quality. Yet, as the citation below shows, leaders were easily allured by the so-called success models – the booming tech and innovation industries in Silicon Valley – ignoring that region's congestion, housing and homelessness crises (Semuels, 2018).

'Very prosperous! I would like to see it as the British version of Silicon

Valley! [We both laugh] Very seriously. Now we got compound

semiconductors which is IQE – a world leader. You only got to look at

Europe and see the prosperity that metro systems bring. And if we can

upscale our workforce, you know, it will be a big attraction and people will

want to come to live in SE Wales.' (LAR3, personal communication, 18

January 2018)

Interviewees endorsed the need for better paid jobs and sectoral innovation. One person emphasised that future-proofed industries should be located disparately across the region, and another mentioned that prosperity and economic growth should radiate from Cardiff, albeit after 'Cardiff itself builds critical mass and as the city centre develops further' (LAR9a, personal communication, 03 April 2018).

Fairness and equality featured high on the agenda too, especially as 'equal opportunities' could determine young people to stay in their areas. As CCR is struggling with graduate retention issues, reversing the 'social capital leach' (LAR10, personal communication, 16 January 2018) would be beneficial both within LAs (to reduce the number of people migrating to Cardiff) and at city-regional scale (so that young people would not leave to England or abroad).

Besides, some leaders wished to see the overall quality of life increasing in the future, as well as more 'resilient, sustainable communities, especially north from the M4 corridor'. For this, three respondents considered better housing and more diverse housing options as instrumental.

Furthermore, one city-regional leader wished for 'better integration in the cultural sense' – people acknowledging the richness of the region and travelling across to discover it (LAR5, personal communication, 26 February 2018). Similarly, another person hoped for a 'shared regional identity and a better defined sense of purpose' (LAR9a, personal communication, 03 April 2018).

These statements prove that for the majority of the leaders, a successful city-region would require a much more comprehensive approach than the current city deal agreement. One interviewee's goal is illustrative in this sense:

> *'A region that has a clear direction, which has married some of the economic ambitions with its social aims.'* (CCRCDR, personal communication, 11 June 2018)

Unfortunately, as observed throughout the UK, 'the devolution agreements are not always as comprehensive as local government advocates hope' (Lyall et al., 2015, p. 2). Judging from these answers, one could expect city-regional leaders to prioritise policies which are compatible with the progressive regionalist programme that is 'focused on equity, reducing root causes of poverty and social injustice' (Pezzoli et al., 2009, p. 337). This is of paramount importance, especially since most interviewees have talked about budget cuts and austerity that tend to impact those least well off, who need social services most. Thus, the money in the city deal might actually come from losses in the local budget.

Yet, since the city deal follows a logic of agglomerative growth, social responsibilities and a fair distribution of gains is unlikely to 'trickle down' (Beel et al., 2018, p. 13). Thus, while it is encouraging to see that social elements are given consideration, and that economic growth is understood as a means to improve people's lives, there is little evidence that leaders are creating a programme which is 'distributive by design' (Raworth, 2017).

Another worrying aspect is that none of the leaders referred to any environmental aspects when talking about their aspirations for future developments[42]. Only two of them used the word 'sustainable', although referring rather to social sustainability. Yet, as elsewhere in the UK, the latest *State of Nature Report* (Hayhow DB et al., 2019) showed that nature in Wales is under pressure. 523 species (8% of the 6.500 found in Wales) are threatened with extinction, and the management of agricultural land remains the most challenging issue in reducing biodiversity vulnerability. Although such issues span across administrative boundaries, they have been absent from CCRCD's agenda thus far.

Furthermore, despite international agreement for the urgency to address climate breakdown, as well as a steady and unavoidable rise in sea levels around UK (Committee on Climate Change, 2018), none of the interviewees touched upon these subjects. Unfortunately, it seems that Etherington & Jones's observation (2009, p. 252) dating from a decade ago – that the environment is a topic only 'lightly touched upon' at city-regional scale – is still valid today.

A large amount of the budget is invested in public transport and digital infrastructure, so there are chances that the CD will ease traffic congestion and reduce CO_2 emissions (unless as mentioned, better transport links lead to sprawl and increased environmental stress). In the future, it should become easier for citizens to rely less on private cars and even work remotely. Still, many CCRCD leaders have not been able to decouple the idea of development from fossil fuels, as Figure 5-3 illustrates. This Tweet was posted on 7 March 2019, demonstrating the ambivalence towards motorised traffic in the detriment of environmental protection.

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[42] However, throughout the interviews some participants have talked about certain issues such as clean industries, biodiversity, climate change, carbon emissions, etc.

Figure 5-3: Giving roads priority on social media

5.1.4   Is one city deal enough to make a city-region?

> *"For me, the city-region is more than the city deal. It creates a level of*
> *leadership that sits below Welsh Government, but sits above local*
> *government. That's what's powerful to me about it. And as I get more and*
> *more aware of the politics... so, at the end of the day, all we want is a*
> *railway line, that's what we want, really, maybe a park and ride, half way*
> *down."* (LAR7, personal communication, 25 January 2018)

So far, this research has shown the city-region's fixation on GVA growth and a limited reflection on environmental aspects. This might come as a result of the current city-regional constellation, a tightly controlled governance structure which makes decision-making both elitist and opaque (more on this in section 5.2.2). In this sense, civic engagement, the co-production of knowledge and social democracy – deemed vital in a progressive city-region (Nam, 2013; Pezzoli et al., 2011; Sites, 2004) – are currently missing in CCRCD. These issues will be expanded upon in the governance chapter.

The current limitations could be ascribed to the city deal arrangement, although the WG's complacency within this approach is also culpable. For this reason, besides understanding the leaders' wider-spanning aspirations for the future, this research investigated whether they considered the city deal to be the most suitable tool to achieve their ambitions. As discussed in the literature review (2.1.3), several academics and independent studies are questioning the effects of CD arrangements (P. Jones et al., 2017; Joseph Rowntree Foundation & Bevan Foundation, 2017; O'Brien & Pike, 2018).

Interestingly, when asked whether the city deal accommodates their vision for development, seven city-regional leaders gave a definitive yes. As an example, one leader said:

'It's [the city deal] a critical policy because it's focused on skills,
infrastructure and industries of the future and connectivity. And all those
are vital in terms of driving prosperity.'

Only four persons mentioned that the 'city deal was not a silver bullet' (LAR5, personal communication, 26 February 2018), and that the current amount of money 'was just a drop in the ocean' (LAR1, personal communication, 29 January 2018), while two others were uncertain. Nonetheless, there seemed to be a general agreement that beyond the financial gains, the city deal's biggest achievement has been to bridge the historical divide between the coast and the valleys.

Indeed, the collaboration marks an evolution from a parochial mind-set where each county (and county leader) was solely concerned with the territory and people living within its boundaries. As the previous chapter showed, this has been a very slow process and some leaders have mentioned they are still struggling to convince their councillors and electorate of the benefits brought by integrating policies and projects at city-regional level.

Even so, it seems that all leaders interviewed acknowledge and accept that investment might mainly go into the bigger urban centres – Cardiff and Newport – and possibly along the M4 corridor. However, with the development of the transport system, the leaders of more peripheral counties hope and expect that their communities will at least have equal access to opportunities:

'(…) And what will we have? A trickle? I don't mean a trickle of money; I
mean a trickle of opportunity. So that's where I'm keen on, that what we're
left with should be a real energy to pull off the assets from the Cardiff train
station and transport up here, and make sure that is tangible elsewhere
because we know it's gonna be good for Cardiff.' (LAR7, personal
communication, 25 January 2018)

Unsurprisingly, the city-centric agglomerative logic (Pike, 2018) underpinning the city-region leads to a bias towards cities, without a clear assessment of the impact on the more rural areas. Here too, CCR is inconsistent with the progressive regionalist values, failing to depict the urban-rural relationships in ways which go beyond a core-periphery model, determined by transport links and work catchment areas.

In fact, several leaders from across the region admitted that the CD offered their LAs a chance to develop projects which had been stuck 'on their shelves' because of previous lack of funding.

Thus, these actions had not necessarily been conceived at city-regional level. Although some of those proposals could have positive effects beyond the county's administrative borders, the geographic distribution of benefits might be questionable. As one non-CCRCD interviewee has said, while the Metro's spread across the region is easy to map, the effects of the CSC cluster are less evident, especially for the further afield places and/or the people who lack the necessary skills to engage in this industry (FGCR3, personal communication, 1 May 2018).

Nonetheless, the current city deal might be just the first step towards broader city-regional policies and actions. As the following chapter will show, despite the 'paradoxical effect' of the city deal which led to a democratic deficit and to power concentration (Lyall et al., 2015, p. 5), the city-region has captured many people's imagination. Whether funded by this city deal, a forthcoming one or by other means, new collaborations and visions spanning across administrative boundaries seem like a realistic scenario in South East Wales, in part thanks to the city deal.

5.1.5   Conclusions

Using a progressive regionalist lens, this chapter has analysed the city deal arrangement, as well as its effects on the Welsh city-region and the narratives which are driving it at the moment. The fieldwork showed that this 'Treasury-run model of development' (CUKM, personal communication, 30 May 2018) is currently limiting the scope of city-regional action, as well as the range of actors involved. Leaders see CCR mostly as a socioeconomic space and have faith that public investment in physical infrastructure and innovation sectors will bring benefits which will eventually trickle down to all residents and all areas. This conventional outlook on economic development – based on city-centrism and agglomeration – leaves little room for alternative approaches, despite recurrent academic pleas for a more holistic understanding of the economy. Furthermore, there is little recognition of the complex interrelations between social and ecological aspects, and even less proactivity in environmentally-oriented action. This might be a result of the dominant conceptualisation of sustainable development of three/four separate pillars, which scientists have deemed inappropriate due an observed political bias towards the economy (Giddings et al., 2002).

The CD's layout has been largely dictated by the UK Government, being a questionable type of devolution. The two higher authorities involved maintain most power, either by managing projects or by assessing achievements. Nonetheless, considering the WG's historical predilection for well-being and sustainable development, it is both surprising and disappointing to see the

limited sway of such aspects in the city-region's developmental narrative. With equal funding responsibilities to Whitehall's, WG could have argued for alternative success indicators, focusing on well-being, rather than GVA, while also prioritising ethical and environmentally-sound initiatives, and making a strong claim for decarbonisation.

Furthermore, as city-regional leaders talked about wider ambitions, only some of them acknowledged the limitations of the current CD. Whether driven by naivety or simply unwilling to assert during the interview, some respondents disregarded processes and policies formulated at other scales (that have a direct influence on the city-region and its inhabitants) and were (overly) optimistic that the integrated transport system and the skills strategy would redress persisting inter- and intra-regional inequalities. However, there were also some persons willing to recognise CCR's embryonic stage and the large amount of work left to be done.

> *'I think there's a need for more detailed ongoing research (…) bring in some interesting people from around the world and talk to us about what's possible. And again this is a conversation about good growth (…) really, I think we could do more work on the kind of progressive social policies that are needed to match the economic gains that we'll be making. [And] this conversation with Welsh Government – about double devolution and what that means – has to be on the agenda as well.'* (CCRCDR, personal communication, 11 June 2018)

Surely, it is worth appreciating CCR's achievements, too. The public transport system in South East Wales requires a substantial upgrade, after years of underfunding from Whitehall (Barry, 2019; Editorial Team, 2002). Although improved public transport links have sometimes showed perverse effects, they also play an important role in reducing the city-region's car-centric culture, reducing isolation, as well as shaping an identity for this new establishment. After all, it is the prospects of a better transport system – considered vital for economic growth – which determined the local leaders to co-operate and conceptualise development beyond their own administrations. The city deal's financial support has helped to overcome decades of antagonism. As the following chapters will show, a change in leadership, various grassroots alternatives, as well as a stronger commitment to the well-being legislation are positive and progressive signs which could sooner or later influence CCR's pathway.

5.2   Part 2: A collaborative city-region?

In essence, any city-region is a collaborative project since it involves a number of actors working together towards a shared goal. In CCR, the city deal formalised both the vertical collaborations – between local authorities (LAs) and the two governments, and the horizontal ones – among the ten LAs. As the city-region became institutionalised, its governance structure turned increasingly complex and, the following sections will show, difficult to pin down.

This chapter's overarching aim is to reveal the actors and the spaces of decision-making which led the CCRCD between 2016 and 2018, analysing this structure through a collaborative governance lens. Thus, it explores the second empirical question: How is the city-regional governance structure designed and to what extent are collaborations enabling a more progressive agenda? In a nutshell, the following parts will show that although the city deal collaborations are tightly controlling the official projects, a number of other actors are seeking to disrupt the current trajectory, bringing CCR closer to a more progressive city-regional embodiment.

The chapter is divided into four parts, each serving a distinct purpose. The first part describes the CCRCD's governance structure as it was inscribed in the 'CCRCD Combined Document Pack' – a package of foundational documents (such as the Joint Working Agreement and the Assurance Framework), published in January 2017 on Cardiff Council's website. This constitutive document is chaotic and difficult to navigate, so a primary ambition has been to streamline the data and present it in a more accessible format, making the first part a rather descriptive one. At times, supplementary information gathered during interviews with city-regional leaders, as well as with other persons and organisations interested in CCRCD, complements the desk research findings.

After this explanatory section, the second part explores and analyses the institutional arrangement, reflecting on the issues revealed during interviews and the various events and meetings which allowed for participatory and non-participatory observation. These issues are grouped in three clusters: roles and responsibilities, equity and equality, and elitism, transparency and accountability. As explained in the methodology chapter, the reasoning was inductive and these themes were created after coding the data, being supported by the literature reviewed.

Attending a number of events (see Annex 4) allowed to discovered various other initiatives which engaged with the city-region concept, yet evolved independently from CCRCD. The third section presents four such *counter-hegemonic* (Etherington & Jones, 2017) cases, highlighting the actors, their narratives and actions, as well as some possible implications for the city-region.

The fourth and last section brings together all these ideas and analyses the entire city-regional apparatus, including both the official actors and the grassroots initiatives. The lessons learnt are summarised and situated within the trilateral conceptual framework, while also explaining the need to reconsider the definition of collaborative governance.

5.2.1   Who collaborates in CCRCD?

Regional and city-regional projects around Europe have not always endeavoured to create space for deliberative democracy (Morgan, 2014, p. 315) and there is widespread academic concern that city-regions are frequently characterised by closed, elitist governance structures (Beel et al., 2018). It is not surprising, thus, that progressive regionalists have called for a 'modus operandi which puts a premium on the coproduction of knowledge, state–society synergy, civic engagement, and social democracy' (Pezzoli et al., 2009, p. 339). Consequently, decision making in a progressive city-region would need to take place in open and collaborative governance structures, which strive to be accessible and inclusive for the civic society. Supported by the collaborative governance literature, the following chapter explores how such issues have featured in CCR's case.

Before delving into the analysis, there are two aspects which require clarification. First, that the Welsh city-region should be understood as a process, a constantly evolving phenomenon, and not a finite element – similar to Waite & Bristow's (2018, p. 2) conceptualisation of city-regional policy as 'an evolutionary logic or approach'. The historical perspective offered in the previous chapter shows that the city-region has continuously changed, modelled by various political constellations and narratives. Therefore, the results of this fieldwork portray the city-region in a specific moment in time – the beginning of the institutionalisation and the first two years of this institutional arrangement (2016 – 2018). The numerous changes observed are also an indicator that CCR's future is hard to predict, since the global climate crisis and the government's declaration of climate emergency, Brexit, as well as other, more local events[43] might alter the entire structure.

Second, it is worth restating the distinction between the city-region and Cardiff Capital Region City Deal. Loosely, the city-region could encompass all actors that operate at regional level,

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[43] Such as, for instance, the severe floods of November 2019, as well as the decision to 'decommission' a town in Wales after 2040 when rising sea levels might make it unfit for living (Wall, 2019). Such unfortunate events raise awareness about the issues that need immediate attention, and which can easily escalate into crises.

although in an ad hoc manner. In this sense, one could include any pan-regional body, like for instance, the universities. However important this demarcation is, the following section refers strictly to CCRCD, because as the preceding chapters showed, it is the city-regional manifestation which has monopolised all discussions and is currently leading the way forward.

CCRCD's current governance structure

> *It's a really complicated system and there's been a lot of... you know, the*
> *getting to know you part, working in collaboration, not just up the political*
> *level but the chief execs, the directors and all the groups, and the program*
> *office themselves. And I think the program office has been under-resourced.*
> *I don't think they've been doing all the right things, I think they've been*
> *focusing on creating something like an industry, papers, administration,*
> *creating groups, rather than necessarily (…) thinking about the cleanest*
> *way of doing this. I don't know whose fault it is, but I think they've taken a*
> *kind of old-school public sector approach. It's very much government by*
> *political committees and governance structures that are really 20th century,*
> *not very 21st century... which then, you know, has a knock-on effect on how*
> *transparent they are…"* (FGCR2, personal communication, 26 April 2018)

As mentioned in the introduction, the next section was mostly informed by the 'CCRCD Combined Document Pack' and supplemented, or clarified with data obtained through direct communication or events (in which case it is stated in brackets). A PowerPoint presentation, available during the secondment with the Future Generations Office, showed a slightly different organigram (with various other working groups for areas such as housing, digital, etc.). Another presentation given during one of the (few) business engagement events hosted by the CCRCD showed a simplified version of the account summarised below. Regardless, the key message is that the CCRCD is a complex, difficult to trace institutional arrangement, further complicated by the inconsistency in name uses.

Overall, the governance structure leading CCRCD throughout the entire financial arrangement (2016 – 2036) is composed of 12 governmental bodies: 10 local authorities, the Welsh and UK Governments. The institutional design and the processes summarised below were inscribed in the CCRCD Joint Working Agreement (2017) and are liable to change.

The UK Government – the assessor and one of the funders

The UK Government's function is to fund the CCRCD with £500m. However, the money allocated for the Wider Investment Fund (£375m) is given in tranches and is subject to the CCRCD's successful completion of the Five Year Gateway Review. The review uses economic growth as 'the primary metric against which impact is assessed'. Nonetheless, since CCRCD's economic impact might not be noticeable in such short periods of times, the national evaluation panel might use other, 'more appropriate metrics, such as whether investments are delivered to time and to budget' (CCRCD, 2017, p. 88).

Besides, Whitehall committed to compensate for the European funds (£125m) in case CCRCD would not be able to access this sum before Brexit (LAR3, personal communication, 18 January 2018).

The Welsh Government and Transport for Wales – the leaders of the largest project

The Welsh Government is the other main funder of the city deal, and its £500m contribution is allocated for the development of the integrated transport system, the Metro. To this end, the WG has set up *Transport for Wales* (TfW), a not for profit company whose remit is the development of the South Wales (and North Wales) Metro. Thus, TfW is the de facto planning, procurement, delivery and oversight organisation for the city-region's largest project. The representative interviewed stated that TfW's remit has been continuously expanding and might cover more infrastructure works, as well as buses and roads (TfWR, personal communication, 1 May 2018).

Moreover, the WG is also considered an advisor/consultant due to its statutory responsibilities and the overlap between its duties and the areas covered by the Wider Investment Fund.

The Joint Cabinet (JC) – the decision-maker for the WIF

The leaders of the ten local authorities, together with the director of the city deal, make up the Cardiff Capital Region Joint Cabinet (also known as Joint Cabinet or Regional Cabinet, JC hereafter). The JC is the decision making body of the CCRCD and has passed from shadow to a permanent form in March 2017. While some of the members have been active all the while, other leaders have been replaced following local elections. Andrew Morgan, the council leader of Rhondda Cynon Taff, is the JC's chair, while Peter Fox from Monmouthshire and Huw Thomas (who replaced Phil Bale) from Cardiff are the vice-chairs. These three LAs were part of the negotiating team and according to one interviewee, this was a well-balanced team since the valleys, the rural and the urban communities were all represented (LAR10, personal communication, 16 January 2018).

It is important to highlight that the JC is not an elected body as such. The city deal established that a cabinet comprising of the ten local authorities is 'the first step in the development of greater city-region governance across the Cardiff Capital Region' (HM Treasury, 2016a, p. 16). The local council leaders became, automatically, the cabinet members. Questions still remain whether they are the best suited persons to take this role (detailed in sub-section 5.2.2.1).

Although the CCRCD website does not state this information and the official documents are rather ambiguous about it, the empirical stage showed that each LA is, in fact, represented in the JC by two persons – a council leader and a chief executive (CEX). An LA representative explained that this was a balanced way of having both the political and the technical sides covered (LAR1, personal communication, 29 January 2018). The CEX and the Regional Director (see below) – who also attends the JC meetings, have no voting rights.

The JC's main responsibilities are to oversee the progress of the City Deal, give strategic direction, manage the Wider Investment Fund and decide which projects and schemes receive funding. The JC should also promote partnership between councils, and with other city deal partners around the UK (Cardiff Capital Region, n.d.). Besides, due to a 'portfolio arrangement', leaders have formed working groups around five areas: Regeneration, Housing and Planning; Work, Skills and Economy; Business and Innovation; Transport; Finance and Governance. Each of these is led by two councillors, and as section 5.2.2.1 will show, portfolios were still a confusing part of CCRCD for some of the leaders interviewed.

Except for the director whose position is full time, all cabinet members are primarily responsible for leading their local authorities, on top of exercising multiple other functions outside of the CCRCD. On the one hand, this is important because it allows leaders to interact and stay up to date with important events happening in their communities. On the other hand, it means that leaders only dedicate a limited amount of time to city-regional matters, and their local interests might weigh more than the regional ones in the JC.

The Regional Programme Director

The CCRCD director is the person 'so appointed from time to time by the JC to represent the interests of all the councils in respect of their operational requirements for the city deal' (CCRCD, 2017, p. 9). As mentioned, the director's role is full-time as she oversees various CCRCD sub-structures and liaises between them and the JC. Although the regional director does not have voting powers in the JC meetings, interviews and observations confirmed that the director can strongly influence the city-region's development. Besides, she is the main point of contact with the wider public, and the representative of CCRCD at most public events.

The director position has so far been occupied by two persons, whose different ways of thinking and leadership styles will be discussed later in the analysis. The JC appointed Kellie Beirne, former deputy CEO of Monmouthshire Council, in August 2018 (although her position was publicly announced in spring 2018). Beirne replaced the interim director – Sheila Davies, former Strategic Director – Place at Newport City Council.

The regional director and all the following sub-committee members are selected by the JC.

The Regional Programme Board – the day-to-day manager
The Regional Programme Board (RPB hereafter) is composed of representatives from each LA (generally the CEX, although any senior member can be appointed), as well as the CCRCD director (who chairs the RPB), and the programme manager. The role is to implement the city deal and to manage the Wider Investment Fund, without any decision-making powers. Thus, the RPB is meant to assess project proposals for WIF and make recommendations for the JC. Besides, members provide support to the portfolio leads and oversee the performance and delivery of portfolios.

The Programme Management Office – the day-to-day administrator
The Programme Management Office (PMO hereafter), also called the Regional Office, is tasked with providing 'services to the Joint Cabinet, including programme management, financial management of the delivery programme, administration, engagement, and communication' (CCRCD, 2017, p. 90).

Different office visits and personal communication with the officers have revealed that the PMO is mostly concerned with developing documents that support the cabinet (e.g. Assurance Framework, Implementation Plan, Business Plans, Performance Reports, etc.). The officers have repeatedly expressed their frustration with working under tight deadlines and being understaffed – an issue which often became the reason for delayed communication and/or cancelled meetings.

Separately from the PMO, the LAs have chosen Cardiff Council as an Accountable Body that manages the overall financial arrangements.

The three advisory bodies
There are three groups that should advise, challenge and support the JC:

- the *Economic Growth Partnership* (EGP) oversees the regional economic strategy and the WIF investments. Its members are business persons, education representatives and council leaders. Their names are publicly stated on CCRCD website.

- the *Regional Business Council* (RBC) represents the business sector and helps identifying barriers to growth, economic priorities and opportunities. The members are business persons and their names are also currently available online.

- the *Employment and Skills Board* (also known as Skills Partnership, ESB hereafter) is tasked with identifying regional priorities for skills investment. The CCRCD website mentions that it 'brings together a wide range of stakeholders, including businesses; industry bodies; higher and further education institutions; training providers; schools; local authorities and the Welsh Government'. While the website states the members' names for the EGP and the RBC, it leaves out any information regarding the persons active in the ESB[44].

The members of all these advisory bodies are unpaid volunteers (travel and expenses can be claimed), drawn by the JC from the pool of applicants[45]. The groups are non-statutory, which means that the JC is not bound to follow the groups' guidance.

The Regional Transport Authority – the delivery body
The RTA is responsible for creating the regional transport vision and has so far attempted to identify complementary projects for the South Wales Metro. The members are exclusively local councillors.

WIF decision-making process
While the Metro is led by the WG through TfW, the Wider Investment Fund is administered by the CCRCD who should create an Assessment Toolkit to guide its investment. Although the toolkit is still under development at the time of writing (August 2019), the CCRCD's Assurance Framework describes the decision-making process. Annex 9 shows the original diagram which might facilitate understanding the course of actions and the appraisal framework created.

In brief, any candidate seeking investment needs to submit an *initial proposal* to the Programme Management Office (PMO), which will then send it to the appropriate advisory body and to an external business case assessor for an independent assessment. All these documents are sent to the Regional Programme Board (RPB) which can decide if the proposal is strong enough to go to the next stage. In a favourable case, the candidate is required to submit an *Outline Business Case*. This is sent back to the external business case assessor who provides the RPB with a review. Based on it, the RPB recommends the JC how to proceed (reject, review, support). If the

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[44] Last time checked on 9 July 2019.
[45] There is no information regarding any potential refusals.

JC chooses to support the proposal, the candidate needs to submit a *Full Business Case* which is then sent again to the external business case assessor. At this point, the PMO and the Accountable Body provide legal and financial assessments. This entire package is sent back to the RPB who sends it to the JC for a final decision.

It is probably not surprising that CCRCD's first investment, in the CSC cluster, did not follow this process (as detailed in the section on elitism, transparency and accountability – 5.2.2.3, and further discussed in the conclusion). Although outside the scope of this thesis, it is worth mentioning that a document issued in 2019 outlines a slightly simpler process.

Based on this descriptive section which summarised the CCRCD's components, the next part analyses the issues arising from this governance structure. The three thematic clusters (roles and responsibilities, equity and equality, as well as elitism, transparency and accountability) are based on observations and interviews conducted with both insiders and outsiders of CCRCD.

Figure 5-4 attempts to encompass all the different stakeholders who are formally involved in CCRCD, based on the information made available by June 2018. The upper part of the organigram shows in black the insiders who hold powers and financial responsibilities (UK and Welsh Government, and the ten local authorities). The bodies and mechanism they formed are represented in different colours, while the arrows indicate the working relationships within the governance structure. Marked with red and placed in the middle, the JC is connected either directly or indirectly with most other substructures. So is the regional director who represents local authorities, is involved in both PMO and RPB, and liaises with the advisory bodies. The RD, PMO and RPB are tasked with the managerial, administrative and financial tasks regarding the WIF, and have no voting powers. The advisory and delivery bodies are represented with two shades of brown, marking their different composition and responsibility.
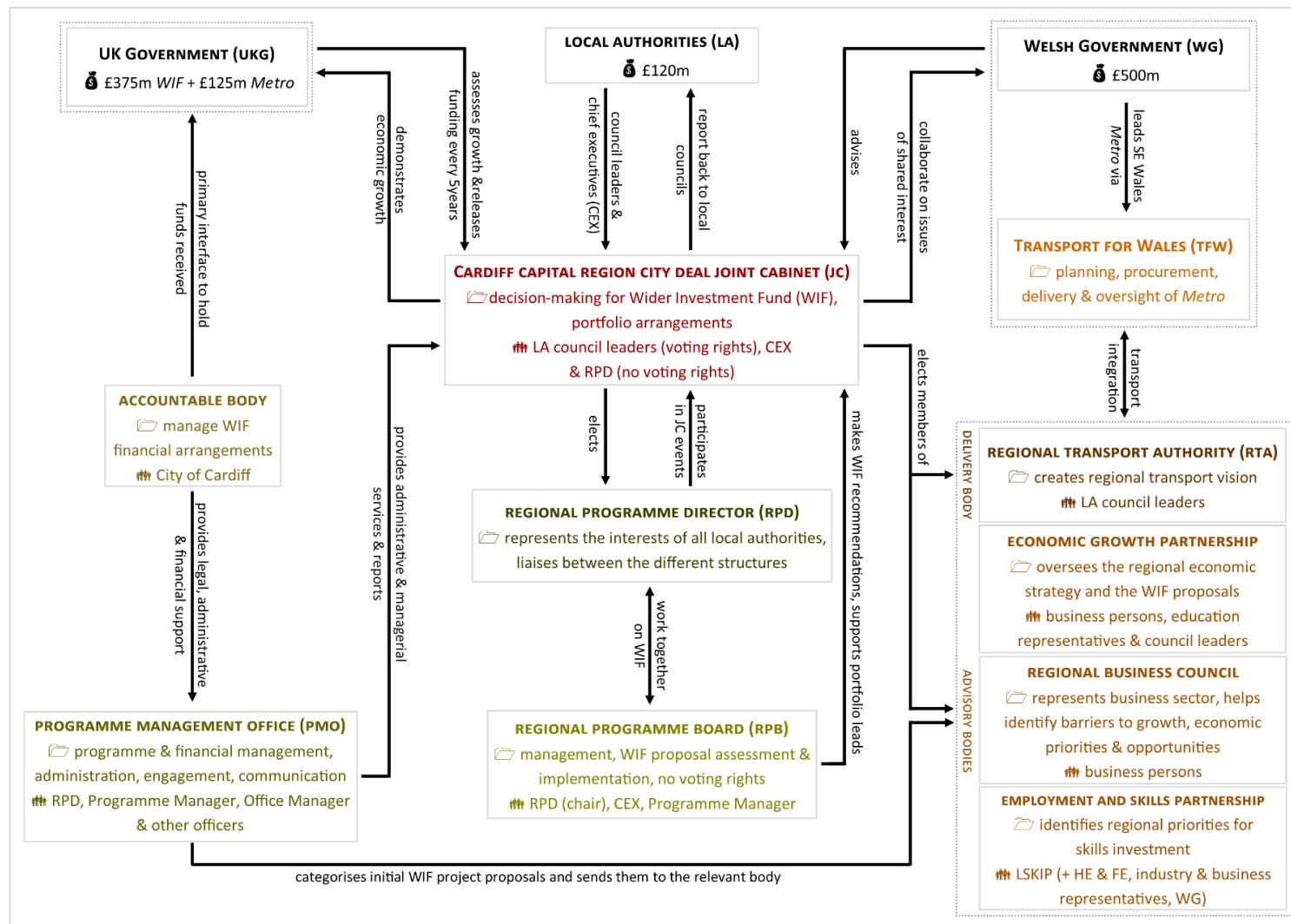
Figure 5-4: CCRCD's governance framework

5.2.2 Complex, complicated and closed off. An analysis of CCRCD

Before exploring the themes identified, this brief introduction discusses some issues prompted by the city-region's establishment, which augment its complexity: the (false presumption of) subsidiarity, and the hierarchical and political composition of CCRCD.

In theory, city-regions embody the subsidiarity principle according to which issues must be dealt with at the most immediate level that is going to support their resolution. This requires decentralisation and a transfer of power and responsibilities, yet it remains debatable in the British context. As a local leader confessed, through the city deal, the UK Government has been the most powerful decision-maker for the city-region's format:

> *"(…) the city deal prescribed very clearly what it needed for governance (…)*
> *UK government are the initiators of city deal, albeit they require local*
> *government to lead it. What the different dynamic in Wales was that we*
> *had a Welsh government as well. So we needed them on board, as well. (…)*
> *So yes, the governance really was... what our thinking was, it had to be in*
> *line with what UK government would want. UK government was the leading*
> *partner in this, we had to satisfy them. It was less difficult to satisfy the*
> *Welsh government in this regard."* (LAR10, personal communication, 16
> January 2018)

This proves that city-regionalisation is not an indication for the state's retrenchment, but rather for a 'new spatial fix' (Harvey, 1982) through which the state is 'exercising its powers in the 21st century' (Jonas & Moisio, 2016, p. 2). Whitehall calls it devolution, yet it is a tightly controlled one since the rules – largely established by it – reinforce the same traditional hierarchies. Essentially, the state continues to be an important player that sets the terms for local development (Cochrane, 2019, p. 14). Moreover, if English city-regions are at least responsible for handling their entire budgets, in Wales there is an additional layer: Welsh Government. Thus, in CCR's case, WG retains a major role, being responsible for planning, developing and managing the city-region's iconic project – the Metro. The RTA might be the local leaders' attempt to counterbalance this monopoly, yet with limited funds and expertise, the input into the Metro's development will probably be minimal.

Nonetheless, tensions between the LAs and the WG were rarely acknowledged during interviews, although Cardiff Council and the WG have experienced frictions in the past (Parkinson & Karecha, 2006). In contrast, a public meeting from November 2017 (discussed at length in 5.3.3) provided a different, seemingly more honest, perspective. At that time, as the

terms of reference for the RTA (which had been meeting in shadow form until then) were being agreed, a discussion emerged between the council leaders. The transcription below attempts to reproduce the different statements made[46]:

> *'- It is frustrating that the RTA didn't get their legal authority right. I want to shape the future of this region, to honour the agreements made with the Welsh Government.*
>
> *- (…) We will shape it far better than any officer in Cardiff Bay.*
>
> *- Transport for Wales is being set as we speak, it's acquiring power and unless we act fast, we will lose our role. It will be done to us. Unless we write this report fast, we will lose.'* (personal communication, 20 November 2017)

Indeed, the literature on collaborative governance literature sees power as a key aspect, since imbalances can deter stakeholders from engaging in partnerships or lead to manipulation by stronger actors (Ansell & Gash, 2008, pp. 550–551). However, the question of power has many layers in CCRCD. For instance, some interview participants saw the involvement of two governments as an opportunity to obtain funding from both sides, while also accessing European money. For some of the smaller authorities, attracting finance and 'having money to spend' (LAR3, personal communication, 18 January 2018) was actually an unusual situation since they were much more accustomed to operate under budget cuts. It is thus, understandable that local leaders signed up for this arrangement, despite the unequal power balance and the limited influence on the governance and the assessment metrics.

Similarly, the CCRCD interviewees did not mention any issues between the UK and the Welsh Governments (one being conservative-led, while the other labour-led). Still, one person thought it was beneficial to have Peter Fox – a conservative – in the negotiating team because of his 'conduits and the relationship' he has with the UK Government (LAR10, personal communication, 16 January 2018).

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[46] I will not provide any personal references since my intention is not to cause problems for the parties involved, but to show that there are unresolved and unrecognised disputes in CCRCD's governance framework. Needless to say, the minutes published [shorturl.at/fuB35] after the meeting left out any of this information.

Furthermore, while there was no direct reference to the relations with and between the two governments, four LA representatives made vehement statements regarding the cross-party collaboration inside the JC. This is best illustrated by the affirmation below:

> *'(…) you know, at Whitehall there's a constant political battle between the*
> *conservatives and labour. Down the Bay there's a constant political battle*
> *as well between those political parties, but in the city deal – you could sit in*
> *a meeting in the city deal and you would not know what political party…*
> *All politics are left at the door and we work as a group for the benefit of*
> *the whole area. There is no politics, at all, brought into the cabinet room.'*
> (LAR3, personal communication, 18 January 2018)

The fact that differing political colours are not jeopardising CCRCD's collaboration could be a positive sign that historical antagonism is diminishing, considering the heterogeneous political make-up of local councils in South East Wales (two independent-, two conservative- and six labour-led administrations). Nonetheless, most LA leaders agreed that CCRCD is a very complex establishment. While some of the respondents thought that the current institutional design was required to handle the large budget[47] and ensure projects were well managed, others thought this was due to change. In fact, representatives of both CCRCD and the FGC office were hopeful that, in the near future, the initial structure would become simpler and more flexible. Nonetheless, during fieldwork, three stringent issues surfaced. These will be detailed next.

5.2.2.1   Who's doing what? Issues of roles and responsibilities

One of the first observations during fieldwork was that roles and responsibilities in CCRCD were often unclear, even for the insiders, confirming Lord's (2009, p. 77) critique that continuous changes in economic development policy led to 'a congested institutional environment characterised by a confused, and confusing, nested spatial hierarchy of interventions'. Besides the disorienting different names given to each substructure, there were two other confusing aspects: leaders' portfolios and the advisory bodies' duties.

Portfolios were particularly problematic for the leaders who joined the JC after the 2017 local elections, since they 'inherited' their portfolios from their predecessors and 'still needed to understand what it meant' (LAR8, personal communication, 19 January 2018). In another case,

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[47] There has been a certain inconsistency within opinions, with some leaders saying that the budget is actually small when divided/year, and others legitimising the complex governance structure because of the large sum of money.

the leader affirmed they had not been designated a portfolio, while the constitutive documents showed the contrary. Of course, leaders are supported by their chief executives and advisory bodies in decision-making, but their unfamiliarity with the role, as well as the topic, raises questions regarding their authority to lead on those areas.

Furthermore, members of the advisory bodies, who are volunteers, were not clear regarding their role. The distinction between the Regional Business Council and the Economic Growth Partnership was particularly blurry. The power distribution and levers to influence decision-making had not been well defined at the time this research was conducted, yet the regional director was keen to reduce the 'complications and duplications':

> *'I think much of it has come from the fact – and it was right for a time but I*
> *don't think it's right for now – that the themes are in quite neat swim lanes,*
> *you know, skills, innovation, digital, transport. And I think the benefits will*
> *come if we start thinking about those things in a much more horizontal*
> *cross-cutting way. So hopefully the governance stuff will find its groove and*
> *will become a lot more fluid; it'll become a lot less formulaic and*
> *mechanistic and streamlined and simple.'* (CCRCDR, personal
> communication, 11 June 2018)

Although most interviewees found it easier to explain the distinction between the RTA and TfW, this is another potential confusing aspect in CCR's structure. According to one respondent, local authorities have neither the powers, nor the capital resources to deliver a railroad project that will serve half of Wales' population. This is why TfW is led by the WG, and has been building up its capacity and capability, developing planning and data teams that will help to deliver the transport vision (CUMB, personal communication, 7 June 2018).

Considering this expansion, the RTA's role was questioned by two interviewees[48] who expressed concerns regarding the body's ability to be strategic, articulate and develop city-regional policies – given that it is formed of local leaders. One of them referred to the RTA's capacities being, at that time, only on paper – especially because of the small number of members working just part time. Another respondent questioned the RTA members' expertise on regional transport issues, as well as the leaders' impartiality to make decisions that might not necessarily be benefitting their own local authorities. Moreover, both persons acknowledged that with TfW's increasing

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[48] One of these persons asked for data confidentiality and in order to protect their identity, no interview reference will be given here.

powers, and due to the lack of clarity regarding the distinction between the two, citizens would be entitled to question the financial costs invested into these structures and their management.

Despite these concerns, interviewees agreed that a fully-fledged RTA could bring major benefits for the region, providing TfW and WG with local perspectives and policy input. Indeed, the RTA could help with (i) multimodal integration, to link railways with other sustainable transport options (particularly for the *last mile*[49] which has significant impact on air pollution as it is often covered by car, especially in smaller towns and villages), and (ii) integration between regional transport and other strategic regional areas such as planning, housing and tourism (a topic rarely, if ever, mentioned in CCRCD).

5.2.2.2   Who's deciding what goes where? Issues of equality and equity

Two other particularly thorny issues revealed during field work were the equality and equity between local authorities. Equality refers here to the even distribution of powers for each local authority, whereas equity refers to the fair distribution of direct gains from the investments made.

From its inception, the CCRCD conferred local authorities equal decision-making powers, irrespective of their contribution to the budget. This means that, at least in theory, regardless of their size and population, local councils such as Blaenau Gwent or Merthyr Tydfil have the same voting influence as Cardiff or Newport. This was perhaps most enthusiastically expressed by the following council leader:

> *"I was mostly impressed that ten leaders got together, formed a cabinet*
> *and all had one vote each (…) that's pretty powerful! That's democracy!"*
> (LAR7, personal communication, 25 January 2018)

The literature on collaborative governance does call for such strategies, which empower and represent 'weaker or disadvantaged stakeholders', to reduce power imbalances (Ansell & Gash, 2008, pp. 510–511). However, other leaders believed that the 'one member – one vote' system will need to be reconsidered as soon as the city-regional project will become 'more of a spatial planning project'. Transferring local powers over themes such as housing and planning raises questions of democratic accountability, which could, according to some leaders, be alleviated

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[49] In transport, *last mile* refers to the last leg of a journey before a final destination. In freight, goods are often delivered to a central hub from where they have to be distributed across urban areas. Similarly, when using public transport, people need another mode of transport to reach their homes to and from the station (Arvidsson, Givoni, & Woxenius, 2016).

through population-weighted voting. That would mean that the ten LAs would not only have different budget contributions, but also varying decision-making powers in CCRCD.

Parallel to this idea, three different CCRCD-outsiders interviewed believed that an independent regional leader – similar to a metro/city-region mayor – would be the most effective solution to ensure local interests do not jeopardise the city-region's development. However, such a figure was unpopular both among local councillors and within the WG, since the position would hold power over more than half of Wales.

Notwithstanding the current equal decision-making powers, the equitable distribution of gains was already being questioned. One of the IWA representatives expressed their concerns that city-regional investments had thus far concentrated along the M4 corridor (CSC in Newport and the Transport Hub in Cardiff), except for the Metro – which would anyway take at least five years to materialise. Still, most leaders seemed hopeful that people would have equal opportunities to access investments, even if that meant commuting to other councils for work.

A few were more cynical about the city-deal's widespread reach, despite mentioning the city-region's success in overcoming parochialism:

> *"(…) it has been very successful, if you highlight two projects that we've got in there [CSC in Newport and Metro central in Cardiff] – that's brilliant! But you have it all down there. And what will we have? A trickle?"* (LAR7, personal communication, 25 January 2018)

This idea of trickle-down economics was, in fact, positively presented during an interview. Highlighting the need for a city-regional paradigm – different from a regional one, one LA representative thought CCRCD should first and foremost prioritise investment in cities. As cities became more successful and more dynamic, benefits would spread regionally. Furthermore, the same representative advised me to conclude, as an economic geographer[50], that the development of areas such as Pontyclyn, Llantrisant or the Vale of Glamorgan will be 'a by-product of Cardiff's growth and success as the capital city' (LAR9a, personal communication, 03 April 2018).

However, as discussed in the literature review and throughout the previous chapters, the unquestioned *need to grow* is problematic, just like the assumption that poverty and inequality can automatically be alleviated by trickle-down policies. An alternative course of action could

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[50] I do not have a background in economic geography, as the leader assumed automatically due to my interest in city-regional development and CCRCD.

follow from asking first: why do we need the economy to grow, and which economic sectors should (we) prioritise? Is it the unhealthy food industry and the aviation? Or is it organic agriculture and renewable industries? Raworth's statement fits perfectly here: 'Today we have economies that need to grow, whether or not they make us thrive and we are now living through the social and ecological fallout of that inheritance. What we need are economies that make us thrive, whether or not they grow' (Raworth, 2017, p. 24).

The second, equally important set of questions is: who benefits from this growth and how equitably are the benefits spread? For instance, it is true that the BBC headquarters in Central Cardiff will bring jobs in the service sectors for lower skilled inhabitants. However, this is only positive news if those jobs pay a living wage, and if those employees stand a chance to climb the social mobility ladder.

And last but not least, how do we measure this growth? Do we continue using GVA as the main indicator of success, despite the widespread recognition that well-being depends on much more than the market value of goods and services produced within a country every year?

Needless to say, such critical discussions have been largely absent in CCRCD, or at least impossible to trace within its foundational documents.

5.2.2.3   *And how could one know what's going on? Issues of elitism, transparency and accountability*

> *"I think our concern is that the faith of this investment for this region*
> *appears to be in the hands of a very small number of people who are*
> *making decisions behind closed doors and not in a transparent way, and not*
> *in a way that allows other people and the communities of the region to*
> *have a stake in 1) making the city-region a success and 2) shaping what it*
> *looks like. That's fundamentally where our concern is."* (IWAR1, personal
> communication, 14 June 2018)

The institutional design of the city-region, currently prescribed by the city deal, defines a rather narrow range of direct stakeholders – actors who have access to information and power to influence the city-region's development. As shown in the first part of this chapter, the vast majority of CCRCD insiders are politicians and business persons – the ones deemed suitable 'to unlock significant economic growth' (HM Treasury, 2016b). Thus, the paradigm chosen for the city-region's future entitles only specific groups of people to have a say, making others seem

inappropriate or unskilled. The opinion below contributes to explain why CCRCD has been rather closed (at least) during the first two years of existence:

'I am not even sure how relevant would it be to consult people [LA]. They're not experts in economic development. They know there are no jobs and that they need jobs, but that doesn't bring jobs.' (LAR8, personal communication, 19 January 2018)

While this is just a personal opinion, it supports the claim that city-regions across the UK are select, exclusionary spaces which might be serving the 'hegemonic interests' (Etherington & Jones, 2017, p. 251) of business and political elites (Beel et al., 2018). Such issues of elitism – where only the wealthiest or best educated people detain the control – are becoming a problem throughout the whole of the UK[51].

This observation should not be mistakenly associated with the anti-intellectualism[52] sentiment that has been surfacing in the UK since Brexit. Instead, this is a call for a plurality of opinions and perspectives. Even if the current actors are the most knowledgeable persons to lead CCRCD, and even if they act with the best interest in mind, an elitist governance structure is still problematic. The result can be a depoliticised city-region, where potential opposing narratives are not allowed to emerge. Darling, Etherington and Jones (2017, p. 18) reveal that when 'combined with a market-oriented transfer of responsibilities, depoliticisation acts to constrain the possibilities of political debate and to predetermine the contours of those policy discussions that do take place.' Practically, without any feedback loops, the CCRCD could become an echo chamber where the same people discuss and decide the future for half of Wales.

Such depoliticised, closed institutional designs are exactly the opposite of what the progressive regionalist, collaborative governance and regenerative development literatures aspire to achieve (more on this in the conclusion).

Unsurprisingly, all the outsiders interviewed referred to the problem of elitism. Some highlighted CCRCD's lack of attempts to open a dialogue with people whose profiles are outside of politics, business or education. Furthermore, one interviewee confirmed a general

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[51] It is outside this research's scope to delve into this problem. For a recent analysis, see the comprehensive report written by the Sutton Trust & the Social Mobility Commission (2019). Their work shows that UK's 'power structures remain dominated by a narrow section of the population' that was lucky enough to be born in wealthy families who could afford private education. Meanwhile, social mobility is low and not improving.

[52] Incited by Michael Gove who said that 'people in this country have had enough of experts' when he was asked to name an economist who would back Britain's exit from EU (Mance, 2016).

observation formed while attending CCRCD meetings and events: the audience's homogeneity. As the interview participant said, the persons involved in CCRCD were 'overwhelmingly white middle-class blokes of middle age, or older, who tend to come with a particular perspective' (CUML, personal communication, 22 June 2018).

Some more proactive outsiders 'tried to get in touch with the city-region and they [the CCRCD representatives] never replied' (DCR1, personal communication, 12 June 2018). Such observations have confirmed this research's own empirical findings. Reaching CCRCD leaders has been one of the most frustrating exercises conducted for this project. Most often, emails were not answered, meetings were postponed and sometimes cancelled (section 6.2.3 discusses at length these difficulties). Surely, this project's completion depended on interviewing city-regional leaders, thus the time and effort were worth it. However, it is hard to imagine that a member of the public would have the patience and time to go through all this process. In spite of all this, it is worth mentioning that changes in leadership brought a more receptive and collaborative programme director, seemingly willing to reduce communication barriers (further discussed in the conclusion).

It is worth emphasising that these issues are also closely connected to a lack of transparency. Transparency here refers to available and clear information regarding 'which actors and institutions are involved in what aspects of decision-making, as well as (…) the various aspects and dimensions of the issues considered' (Joss, 2010, p. 420). As previously mentioned, analysing CCRCD has been particularly challenging due to (1) its constantly evolving institutional arrangements, as well as (2) the acute absence of easily accessible information related to its functioning. Until very recently, relevant documents – such as meeting agendas, minutes and decisions – could only be found by searching on each local authority's website, since the CCRCD did not have a common database. The information was patchy and links would often stop working, so one had to save all documents to maintain permanent access.

More recently, most (albeit not all) of these files are available on the official website and the communication officer has also shown willingness to email some documents requested. Nonetheless, the language and the format remain impenetrable, and it is not surprising that very few lay people have, in fact, made an effort to understand what CCRCD is and does. The official website, the various, albeit short and insignificant Twitter posts, and maybe the Business Plan, are the only bits of information that could be considered more accessible for the general public. These deficiencies add to the general conviction that CCRCD's governance structure is obscure and decisions are made behind closed doors.

This lack of transparency and accountability has been, in fact, condemned by the Wales Audit Office (WAO hereafter) in respect to the CCRCD's first investment – the Compound Semi-conductor cluster (led by the IQE company). WAO defines itself as the 'public sector watchdog for Wales' whose 'aim is to ensure that the people of Wales know whether public money is being managed wisely and that public bodies in Wales understand how to improve outcomes' (Auditor General for Wales, n.d.). Such accounting mechanisms – between state institutions – are what Gross (2010, p. 10, citing O'Donnell, 1998) calls 'horizontal accountability'.

The first part of this chapter explained the decision-making process established for WIF investments. Unsurprisingly maybe, considering the number of steps required, the auditors found that the process was neither duly followed, nor properly documented (Auditor General for Wales, 2018b). Besides attracting criticism for appearing to break its own rules (Lang & Marsden, 2017), WAO found that 'reporting and record keeping were not consistently comprehensive or transparent'. Furthermore, two of their interviewees – CCRCD insiders – questioned whether the city deal partners had enough time and information 'to come to a sound decision' (Auditor General for Wales, 2018b, p. 8). In defence, the CCRCD representatives said they were pressured to seize the investment and they considered that any 'high level risks had been identified and mitigated' (Auditor General for Wales, 2018b, p. 8).

Nonetheless, the decision was taken without any wider consultation and members of the public learned about the investment when it had already been agreed. The CCRCD did not use any 'vertical accountability' mechanisms (Gross, 2010, p. 11) – through which citizens could obtain information and ask for justifications or contest the decision.

In fact, (at least) during the first two years of its existence, the CCRCD did not include any other 'collective voices' that represent the civil society, 'such as trade unions, volunteer groups, charities and welfare services' (Beel et al., 2016, p. 523). Thus, it is possible to see how in CCRCD 'governance per se has bypassed direct election and representative democracy' (Etherington & Jones, 2017, p. 2) or at the very least, has become a diluted version of it. As one of the IWA representatives explained:

> *'(…) you have the chair of the city deal who's been selected by the joint*
> *cabinet and he is on the joint cabinet because he is the leader of a council*
> *and he's been selected as the leader of that council by the council that was*
> *selected by a council ward, possibly only of 1000 people – to be in charge of*
> *£1.2bn of spending which affects 1.7million people. It's very convoluted*
> *routes when you compare it to Sadiq Kahn who's been selected as the*

mayor of the Greater London Authority (…) and he has 25 members of the

GLA also elected with him to be in charge of that (…) And it's the parallel,

it's very different, Sadiq Kahn creates that focus of what's his job, what he is

in charge of, what's happening. And you know who to talk to. Whereas here

you get lost within our structure.' (IWAR2, personal communication, 14

June 2018)

The democratic deficit observed and criticised in South East Wales, might be validating Morgan's (2014, p. 315) concern that city-regionalism could be frustrating the realm of deliberative democracy, instead of fostering it. In fact, CCRCD's democratic deficit was also recognised by one local politician who mentioned in a public event that leaders are not held accountable 'for what they do at city-regional level, only what they do at local level' (Institute of Welsh Affairs, 2018a).

Some of the interviewees believe this might be intentional and, as mentioned, it could be improved by having directly elected city-regional representatives, as Manchester, London or Stuttgart do.

"It's a structure that's been set to alleviate political concerns. And by

political I mean those existing political actors and forces. (…) it's been set up

to be something where no one person holds too much power and what you

have in effect there, is no clear decision-making structure from which

sprints a robust political accountability mechanism." (IWAR1, personal

communication, 14 June 2018)

In CCRCD citizens can, in theory, attend public meetings and/or can address their local council leaders with regards to the city-region. The previous sections have demonstrated though, that in practice, this process can be difficult, lengthy and frustrating. The three actions that Papadopoulos (2012, p. 4) saw as essential for democratic accountability – that decision-makers provide ex post justifications for their decisions, that these decisions are subject to public debate, and that decision-makers risk sanctioned if they fail to convince their audiences – have been largely absent.

Despite, or maybe because of all these issues, the city-region has sparked other people's attention and imagination. Various grassroots groups, currently excluded by the CCR's 'skewed representational regime' (Beel et al., 2018, p. 308), identified certain gaps in the city-regional approach and tried to fulfil complementary functions. It is too early to assess their impact, yet irrespective of it, one implication is clear: a city-regional collaborative governance structure

would create the space for such actors to become central stakeholders, instead of pushing them towards the fringes. As the following parts shows, it is precisely these actors who have the potential to expand the current developmental narrative and create a more progressive version of CCR.

5.2.3   The outsiders' alternative initiatives to city-regional development

As mentioned, the scarcity of information available when this research project started led to an inductive approach to data collection. A continuous effort to be present at events connected (even tangentially) with the city-region helped discovering four different groups whose projects have the following common features: (i) they are centred on Cardiff Capital Region, and (ii) they attempt to fill in a gap perceived in the current city-regional approach.

Besides them, two more groups discovered called for a more proactive city-regional leadership, one which enlarges both the range of its stakeholders and its scope. Surely, there must be dozens of other city-regional projects relevant to study. Nonetheless, the aim of this research is not to exhaustively list them, but rather to show the wealth of ideas available that the CCRCD would benefit from considering. These initiatives constitute 'regionalisms from below' (Kipfer & Wirsig, 2004), demonstrating similar to other British city-regions, that non-experts 'want to feel part of the revolution in devolution and not simply to have change imposed upon them' (Flinders et al., 2015, p. 3).

In this sense, an employee of the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority highlighted that, as far as they knew, the communication between the park and the city-regional structures had been minimal. Nevertheless, the BBNP will most definitely be impacted – both positively and negatively – by the different decisions of CCRCD. Besides, when asked about their areas' assets, various CCRCD leaders mentioned the proximity to the national park and the benefits for their inhabitants' life quality. Certainly, the lack of communication raises questions regarding the integration of future plans which could be secured through dialogue and collaboration.

Furthermore, a local artist from *Made in Roath*[53], highlighted the need to preserve the region's rich culture, as well as to ensure equal access across the CCR:

> *"In Cardiff we were campaigning (…) but, you know, with the National*
> *Museum on our doorstep, with access to galleries, museums, even if all that*

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[53] http://madeinroath.com/

stuff might feel like it's under threat, in Merthyr there is an enormously rich

history and culture of political activism, just really rich culture not being

celebrated at all. I just went to the local museum and you now have to pay

£2 to get into – which I know isn't much, but in terms of what it means,

when it's the only place the people in Merthyr can go to, to access culture –

their own culture! It's a really sort of damaging symbol, I think…" (MIRR,

personal communication, 6 June 2018)

The interviewee cited above is one of the organisers of *The Red Route*, a march from Cardiff to Merthyr Tydfil which merges culture and activism. The 27mile long walk is opened to anyone and the organisers offer participants water, food, and *cultural nourishment*, engaging local artists. The event has a twofold aim. First, it is an attempt to 'bring something back to Merthyr', since 'Merthyr built Cardiff' (MIRR, personal communication, 6 June 2018) and is now one of the most deprived councils in South East Wales. Second, the event tries to raise awareness about the vibrant artistic and cultural community that was born, raised and highly influenced by the Welsh valleys.

Nature and culture are only two examples of projects and themes that the CCRCD is discounting, as they are probably not considered to have a direct impact on the economic targets set. Conscious of this limited perspective, one of Cardiff University's working groups has, in fact, outlined a variety of subjects that explore the city-region's wider potential. The section below analyses the university's contribution, and is followed by two other projects that attempted to bring alternative or complementary visions for city-regional development.

5.2.3.1   Cardiff University

a. Metro Group
Who?
The Metro Group (CUMG) was set up in the summer of 2016, a few months after the institutionalisation of CCRCD, by Mark Barry. Barry is a Professor of Practice in Connectivity at Cardiff University and author of the report[54] which laid the vision and foundations for the South Wales Metro. The group aimed to 'focus on research, practice and impact under a City-Region/Metro *Mobilities and Placemaking* theme'. For this, it deemed appropriate to involve 'interested academics at Cardiff University and key regional stakeholders with influence over, or

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[54] Barry, M. (2011). *A Metro for Wales' Capital City-region. Connecting Cardiff, Newport and the Valleys.* Cardiff Business Partnership/Institute of Welsh Affairs. https://www.iwa.wales/wp-content/uploads/2011/02/iwa-metroreport.pdf

responsibility for, *delivery* – such as the Design Commission for Wales, local authorities, WG, design/planning consultancies, etc.' (CUMB, personal communication, 7 June 2016).

Many volunteers embraced this initiative and the number of active members has been fluctuating depending on the activity. While some meetings were only attended by the core group (of under 20 persons), the event organised in October 2018 to launch the *Metro and Me* report attracted around 250 attendees. These were academics, politicians and governmental officers, planning and architecture practitioners, entrepreneurs and business representatives, as well as artists. The event's core organisers came from Cardiff University, the Institute of Welsh Affairs and the private company Capital Law. Besides, the corporate community supported it in various ways: the report was designed and produced by the global firm Arup, and sponsors included Transport for Wales and KeolisAmey (the winning bidder in the Metro's procurement), among others.

What?

Besides the internal meetings, CUMG organised two large public events and published a collection of thought pieces and a report. The central question (and the name of the first event) has been 'What Metro Might Do?', highlighting that the Metro is the biggest single project ever undertaken by the WG. Considering the scale, it required a systemic understanding and planning of the city-region in order to succeed in connecting it, not only from a transport point of view, but also socio-economically and culturally.

The group functioned independently from the WG (and the RTA) and explored how a transformed public transport network would impact CCR. The academics and practitioners involved aimed to emphasise that topics such as the built environment, spatial planning, arts and culture, green infrastructure, economy and community engagement must be considered when exploring the Metro's full place-making potential. Without pretending to have all answers, CUMG's intention was to open a conversation and raise questions about topics which had not been previously reflected upon.

So what?

The group has had significant city-regional impact, both from a process and a policy perspective. In terms of process, although CUMG was started and mostly led by academics, its events were public and the outputs are available online. These might have been the largest city-regional engagement events where a diversity of people had the chance to reflect and discuss on what the city-region might be, well beyond its transport infrastructure. Thus, CUMG has showcased

the wealth of local knowledge and individuals' enthusiasm to get involved in influencing CCR's future.

Certainly, there have been questions regarding Barry's intentions and possible conflicts of interest, since he was working for one of the bidding companies during the Metro procurement. This resulted in initial limited interaction with WG and CCRCD, and the barriers were only removed in May 2018 when the winning company was announced.

Even so, from a policy perspective, CUMG has reversed the way of thinking, asking 'what type of city-region do we want and how do we get there?' – an interrogation which might determine people to think of the manifold interrelated aspects that make the city-region and affect its development. This is a clear departure from defining the city-region solely based on commuting patterns and from measuring its success in economic gains.

b. City-region Exchange
Who?
The City-region Exchange (CUCRE) was one of the five Flagship Engagement Projects launched by Cardiff University. Lasting from October 2014 until June 2018, it was run by three academics out of which only one person worked fulltime. Although not directly associated, other academics have also contributed to CUCRE's work and outputs.

What?
CUCRE was 'launched at a time when the city-region was mooted but its structures didn't really have any kind of clear form' (CUCRER, personal communication, 07 June 2018). Cardiff University's leadership wanted to be involved in discussions, to shape and steer the city-region's development, and the political figures also thought it would be beneficial for the region. CUCRE's aim was to 'promote and support academics' engagement with city-region agendas', and collaborate with external partners that could bring positive socio-economic impacts in the city-region (Cardiff University, n.d.).

Unlike CUMG, which could be considered a more grassroots initiative, the CUCRE had a rather prescribed agenda. The university's 'oversight structures' expected the group to focus on engagement activities, rather than research. According to one of the persons interviewed, this proved incompatible with the members' interests who did not have the capacity, nor the expertise to do 'pure engagement activities' – a remit which the interviewee believed belonged to the university's Engagement Team anyway (CUCRER, personal communication, 07 June 2018).

Nonetheless, throughout its existence, CUCRE hosted a range of events, from roundtable discussions – most often attended by relatively small groups of academics from across various departments, to the *Partnering for Change* showcase – a larger exhibition of projects led by CU's students and staff around the city-region. Besides, CUCRE produced a series of outputs which are still available on its website, trying to analyse and capture various aspects of the city-region.

Moreover, CUCRE led an award scheme that offered up to £5000 to pilot projects that engaged with communities, public authorities or firms on issues such as health, well-being, social inclusion, business support, innovative public service delivery, education and employment, economies, and heritage. Some of these projects have been very successful and are still running today after securing money from other sources, but most have ceased existing (either because of their event-based nature or lack of funding).

So what?

Despite its limited existence and remit, one of CUCRE's biggest realisations has been to demonstrate the wealth of community-based initiatives across the city-region, and the richness of knowledge and information available. Among the four initiatives analysed in this chapter, it is probably the only one whose emphasis was mainly on small-scale development and community groups. Unfortunately, its leading structures did not have a plan to develop or maintain the engagement projects – a commonly encountered engagement flaw which fails to ask what happens once the funding/event ends.

Also regrettable is CUCRE's disconnection both from the CUMG, and CCR's formal governance structure. The group operated in isolation since it was not 'sufficiently tapped into those networks and nobody thought to include or update' members (CUCRER, personal communication, 07 June 2018). This is another proof that CCRCD is currently unable to harness the different interest groups and foster collaboration among them, since there is no platform for such encounters. Nonetheless, as the interviewee pertinently said, the three universities in South East Wales are among 'the few bodies that have the scale to be able to operate regionally, the budget to be able to operate regionally, and the remit to operate regionally'. Thus, independently from the CCRCD, they ought to be using their power (particularly their procurement power) in the benefit of people and communities in South East Wales. This statement raises interesting questions regarding the role and responsibilities of universities and other pan-regional bodies, especially in terms of contributions to the national well-being goals (detailed in Chapter 5.3).

5.2.3.2   Design Circle

Who?

The Design Circle (DC) is a voluntary group established in 2007 as the southern branch of the Royal Society of Architects in Wales. Its members range 'from architects and artists to planners and project managers' who are generally interested in improving the built environment (Design Circle & Partners, 2016). In the context of CCR, DC has stressed the mutual influence between the transport system and the built environment, and has initiated a range of activities to encourage more creative thinking and debates on this matter.

What?

Starting with 2016, DC has been organising design charrettes, engagement events and workshops. The largest event, called 'MUD: Metro Urban Density', aimed to 'show that the Metro could be a huge opportunity for making the whole city-region a more vibrant, diverse, pleasant and interconnected set of unique and enjoyable places' (Design Circle & Partners, 2016, p. 2). Around 70 persons spent a day working in groups to imagine how six (pre-selected) locations could be developed to become community hubs, and not just transport stations. Although the attendees were mostly planning and architecture practitioners, the representatives interviewed believed they had succeeded to attract 'a wide mix of people, including a labour councillor, an ex-minister, teachers and local residents' (DCR1, personal communication, 12 June 2018).

The outcomes of this event include a video and a report, as well as the commitment to continue the exercise in the future. Ultimately, DC aimed to gather evidence for what people would like to see around metro stops, which the WG could adopt as a planning guide. In June 2018 the members were also working to create a game[55] or a mobile app that could engage people in a more creative way than surveys do. They were specifically targeting young people, because 'they're the ones who will have the real benefits because this program is 15-20 years down the line' (DCR3, personal communication, 12 June 2018):

'We're painfully aware that online surveys are boring and terribly responded to (…) So we're creating our own game that's akin to Sim City, with a metro stop in the middle, and we're asking people to put what they want next to the metro stop. So hopefully that will be more fun than a survey. But in the background, the engine will be pulling out the priorities for what the people put in, and that will give us an evidence base from

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[55] One year later, in June 2019, DC launched #MyPerfectMetro, an online interactive game similar to 'SIMcity' [shorturl.at/zJLY0].

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which we will then construct a pseudo-planning policy document that says:

based on the robust evidence that was collected, this is the guidance.'

(DCR1, personal communication, 12 June 2018)

DC initially thought of working in collaboration with the LAs and the WG, but after approaching Cardiff Council, a co-decision was made to proceed independently. While the group did not want to have 'the council's badges on everything it did' (DCR1, personal communication, 12 June 2018), the council was afraid that the event might be misinterpreted as public consultation (with potential legal requirements and consequences). This argument raises questions regarding the limits to collaboration, and whether engagement activities should be kept outside of the formal governance structure. Certainly, the approach offers organisers more freedom, but it also means that decision-makers can choose to ignore the results.

So what?

MUD was a complex, well-planned exercise with positive results, such as better informed attendees, imaginative proposals for development, networking and possibly new collaborations. Nonetheless, some attendees expressed their preference for a more detailed briefing session, in order to be better prepared and be able to make a meaningful contribution. Real information regarding budgets, timelines and even planning permissions, as well as a series of workshops (instead of one occasion) might have produced a more robust body of evidence for WG.

Still, all three representatives emphasised the amount of effort and time put into organising this one-day event, especially since all people were volunteers and had to raise funds. Their experience matches CUCRE's and IWA's (see below), who also faced major limitations when trying to organise regional-wide engagement activities. Besides, DC's case confirms that 'while intermediaries are able to facilitate more creative ways of thinking about transportation, they are limited by the need to secure funding' (Weir & Rongerude, 2007, p. 9). Nonetheless, the members thought it was all worth it since:

> *'(…) two years later, we're still getting interest, still looking to do the next*
>
> *thing on the back of it. And it did get conversations with Transport for*
>
> *Wales to happen, it got conversations with the head of planning in the*
>
> *Welsh Government to happen. It may have helped, you know? And that's*
>
> *kind of why we did it.'* (DCR2, personal communication, 12 June 2018)

Although the initial events might have mostly been attended by 'usual suspects', DC attempted to fill various gaps in the city-region: the lack of integrated thinking needed for place-making,

the absence of engagement with communities, as well as the dearth of creative ways to spark conversations and encourage people to imagine how their places could look like in the future.

5.2.3.3   IWA

Who?

The Institute of Welsh Affairs (IWA) defines itself as a politically- and governmentally-independent think tank which aims 'to make Wales better', by providing expertise on the economy, education, governance, health and social care, and the media (Institute of Welsh Affairs, 2018b). IWA's engagement with CCRCD was summarised in *Our Smart Region - using smart technology in the Cardiff Capital Region to improve public services, infrastructure, and the economy*.

Coordinated by Keith Watts, the 6-month research project and report received funding and/or advice from members of academia (the Open University and Cardiff University), the private sector (Arup, BT, NextGen Data, Centrica and Microsoft), as well as from the Valleys Taskforce, Wales Cooperative Centre and Y Lab.

> *'Effectively, what we brought together is a group of organisation that are passionate about the region, passionate about innovation, and frustrated about the fact that what they consider to be enough progress is not being made because of the CCRCD.'* (IWAR1, personal communication, 14 June 2018)

What?

IWA's project was inspired by Milton Keynes' smart city initiative (MK:Smart) and explored how CCRCD could use smart technology to improve the lives of people who work and live in the city-region, while strengthening its economy. Essentially, IWA defines smart cities and regions as those which employ automated data to make better decisions, improve their performance quality and efficiency. In CCRCD's case, the think tank recommended six steps to achieve 'far more significant and long lasting benefits' than the stated economic aim of 5% GVA increase (Institute of Welsh Affairs, 2018b, pp. 10–13):

1. Appoint a Digital Futures Champion to lead the region's digital strategy
2. Create a clear, meaningful and motivating Vision Statement
3. Deliver a regional digital strategy that makes open, transparent communication a priority
4. Build an Innovation Hub to co-create digital solutions that tackle regional challenges

5. Launch a Challenge Fund to encourage innovation and ideas from communities, businesses and organisations across the region, stimulating cross-sector collaboration

6. Build a Digital Skills and Employment Platform to up-skill the regional workforce.

Clearly, these recommendations were born out of perceived deficiencies. They highlighted the absence of a clear regional vision and a digital strategy, issues with transparency and openness, as well as a lack of platforms that encouraged innovation and collaboration.

So what?

The report, as well as the interviews with IWA's representatives validated most of the empirical observations summarised in the previous sections (particularly 5.2.2). The two interviewees revealed to have come across similar burdens when trying to find data and understand what is happening in CCRCD. Unsurprisingly, their work put a strong emphasis on visibility and transparency, citizens' right to be informed and have a say in the city-region's priorities, as well as the potential to enlarge collaborative networks. Moreover, they were keen to demonstrate that there is already a wealth of initiatives in the city-region, but no platform for people to learn about each other's activities.

IWA's report was launched in September 2018 and the public event was attended by a variety of practitioners, business representatives and politicians, including some of CCRCD's leaders. The final panel discussion invited the CCRCD director, Kellie Beirne, and Monmouthshire's council leader, Peter Fox, to reflect upon the report and future steps. The two welcomed the 'timely critique' and the provocations, and Fox acknowledged the democratic deficit at city-regional level, as well as the lack of dialogue with communities around their aspiration for the region.

Despite endorsing IWA's work, Beirne criticised IWA for not stating clearly enough 'what problem are we going to solve through technology'. Besides, the CCRCD director also mentioned that there should not be an expectation for the CCRCD 'to do the job for us', since its role should be to 'lay the foundation' and 'put the infrastructure in place'. Auriol Miller, IWA's director took issue with this statement, explaining that it is precisely what IWA expects the CCRCD to do: lay the foundations and open up for other people to be able to influence and collaborate in the future (Institute of Welsh Affairs, 2018a).

Although it is difficult to assess IWA's influence on CCRCD and whether the recommendations will bring any changes in CCRCD's functioning, IWA has successfully held CCRCD's leaders accountable. Besides highlighting the deficiencies in the governance structure, IWA engaged a large number of actors and encouraged them to imagine the city-region's future. The think tank

not only created an alternative vision, but it also proved that a different, much more inclusive way of working is possible at regional-level.

5.2.4 Conclusions

This chapter has analysed Cardiff Capital Region's governance framework, elucidating both the actors who lead the city-region, and the ones who would want to affect its development, yet are currently excluded and are operating mostly independently.

The first part aimed to disentangle the official governance structure, the different groups established, their attributions and ways of working in CCRCD. As mentioned, their constellation, names and functions have changed various times, and will most probably continue to do so, making it difficult for outsiders to understand and follow the evolution. After depicting the complex institutional arrangement, the various issues which result from it were discussed at length, particularly in terms of confusing structures and roles, equality and equity among local councils, as well as elitism, transparency and accountability.

Such issues have determined a range of reactions from groups and individuals who fall outside of the formal governance structure, but who wish, for a variety of reasons, to be able to influence CCR's future. Higher education members, practitioners from both public and private sector, as well as policy makers and researchers, have challenged and tried to influence the city-regional agenda. These groups contested different aspects and deficiencies of CCRCD, opening possibilities for more diverse and holistic approaches for development.

These concluding pages gather the aspects discussed and situate them among other city-regional and collaborative governance studies. The starting question to tackle is whether CCRCD's institutional arrangements can be considered a collaborative governance structure or not. Certainly, CCRCD fosters cross-council and cross-party collaborations, which are an evolution from the past longstanding adversity among these actors. Yet are they enough?

According to the definition and criteria of Ansell & Gash (2008, pp. 544–545), CCRCD's governance structure cannot be considered collaborative since the public agencies or institutions involved have never initiated a 'forum'. The few business engagement events sponsored by CCRCD aimed to inform business communities, not to include them in policy deliberation and collective decision-making processes. Furthermore, CCRCD's open meetings are particularly flawed since (i) they are not the actual meetings where plans are debated and

decisions made[56], (ii) they are poorly advertised, thus poorly attended by the civil society, and (iii) a potential attendee needs strong motivation and skills to read and understand technical documents and policies. Unless the attendee manages to navigate these sources of information, there is a strong power imbalance.

The CCRCD's case confirms some other critiques regarding the unequal power distribution and the struggles for spatial development relocated at city-regional level. Apart from state actors, CCRCD's governance is skewed towards business representatives, and the effects are that 'social relations of production and consumption, especially collective provision by the state, are for the most part downplayed or ignored' (K. Ward & Jonas, 2004, p. 2135). At the same time, the interests of other communities are either not considered, or instrumentalised according to the business elites' interests (Weir & Rongerude, 2007).

The current governance structure was allegedly set up to alleviate any concerns that its two main funders might have had. This has resulted in a depoliticised space, where regional pluralism (Waite & Bristow, 2018) and alternatives to the current ideology of economic growth struggle to coalesce and gain visibility.

Still, as one interviewee said, the invitation for city-regional debates and/or action does not always have to come from the formal governance structure. There are other pan-regional bodies, like universities, that can facilitate larger engagement:

> *'I don't think we need wait on a political opening to do it. This is the thing with self-governing, we're not controlled by the local authorities and we have the freedom to make those decisions. And I think we should be making those decisions. I think that you can probably put too much weight on the political structures of the city-region and say that everything must be achieved through them. But actually (…) there's a limited amount that they're ever going to be able to do and I think other organizations, if we're serious about it, we need to step up and do something about it as well'.*
>
> (CUCRER, personal communication, 07 June 2018)

In this case, Cardiff Capital Region can be analysed through the lens of Emerson, Nabatchi, & Balogh (2012), who think that collaboration can be initiated by anyone, and not necessarily state actors. Indeed, the initiatives that sprang from the outsiders have filled certain gaps and

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[56] The JC and RPB first discuss the items on the agenda during closed sessions. The following week, members of the public can attend, yet the meeting is practically void of any debates. In my experience, the items were mentioned, a few comments were made, and finally everyone voted in agreement.

deficiencies, and have hosted some constructive public debates. Their projects aimed to involve communities, create space for dialogue and imagine the potential of the city-region beyond an economic scope. When the CCRCD leaders were engaged, their reactions were mostly positive as they welcomed (at least in principle) the challenges. In fact, one of the leaders acknowledged during IWA's *Our Smart Region* report launch event that the city-region is creating a democratic deficit (Institute of Welsh Affairs, 2018a) – endorsing this research's findings that transparency and accountability might be two of the biggest city-regional issues.

Such openness is welcomed, although the lack of further action raises questions about (i) the willingness to reduce the democratic deficit, and (ii) the outsiders' capacity to effect real changes. Thus, although city-regional leaders are aware of these alternatives and have sometimes joined the fora created by outsiders, the formal governance structure has not committed to making any changes in the way it operates, at least during its first two years of existence.

Not coming across these bottom-up initiatives might have led to the erroneous conclusion that outsider groups and the civil society are not interested in city-regional issues. In that case, the actors currently involved in CCRCD, through their multi-level, cross-council and cross-sector partnerships, could have been sufficient to consider CCRCD as an example of collaborative governance. However, the examples analysed show that the current institutional arrangements exclude, deliberately or not, a large number of citizens. The bottom-up initiatives presented were inspired by the potential embodied in the city-regional scale. Their initiators managed to advance 'counter-hegemonic visions (…) which are forming part of an important repoliticizing of the local state' (Etherington & Jones, 2017). Despite evident shortcomings (reduced scale, lack of funding, limited influence, etc.), the four cases contain 'potential seeds of quasi-public and regionally scaled action' (Sites, 2004, p. 775) and show a broader, more nuanced image of city-regional ambitions and stakeholders. By balancing the economic perspectives with other issues which matter to local people, outsiders brought CCR closer to what a progressive, regenerative city-region could look like.

Yet, as reiterated throughout the thesis, CCRCD is led by an unequal power structure, even for the insiders. Similar to other British city-regions, CCR is accountable to Westminster who 'retains a stick with which to beat localities if they are not achieving outcomes desired by central government, perhaps especially economic growth and cost savings (Lyall et al., 2015). Furthermore, with WG steering the development of the most important project, LA leaders are left to handle a limited devolution project.

Nonetheless, it is important to acknowledge CCRCD's evolution. To start with, the city-region's state-actors have a history of 'fractiousness and finger-pointing' (Institute of Welsh Affairs, 2018b, p. 26) and their transition to city-regional arrangements has 'layered over old, inherited landscapes and cultures of local and regional economic governance and spatial planning' (Waite & Bristow, 2018, p. 4). Academia has already emphasised that often, collaborative governance 'builds on a history of rancour that has institutionalized a social psychology of antagonism' which can lead to low levels of trust, suspicion and stereotyping (Ansell, 2012, p. 553). Although most CCRCD representatives denied any remaining conflicts during interviews, some were dissatisfied with the current unequal distribution of benefits among local authorities, while others took a clear oppositional stance against WG during a public meeting. Thus, the 10 local authorities and two governments need time to change both how they function internally and how they interrelate, as the following quote explains:

> *'I think it's been a process for everyone. I think we're, you know, we're light-years ahead of where we were at the start and that's a good thing because then, when issues come up, when people have concerns and disagreements, you can talk through them and try and reach a sort of, you know, a way forward. Like you would in any other area of life or work, really, you can't always get your own way. Because everyone has a different perspective and a different interest.'* (LAR1, personal communication, 29 January 2018)

These initial years might have been used for 'remedial trust building' (Ansell & Gash, 2008, p. 559), since trust is considered a sine qua non condition for collaboration (Ansell, 2012; Emerson et al., 2012; Morse & Stephens, 2012). Establishing trust is a time-consuming process, especially when it needs to cascade from the LA leaders and CEX towards their own local councils and administrations, where the number of people involved increases exponentially. Certainly, an important issue becomes, then, the time required for the civil society to develop trust in these structures, considering the limited information available. Although at the moment there are no clear channels through which citizens can impede decisions, city-regions like Stuttgart show that civil opposition can stall well-devised projects (Morgan, 2014, p. 315), and CCRCD might also start facing resistance from outsiders.

In fact, as mentioned, CCRCD's first investment in the compound semi-conductor cluster has been criticised both by the Wales Audit Office and by academia. The two main critiques referred to approving the project before addressing all outstanding matters, and not making publicly available the records of the JC meeting where decisions were made (Auditor General for Wales,

2018b, pp. 31–33). Besides, representatives of the Office of the Future Generations Commissioner have questioned the project's relevance for the whole of South East Wales (FGCR2, personal communication, 26 April 2018), while also pointing out the rushed decision and the lack of information regarding the process (FGCR1, personal communication, 3 May 2018).

However, despite admitting to have breached the WIF decision-making protocols (detailed in the first part of this chapter), CCRCD insiders consider the CSC to be one of their biggest successes so far. Leaders operated under commercial pressure (IQE could have chosen to go to North America) and political constraints due to the impeding local government elections (which could have changed the JC's composition). For these reasons, the insiders believe that signing the CSC project demonstrated that LAs are capable of working together, that their relationship has matured (LAR10, personal communication, 16 January 2018) and that public bodies are willing to take risks if the expected outcomes outweigh the perils. In fact, during interviews, four different leaders mentioned the CSC project as a positive example for the advancement of the city-regional collaboration (LAR1, LAR5, LAR11, CCRCDR). Although the CSC is not a small investment, the project might correspond to what the literature on collaborative governance calls 'intermediate outcomes' or 'small wins' (Ansell & Gash, 2008). Such outcomes help building momentum for collaboration and help developing capacity for joint action (Emerson et al., 2012; Francesch-Huidobro, 2015). Seen from this perspective, the CSC can be considered a project which has strengthened internal city-regional relationships.

Nonetheless, while benefitting the CCRCD's internal functioning, the CSC example also shows that there are significant tensions between efficiency, transparency, accountability and/or wider public engagement. Although citizen engagement experiments have happened elsewhere in the UK (see 2.2.3), CCRCD has barely made any attempts. This might be because of limited resources – financial, temporal, human, etc., but they could also be explained by the LA leaders' need to expose 'a united front' when negotiating with the central government, a stance which could be disrupted by a diversity of opinion and ultimately jeopardise funding (Prosser et al., 2017, p. 10).

Collaborative governance advocates recognise these conflicts, yet argue that 21st century public administration needs to work and solve these puzzles (Morse & Stephens, 2012). While CCRCD might have been efficient in creating employment and prosperity opportunities for the region, it has operated in non-democratic ways, inconsistent with the ways of working inscribed in the Well-being of Future Generations Act (explored in the next chapter).

Yet, many CCRCD interviewees believed that with the time passing by, CCRCD would become more inclusive and collaborative. Indeed, changes in key positions led to significant improvements in terms of direct, personal communication, as well as willingness to open up to a variety of actors who had been excluded before:

'I want it [CCRCD governance structure] to be really nimble and flexible, so we bring people in for a purpose, we set the team, we collapse it. Lots of secondments from the university, from the private sector, from the community sector – because we haven't even tapped into the resource there. You know, there's some fantastic, world leading work there.'
(CCRCDR, personal communication, 11 June 2018)

Some of the academics and public administrators consulted for this research had high hopes that the city-region would establish a different, more open and transparent trajectory. Certainly, this intention can only be confronted as time goes by and future research will elucidate whether CCRCD has indeed opened up its governance structure, as well as the effects this has had on its processes and projects.

The following chapter analyses CCR in the context of what might be the most progressive piece of legislation in Wales. Since its approval, *The Well-being of Future Generations Act* has been challenging public bodies to think and work in ways which contribute to a more sustainable development, both within and beyond Wales. Akin to the regenerative development paradigm, the act remains idealistic for the moment as its application has proven extremely difficult at all spatial scales.

5.3 Part 3: A regenerative city-region?

Regenerative development is the third supporting paradigm for this thesis, along with progressive regionalism and collaborative governance. The concept stipulates that 'the earth can be healed and regenerated through human development' by partnering with nature, and rekindling traditional practices with modern science (Foss, 2012).

This chapter aims to explore the opportunities and impediments for city-regional regenerative action and to analyse the influence of current collaborations, answering the first part of the third empirical question[57]. Regenerative development is a suitable lens to study the Welsh city-region particularly because of the Well-being of Future Generations Act (WFGA) – a piece of legislation which requires public bodies to put the principle of sustainable development at the core of every future action (National Assembly for Wales, 2015). As the subsequent sections will show, such a legal requirement can raise awareness and influence decision-making, yet its success is strongly dependent on political will, as well as time, financial and human resources.

The first section introduces the WFGA, drawing parallels between it and the normative principles inscribed in the regenerative development literature. Then, the chapter analyses a rich, multilevel context, including local and national perspectives that have been aligned (or not) to the Act's foundational principles. This is necessary since city-regions are not standalone structures functioning in a vacuum, but are part of tangled webs of people and institutions. Moving through scales, section 5.3.2 examines local efforts, sections 5.3.3 and 5.3.4. study the interactions at city-regional level, while a national example is scrutinised in 5.3.5. Centred on the idea that what we measure is what we think is important, this chapter also looks at the divergent ways of measuring success within CCRCD and WFGA (5.3.6).

Based on the work done during the secondment with the Future Generations Commissioner's office, further document analysis, non-participatory observation and interviews, this part concludes that CCRCD has been initially evolving independently from the WFGA and has only tangentially touched upon the wider considerations inscribed in the well-being legislation. However, there are visible signs of change especially in the discourses and documents issued more recently, co-existing with persistent barriers that deter CCRCD from applying the Act. All these different scales and issues are meshed and analysed in the final part.

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[57] Some of the key arguments have also been included in Mehmood, Marsden, Taherzadeh, Axinte, & Rebelo (2019). For the sake of simplicity, the article is only cited once, here.

The same word of caution reiterated throughout the thesis is needed here: the fieldwork stage coincided with CCRCD's and the WFGA's first years of existence. Their novelty required all actors involved to accept and adapt to a significant number of changes, including major mind-set shifts. This might mean that the views expressed in interviews and analysed below have changed by now, particularly because of recurring international calls to prevent climate breakdown, as well as a stronger governmental and local commitment to reduce environmental destruction in Wales.

5.3.1 The national legal framework that could support regenerative action

In 2014, the former Commissioner for Sustainable Futures for Wales, Peter Davies, together with Sustain Wales[58], led a national conversation entitled *The Wales We Want.* The project hosted '20 events, 3 launch events, recruited 150 Futures Champions and brought together over 6000 people who took part in over 100 conversations across Wales' (Sustain Wales, n.d.). The aim of this engagement exercise was to identify and discuss issues which matter to people in Wales, group these ideas into goals and start thinking about a plan to pursue them.

This national conversation formed the basis of Wales's ground-breaking framework called *The Well-being of Future Generations Act*, formalising WG's focus on sustainable development. The following paragraphs look into its most important characteristics – the goals, ways of working and the institutional arrangements created, and then describe some of its liabilities.

NAW introduced the act in 2015, yet WFGA only came into force in April 2016 (one month after the signing of the CD). Through it, Wales became one of the first countries in the world requiring its public bodies to place the sustainable development principle at the core of everything they do. This means that:

> *'(…) the [public] body must act in a manner which seeks to ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.'* (National Assembly for Wales, 2015, p. 4)

To pursue this type of development, public bodies have to consider how their actions contribute to *seven national well-being goals* (full description in Annex 10a): prosperity, resilience, health, equality, cohesive communities, vibrant culture and Welsh language, and global responsibility.

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[58] Self-defined as a charity helping businesses and organisations to become more sustainable (Sustain Wales, n.d.).

The goals have to be sought in a holistic manner, which means that public bodies cannot cherry-pick some that are easier to accomplish, and disregard their impact on others. To this end, public bodies must set and publish their own well-being objectives, and take all reasonable steps to meet them (National Assembly for Wales, 2015, p. 3). These goals are interconnected and cut across themes, supporting regenerative action while offering an alternative to the sustainability pillars that have sometimes led to disaggregated thinking and an emphasis on economic development.

The other key aspect of the WFGA is that it puts an emphasis on two dimensions: not only the outcome, but also the process. In this respect, *five ways of working* (full description in Annex 10b) should lead public bodies in their operations: thinking in the long-term, integrating, involving, collaborating and preventing. They indicate a different working culture, one which seeks to improve public services and reduce short-termism, silo mentalities and exclusivist decision-making spaces – well-aligned with the theories underpinning this thesis.

A *Future Generations Commissioner* (FGC hereafter), supported by her office, acts as 'guardian of the ability of future generations to meet their needs' (National Assembly for Wales, 2013, p. 12). Practically, the FGC ensures that the (yet) unborn stakeholders are politically represented in today's governance structures. FGC has statutory powers to provide advice and assistance, review public bodies' objectives, monitor and assess the extent to which they are met. However, the commissioner cannot prevent decisions from being made (National Assembly for Wales, 2015). Sophie Howe is the first FGC, appointed by the Welsh Ministers for 7 years (2016 – 2023).

Despite the WFGA's limitations (discussed later in this section), the Act can be seen as a transposal of the regenerative development paradigm into a legislative framework, demonstrating the state's capacity to take progressive decisions. This policy affects cognitive, structural and relational domains of change, which Fazey et al. (2018) consider essential for transformative actions to avoid climate breakdown.

Cognitively, the act alters the way in which Wales should be measuring economic progress: from undefined growth to prosperity and an economy which recognises environmental limits. Structurally, the policy shift encourages public bodies to be pro-active in helping communities become more sustainable. Relationally, WFGA supports interactions and collaboration, both vertically – between different stakeholders, and horizontally – across silos (Fazey et al., 2018). In fact, the WFGA recognises not only the country's relation and responsibility towards the unborn, but also towards the entire planet – since it has become widely accepted that with globalisation, a country's footprint expands well beyond national borders. Despite this support

for regenerative action, functional changes or outcomes, such as practices which disrupt the status quo, are still limited, especially at city-regional level.

Undoubtedly, the WFGA has some limitations. According to Davies (2017), the WFGA features as an innovative piece of legislation In the environmental law literature, albeit with some caveats. The scholar signals that first, a lack of clear definitions (e.g. how long is 'long term'[59]) might allow leaders to interpret the Act according to their own needs. In the city-region's case, the risk is that leaders equate *long term* to 4-5 years – the periodical gateway review or a political cycle, losing track of wider perspectives as required both by the Act and the regenerative paradigm. Furthermore, as this chapter will also demonstrates, without a stronger legal enforcement of the duties stipulated, the Act's application depends almost entirely on political will (Davies, 2016). A final word of caution highlights the limited budget the FGC and her office have, qualifying it as 'mere parsimony' (Davies, 2017, p. 175) compared to the large amount of work needed to oversee the Welsh public bodies listed in the legislation. Apart from these legislative loopholes, section 5.3.6 will also discuss some issues related to the WFGA metrics, considered problematic by some interview participants.

Furthermore, as mentioned above, the Act was published just before the CD was signed – and thus, the CCRCD is not one of the public bodies directly listed. This means that CCRCD is not compelled to define *regional well-being goals* or a *regional well-being plan*. Section 5.3.4 shows how the city-region has evolved disconnectedly from the well-being legislation, although there are signs of change.

Despite this drawback, individually, the ten local authorities and the WG do have statutory duties, and have all developed and published their separate well-being goals. Thus, the UK Government is the only CCRCD insider falling outside of the WFGA's framework. Even so, the commissioner has tried to liaise with and steer both the JC and the UK Government (albeit with the former regarding issues related to Anglesey, not South East Wales). The FGCO contacted the UK Secretary of State to highlight that even though the Act was only covering Wales, 'it made sense to apply it', especially since any local authority from Wales was required to. However, while waiting for a reply, the representatives were not expecting a positive and enthusiastic response (FGCR1, personal communication, 3 May 2018).

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[59] *Long-term* thinking is one of the five ways of working, defined in the Act as: 'the importance of balancing short term needs with the need to safeguard the ability to meet long term needs, especially where things done to meet short term needs may have detrimental long term effect' (National Assembly for Wales, 2015, p.5).

This issue reflects the tensions between the city-regional approach and the well-being legislation, explored in detail in the following sections. Moreover, it highlights some of the tensions between the two governments involved in CCRCD, which were often concealed in the interviews conducted with the CCRCD insiders, as previously explained. Although the two governments involved have an equal financial contribution in the city-region, it seems like through the city deal arrangement, Whitehall has a greater power to influence Cardiff Capital Region's evolution. Besides requiring a specific governance structure and agenda, the UK Government has the final word in releasing funding. It's not surprising, thus, that one academic thought city deals were entirely shaped by the British Treasury, and are very narrow in terms of what they consider 'development' (CUKM, personal communication, 30 May 2018). Framing city deals in this manner also 'tutors' local leaders into envisioning CCRCD along a conventional *growth* model, regardless of the holistic, progressive legislation that would support them in recognising the limits of the global environment and act accordingly.

Nonetheless, this research sought to understand how this 'ground-breaking piece of legislation' (Davies, 2017, p. 175) was perceived, interpreted and applied (or not) at various levels in South East Wales. The following section looks at the local efforts made to operationalise the act, since the ten LAs – as individual parts composing CCRCD – have made some progress. Yet, as the rest of the chapter shows, the well-being plans and objectives currently set at local and national level demonstrate a heterogeneity of promises and actual commitments. Tangentially affected by both, CCRCD is a specific case and the second half of the chapter presents a nuanced image for the intersection of the WFGA and city-regional action between 2016 and June 2018.

5.3.2 A wobbly beginning for the local efforts that could foster it

To operationalise the WFGA, each local authority in Wales established a Public Services Board (PSB hereafter), composed of councils, University Health Boards, Fire and Rescue Authorities, Natural Resources Wales and a range of other organisations (e.g. higher education, arts and sports, etc.). In CCR, there are only nine PSBs since Merthyr Tydfil and Rhondda Cynon Taf created a joint PSB. PSBs' task is to assess the state of environmental, social, cultural and economic well-being in their area; publish well-being assessments; set objectives; and take all reasonable steps to meet those objectives. The objectives and steps proposed are included in a 5-year Local Well-being Plan (LWP) which had to be published by March 2018 (National Assembly for Wales, 2015).

Fortunately, the secondment with the FG office coincided with the PSBs' first iteration of their well-being assessments, allowing an insider's perspective into the work done. This section summarises personal observations, and is complemented by a brief overview of the report written for the FG Commissioner by three other academics (Netherwood, Flynn, & Lang, 2017). Furthermore, two reports that scrutinised the local well-being plans supplement the data, providing a well-rounded picture of the local efforts to implement the WFGA.

Acknowledging it was the first time LAs undertook a comprehensive assessment of their communities' well-being, Netherwood et al. (2017) paint a grim picture concerning the local capacity to deliver the WFGA. This proves to be a rather widespread concern, shared by some of the academics interviewed, too. The report demonstrates that the 'frame' used by PSBs, or the data they collected and the topics they explored, led to a 'narrow and shallow picture of well-being'. Its domino effect over the policy debate, formulation and implementation, led to a thin version of sustainability where a traditional agenda is marketed as 'planning for well-being', with tiny changes for the status quo. This danger has been signalled in the regenerative literature too (see the critique on sustainability in du Plessis, 2012), and the analysis returns to this issue since CCRCD might also be a case of discourse change without noticeable action change.

Furthermore, the report questions the PSBs' limited capacity to analyse and interpret data, understand it in a holistic way and overcome policy silos. Likewise, long-term and strategic perspectives hardly featured in the assessment, with issues such as Brexit, climate breakdown, welfare reform or ageing populations being barely explored (Netherwood et al., 2017, p. 36). Besides, PSBs showed few signs of progressive ideas which could turn liabilities into an asset for local communities (e.g. allowing communities to transform vacant plots and buildings into community spaces, creating programmes that combine day care for children and elderly citizens, etc.).

In analysing local well-being assessments, this research focused particularly on the PSBs' positioning within and relative to CCR and the CD. Unfortunately, the conclusions reached in the aforementioned report were confirmed from this point of view, too. Judging by these documents (available online at The Future Generations Commissioner for Wales, n.d.), PSBs have a very limited understanding for how different geographic and administrative scales will impact each other. In their assessments, the South Welsh PSBs have barely mentioned the city-region, with one extreme case where only the Metro featured. Furthermore, the CCRCD came up when talking about the economy and transport, without exploring how this funding stream or the new connections created could/will affect local authorities more generally. This can be

interpreted as a clear repercussion of the economic reductionist narrative underpinning the city-region, which prevents alternative ambitions for this collaboration.

A particularly worrying example which supports the conclusions of the section on governance, comes from one of the PSBs which situated itself as an outsider of the CCRCD.

> *'The Cwm Taf local authorities are part of the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal. The deal was signed in March 2016 and aims to unlock economic growth across the Cardiff Capital Region; however, there is limited information on the overall economic outcomes **they** want to achieve or the expected impact on well-being.'* (Cwm Taf PSB, 2017, p. 5 emphasis added)

Theoretically, the ten LAs have joined up forces for the entire region's benefit and their actions will definitely impact all communities' well-being. The opaque governance structure and the limited information released seems to have been inaccessible even for PSBs, which stem directly from local governments. As a result, some PSBs find it difficult to relate to the city-regional layer and to understand the relevance for their own localities. If this is a challenge for public officers, small wonder that most citizens are not engaging with CCRCD.

Subsequent to the assessments, PSBs also published their LWP before June 2018. Both the FGC, and WAO examined the LWPs. The FGC analysed the local well-being objectives and found that, overall, public bodies 'stuck to their core business', putting very little emphasis on environmental and cultural well-being. Very few public bodies had thought of how they are or how they plan to contribute to goals such as 'a resilient' or 'a globally responsible Wales' (Future Generations Commissioner for Wales, 2018, p. 22). Nonetheless, the criticism aimed to be both constructive and empathic with the PSBs' difficult challenge, as the extract below shows:

> *'Your support team have worked hard to develop this assessment and the people who support your well-being planning will need your full buy-in and support. Key features of this are likely to be the leadership you show and your willingness to give people space and permission to explore new ways of addressing old problems. This cultural change is what the Well-being of Future Generations Act is all about.'* (Future Generations Commissioner for Wales, 2017, p. 2)

WAO took a similar stance while examining how public bodies used the WFGA to alter their practices and the services they provide. The report found that while public bodies were able to provide examples for how they used the act, the sustainable development principle was still not

being systematically applied (Auditor General for Wales, 2018a). Moreover, the investigation tried to understand how public bodies perceived the act (Figure 5-5), since this impacts how receptive they are. Although WAO is positive about the many authorities who see it as an opportunity, there are still 41% of the respondents who see it as an additional burden, considering time and budget restraints. Section 5.3.4 describes a similar exercise, representing the answers of CCRCD leaders on a spectrum to show the varying perceptions of the WFGA at city-regional level.
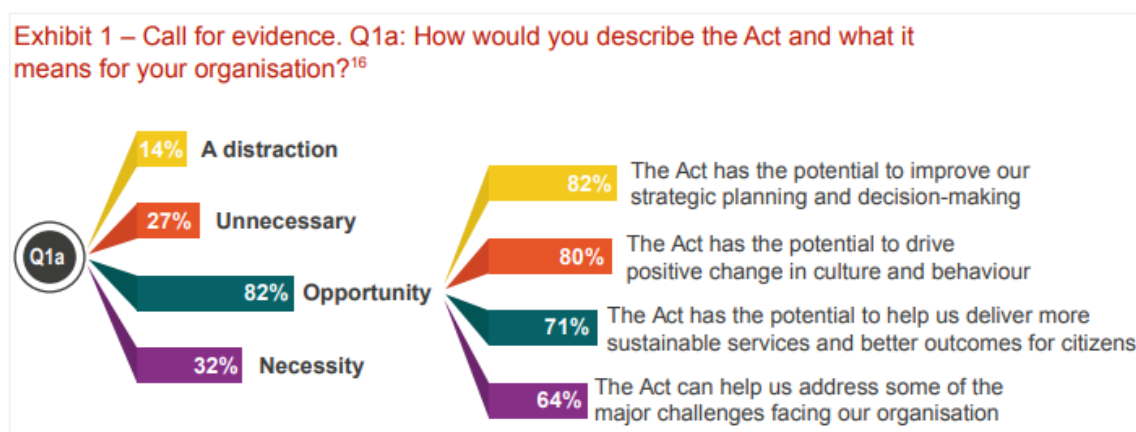

Exhibit 1 – Call for evidence. Q1a: How would you describe the Act and what it means for your organisation?[16]

Figure 5-5: Perceptions of the WFGA among PSBs

(Source: Auditor General for Wales, 2018a)

In conclusion, it is safe to say that all the examinations, academic and governmental, are showing that some small steps are being taken, yet there is still a long way to go for the WFGA to disrupt the status quo. The delivery of the legislation requires a new learning path and a cultural shift, akin to the change in worldview seen as prerequisite for regenerative development (du Plessis & Brandon, 2015; Mang & Haggard, 2016). Unless public bodies acknowledge the legislation's value and embody it in their institutions, there is a real danger that the WFGA becomes another bureaucratic expediency. To further understand these issues, section 5.3.7 discusses in detail the various internal and external barriers that might be limiting the act's implementation, both at local and regional level.

This brief inspection into the work done by public bodies was a necessary foundation for the following parts. Since CCRCD is not listed in the WFGA, the city-regional structure was not bound to define *regional well-being goals* or a *regional well-being plan*. Nonetheless, as 11 out of 12 signatories of the CD have statutory duties, the FGC and her office have actively tried to steer CCRCD's ways of working and decisions towards a more progressive agenda. The following part examines these efforts, as followed closely and documented during the secondment.

5.3.3 The Commissioner's journey to put well-being on the city-regional agenda

So far, this chapter has focused on the changes effected by the Welsh well-being legislation, which through its philosophy and ambitions, can be associated with the regenerative paradigm. The sections above have showed that while the act is innovative and ambitious, it has also proven tremendously challenging to be made operational. Neither the FGC and the academics commissioned to report on PSBs' work, nor the WAO have been entirely satisfied with the interpretation and the application of the act at local level. Nonetheless, they all recognise the many practical barriers and that this will be a long process since it requires work and cultural shifts.

As mentioned, the city-region is not among the 44 public bodies explicitly mentioned in the well-being legislation. Yet, the ten LAs and Welsh Government, as part of CCRCD and under the WFGA, must give due consideration to how their city-regional collaboration can maximise its contribution to the seven national well-being goals. To analyse the extent to which CCRCD has considered the WFGA, it is necessary to first understand the interrelations between the two institutions – FGCO and CCRCD. The fieldwork strived to recognise both angles and this section presents the FGC's perspective on the city-regional work done between 2016 and June 2018. Then, the analysis turns to CCRCD leaders' perceptions of the WFGA and their efforts to apply it.

FGC tried to intervene early in the city-regional affairs because she believed city-regions are a suitable scale to foster collaboration across different local authorities, governments and non-governmental stakeholders; to improve integration among public services, both between different departments and between different geographic areas; to think in the long term and escape the short-term funding and political cycles, since city deals are 20 yearlong agreements; and to act in a preventative way that could tackle 'persistent challenges such as climate change, poverty, inequality, social cohesion, jobs and skills' (Future Generations Commissioner for Wales, 2016). For this reason, Howe discussed with the city-region's chairman, and then the Growth and Competitiveness Commission, and published a letter ahead of the commission's report (see also 5.1.2) in December 2016.

Howe recommended to 'approach economic development in innovative ways that put sustainability and citizens at the centre', instead of focusing on increasing the economic activity and the GVA (Future Generations Commissioner for Wales, 2016, p. 6). The Commissioner made it clear that knowing the challenges of the foreseen climate crisis, the CD must necessarily

support a low-carbon economy, funding those business ideas which do not rely on fossil fuels and can help Wales cut its greenhouse gas emissions. CCRCD decisions should also ensure that prosperity is better distributed across communities in South East Wales, inequalities and inter-generational poverty cycles decrease, and the spiral of disadvantages for vulnerable groups is prevented. Last but not least, embedding the WFG, CCRCD should seek to enhance the cultural distinctiveness and diversity of the region by engaging different communities and allowing them to shape the city-regional programmes.

Besides the interaction with the Growth and Competitiveness Commission, the FGCO 'sought conversations with CCRCD's decision-making structures' (FGCR3, personal communication, 1 May 2018) multiple times. The invitation to join a JC meeting came rather late, on the 20th November 2017. This public meeting provided an opportunity for non-participatory observation for this research.

Yet, as explained in Chapter 5.2, the cabinet's public meeting is, in fact, a ceremonial one where the points on the agenda are listed and agreed upon, with very little debate (since issues have already been fought over in a closed meeting). Howe was scheduled to speak in the very end and used her time to remind leaders that they need to prove they are using the five ways of working and embedding the WFGA in everything they do, including CCRCD. She advised leaders to use scenarios and key trends to inform their decisions (long-term); assess the problems they are trying to prevent and focus on carbon neutrality, poverty reduction, health improvement (prevention); seek collaborations beyond formal partners and constantly consider who else needs to have a voice (collaboration and involvement); and recognise how decisions impact on all other areas (integration).

Similar to the Wales Audit Office, Howe questioned the IQE project not because it might have been a bad decision, but because city-regional leaders failed to provide any evidence they had used the abovementioned ways of working, or evaluated the project's contribution to the seven national well-being goals. During the interview, FGC said:

> *'I'm trying not to make their life harder, but I'm also trying to say: you know, the act is not about doing an impact assessment of the decision you've already taken. Which is what they did with IQE. The act is about informing the decision that you've taken in the first place.'* (FGCR1, personal communication, 3 May 2018)

During the meeting, the commissioner seemed to offer some leeway regarding public engagement, recognising this might be challenging due to tight time scales and limited

personnel, yet not impossible. Unfortunately, some of the city-regional leaders interpreted this as an endorsement for their lack of viable attempts to engage, and this became more evident during the discussion, as well as during interviews (detailed in the next section). One leader said in the meeting that engagement and sustainable development do not always go together, as the results of a public consultation on transport showed. According to them, the consultees asked for bigger roads, while the council aimed for separate bus lanes and speed limits.

While the issues of public engagement will be explored in the next chapter, it suffices to say that this tension is certainly real. Debates on sustainability and climate breakdown have polarised opinions, among citizens, politicians and journalists alike. However, local leaders and governments have an important role in steering citizens towards more sustainable lifestyles, while also fostering continuous public engagement. Constant dialogues would help people understand why, for instance, a bigger road is detrimental in the long-term, while also allowing leaders to apprehend the citizens' needs (e.g., more affordable or reliable public transport to reduce car-dependency). In fact, one of the latest IPCC reports claims with high confidence that investing and promoting climate literacy is vital for communities to learn, understand and prepare for the impending climate changes. Drawing on multiple knowledge systems (including local, indigenous and scientific), such action can 'transform existing institutions and enable informed, interactive and adaptive governance arrangements' (IPCC, 2019, p. 42).

In Wales, however, the signals that leaders have given have been confusing (detailed in section 5.3.5). On the one hand, there's the WFGA, the decarbonising discourse and the investment in public transport through the Metro (as well as some small local efforts to invest in cycling and walking infrastructure). On the other hand, the Severn Bridge tolls were removed and most leaders favoured the M4 relief road construction (nonetheless, disproved by the current First Minister, Mark Drakeford). This inconsistent leadership approach legitimises activities which are not necessarily environmentally sound, continuing to pump CO2 into the atmosphere, despite global recognition of the climate emergency.

Nonetheless, during the aforementioned meeting and in their reactions to the FGC's speech, some CCRCD leaders seemed to incorporate key concepts from the well-being legislation. This discourse adaptation was signalled also in section 5.1.2, with regards to the documents released. Two clear examples captured during the meeting are:

'We have implicitly used the WFGA, prosperity will solve issues such as health, industries for the future (…) the vision is there, we just need to implement it.'

'Nobody asked us to set this up, we did it ourselves, we are a different way of working and we're collaborating more and more.' (personal communication, 20 November 2017)

Whether this was 'lip service paid to the act', as one interviewee thought (CUKM, personal communication, 30 May 2018), or the leaders actually intended to operationalise it at regional level remains to be seen. Yet, as the following section will show in detail, city-regional leaders have different opinions regarding the well-being legislation and processes required, as well as the right time for CCRCD to start employing the act.

Although most insiders would say that CCRCD needed to first develop projects before 'appraising them according to the well-being framework' (LAR9a, personal communication, 03 April 2018), the FGC was keen to establish a long-term, continuous working relation between the two offices. For this reason, one person (or two, depending on the availability and workload) was tasked with working directly with the PMO, 'meet up often and try to share work, watching closely their [CCRCD's] progress' (FGCR2, personal communication, 26 April 2018). Throughout the secondment and during the interview too, FGC representatives expressed dissatisfaction with the difficulties in reaching and communicating with the PMO. However, in the beginning of 2018 the two offices started meeting more regularly.

Inevitably, FGC representatives compared CCRCD with Swansea Bay City Region. Besides the two different deal models[60], FGC praised Swansea's programme office for being proactive, engaging with the FGCO and volunteering to use the future generations framework. Swansea's PMO offered feedback for areas where the initial framework worked and where it could be improved, which the FGC found very useful. Needless to say, the FGC representatives were hoping to develop similar working relations with CCRCD, yet they were far from it within their first two years of existence.

Nonetheless, within CCR, the FGC was pleased with the collaboration with TfW who used the well-being goals and the ways of working during the procurement process for the Metro. Section 5.3.5 will examine this in detail, after analysing how the CCRCD insiders perceived the act, as well as their work in light of the well-being legislation. This dual perspective – from the FGC and from CCRCD – allows to understand the underpinning of the two different narratives co-evolving (Morgan, 2014) in Wales: economic growth and competitiveness on one side, and sustainable development and well-being on the other.

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[60] CCR signed a city deal, and can choose projects throughout its funding period and has more flexibility, whereas Swansea Bay signed a growth deal, establishing the investments from the beginning.

5.3.4 CCRCD's perception of WFGA – a case of institutional cognitive dissonance?

Cognitive dissonance is the discomfort we experience when new information contradicts previously held beliefs and behaviour. It is the main motivational mechanism which prevents us from changing our minds, admitting mistakes and accepting scientific findings (Tavris & Aronson, 2017). The title is only partially a figure of speech. While the previous section examined the relationship between the FGC and CCRCD, as experienced by the former, the following paragraphs will show the contradictions and differing opinions that CCRCD leaders hold regarding the well-being legislation.

The interactions – such as official letters, officers' meetings and FGC's participation in the JC meeting in November 2017 – were almost exclusively initiated by the FGC office. To understand CCRCD representatives' limited receptiveness, this part analyses their perceptions and grasp of the well-being act, as demonstrated by the documents issued and the interviews with CCRCD insiders.

> *'We will maximise opportunity for all and ensure we secure sustainable*
> *economic growth for future generations.'* (HM Treasury, 2016a, p. 4)

The quotation above is the only reference to *future generations* in the city deal document from 2016. Since the CD was signed before the WFGA came into power, it might be understandable that the word *sustainable* features five times (next to: communities, local borrowing and economic growth), compared to *growth* which is mentioned 30 times in the CD's 18 pages. Although this is just a basic textual analysis, it is useful in setting the tone for the rest of this section. The main observation is the disconnect between the well-being legislation as conveyed by the FGC and her office, and the leaders' perception and (mis-)interpretation at city-regional level.

As expected due to its name and purpose, the Growth and Competitiveness Commission's report (the second document issued after the CD) is also chockfull of growth references, yet there are some improvements. In the interview, the FGC mentioned she had contacted the commission to signal the CCRCD's duties under the WFGA. Possibly as a result of these conversations, the report presents economic growth as a means to enhance 'prosperity and well-being for all', and recognises that an increase in GVA without a reduction of inequality and poverty is not a success indicator (Growth and Competitiveness Commission, 2016, p. 10). While laudable, the lack of a

stronger formulation/message did not lead to new or different indicators that would allow the CCRCD to align to the WFGA objectives (detailed 5.3.6).

While it is beyond this thesis's scope to analyse in detail all the documents published by CCRCD, it is possible to say that during its first two years, CCRCD dealt with WFGA in a superficial manner. The well-being legislation was often mentioned, without providing any evidence of a thorough analysis for the changes effected on the city-regional development strategies. Most often, the act was mentioned as a requirement for future actions, as in the WIF Assurance Framework:

> *'The Wider Investment Fund will also support the Well-being of Future*
> *Generations (Wales) Act by playing a role in improving the social, economic,*
> *environment and cultural well-being of Wales. During the application for*
> *Wider Investment Funds scheme sponsors will be required to provide*
> *evidence they are complying with their equality duties and are supporting*
> *the 7 Well-being goals. This will be assessed through an evaluation of the*
> *business case templates submitted by applicants.'* (CCRCD, 2017, p. 82)

However, this evidence and documentation did not exist for the CSC project, for instance. At FGC's request, the PMO published a 'woeful impact assessment' (FGCR1, personal communication, 3 May 2018) which could still not demonstrate how the act had informed the decision.

Apart from these, a document released by Newport County Council stands out and is worth mentioning here because of the parallel it draws between the WFGA and the county's responsibility beyond its local borders – a key aspect in the regenerative cities literature:

> *'The Council has the legal power to enter into the funding commitments*
> *under the exercise of its general "well-being" powers under Section 2 of the*
> *Local Government Act 2000. This gives the Council a wide ranging*
> *discretionary power to do anything that it considers is likely to promote or*
> *improve the environmental, economic and social well-being of the area*
> *and/or persons within the area. Provided that the Council reasonably*
> *considers that its financial contribution towards the City Deal Investment*
> *Fund will benefit Newport, either directly or indirectly, then it does not*
> *matter that the money is spent or invested outside the area. Therefore, the*
> *fact that individual City Deal projects may be located outside of Newport*
> *does not prevent the Council from making a financial contribution, provided*

there is an overall regional "well-being" objective.' (Newport City Council,

2017, p. 9)

In this case, the act is used to enforce the council's *discretionary well-being powers* and legitimise its investment choices against any potential criticism from other stakeholders*.* Although it can be an example of cherry-picking the parts which suit the ones in power, without necessarily having a holistic understanding of the act's requirements, it might also be a positive sign of South Welsh LAs overcoming parochialism.

The last document worth analysing is the CCR Strategic Business Plan for the Wider Investment Fund which was agreed by the 10 authorities in May 2018. The business plan shows a clear discourse change, using a language attuned with the WFGA. The vision is to create 'a prosperous Capital City-Region for Wales'[61] and the three regional objectives are: prosperity and opportunity; inclusion and equality; identity, culture, community and sustainability (Cardiff Capital Region, 2018, p. 10). While these are all new, the strategic themes to achieve the objectives, as well as the performance criteria, remain the ones inscribed in the CD document from 2016. Whether they are indeed compatible constitutes the subject of section 5.3.6, and it suffices to say now that different people interviewed, as well as different scholars who wrote on this topic, have differing opinions.

Beyond the official documents, this project investigated the city-regional leaders' personal perception of the act, its usefulness and application in CCRCD before June 2018. Knowing how leaders perceive the act can help understand the limited uptake at city-regional level. Figure 5-6 summarises their answers, placing them on a spectrum – both in terms of perception and the extent to which the act has informed CCRCD's functioning.

This figure demonstrates the diversity of perceptions CCRCD leaders have, ranging from considering the WFGA as unnecessary, time-consuming and patronising, to being very supportive of it. The spectrum also shows connections between personal perceptions and the degree to which leaders consider they have applied the WFGA in CCRCD. The persons who had a negative perception were, in fact, the ones who felt that the act did not bring anything new or positive in the way they operated, at regional and local level. For instance, one CCRCD insider thought the act was deterring the council from taking immediate action, due to all the processes and bureaucracy required:

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[61] One of the seven national well-being goals is prosperity.

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'we don't do that [reducing carbon emissions, paying attention to biodiversity, investing in better housing, and/or creating better facilities so that elderly people can remain independent, etc.] because of the Future Generations Act, we're doing that because we're doing the right things. Well, we gotta have objectives in place, we gotta have a plan in place, but we just end up in the process (…) So you know, we'll complete all the processes and the documents look lovely, the objectives look fine, the clarity fine, but we would have taken a lot longer to get there than if we would have, well, actually, start doing this now. It's become a big process which I don't think it's helpful. I don't think that was the intention of the act'. (LAR2, personal communication, 1 February 2018)*

Others agreed that although the act had been 'hammered into us' (LAR6, personal communication, 24 February 2018), it was a useful piece of legislation and not just a tick box exercise. Leaders were aware that the FGC was 'watching closely' (LAR3, personal communication, 18 January 2018) and most of them mentioned that Howe had contacted the CCRCD, criticising especially the CSC project. Unsurprisingly, these city-regional leaders did not see the potential to collaborate on an equal footing with the FGCO, perceiving it as a watchdog. During interviews, CCRCD insiders pointed out that they had been under time pressure, and it was difficult for them to demonstrate they had considered the WFGA in the CSC's case. Nonetheless, six of the twelve representatives interviewed agreed that the next projects should be aligned and assessed according to the well-being framework.
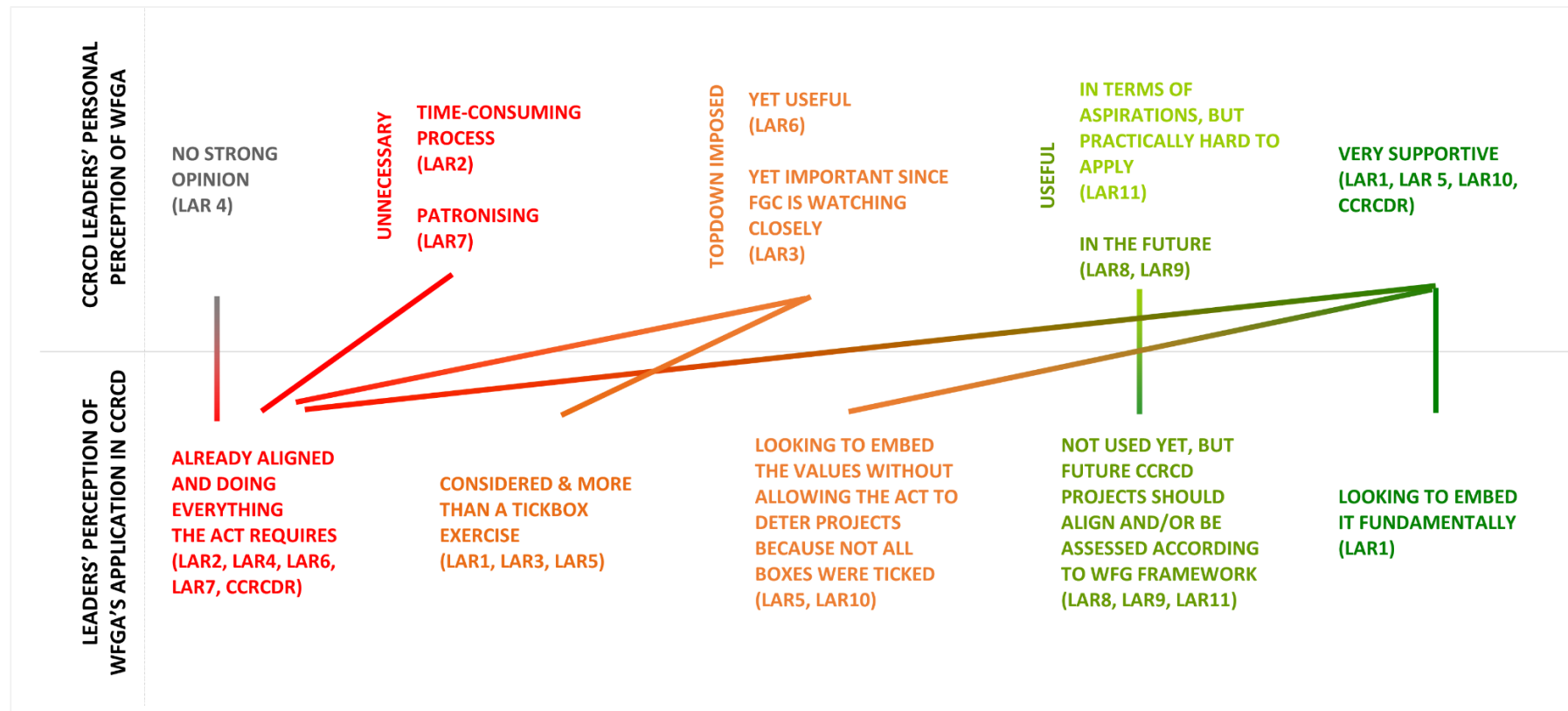
Figure 5-6: Perceptions of WFGA and its application among CCRCD leaders

Towards the other end of the spectrum were leaders who were very supportive of the Act's values and aspirations. Still, this perception led to various answers regarding its application in CCRCD. Only one leader affirmed they were looking to fundamentally embed the act in all local and regional projects, earlier in the process:

'We need to balance the sort of competing interests of any economic regeneration. You know, projects that we can't just think for the short term, that we need to think about using the principles of the act. That's something that we certainly hope to do, and there's different councils that have different sort of approaches and views to the act. I'd like to think we're, you know, one of the council that's tried to embed it most fundamentally. We try and do an assessment for every report that we take up as a council and we're trying to embed that assessment earlier in the process and in the idea stage. I've got members (…) who are very much sort of solid on the principles of the act, to try and sort of provide a scan so that everything we do is built into there. And certainly the city deal is no different.' (LAR1, personal communication, 29 January 2018)

The citation above confirms that the support and interpretation of the WFGA is nuanced across the CCRCD, and subject to change depending on projects and leads. A slightly more worrying, albeit expected position assumed by two leaders is analogous to Newport's aforementioned document. These insiders, while fully supporting the values, thought the Act should not deter the city-region from investing in projects which might not tick all boxes (LAR10, personal communication, 16 January 2018). Instead of becoming a tick box exercise, the Act should be 'something that's part of the culture of the organisation' and the CCRCD should develop the CD programme with those values embedded within it (LAR5, personal communication, 26 February 2018). Nonetheless, the leader thought it was possible for the organisation to embody the Act without turning it into 'a tick box exercise that looks at each project in turn', since there will be projects which 'will not fit with the WFGA', such as the M4 relief road. As it was still debated at that time, the CCRCD insider saw the relief road as 'a prerequisite for the economic success of the region' (LAR5, personal communication, 26 February 2018).

These two cases reveal the danger that the WFGA is applied only partially or in some projects, without consideration for its holistic requirements and approaches. Although Wales committed

almost a decade ago[62] to use only a fair share of the earth's resources, and despite the FGC's advice, some of the CCRCD representatives cannot envision a thriving economy without the pressure on the environment. And since the CCRCD's raison d'être is an economic one, the projects coming forward might be prioritised for their economic returns, compromising environmental aspects.

This is the old-school, long lasting belief that 'economic growth will eventually clean up the very pollution it creates, and replace the resources that it runs down' (Raworth, 2017, p. 128). This mantra has been however debunked and scientists have shown that the Environmental Kuznets Curve, just like the Kuznets Curve, is most often inaccurate (Raworth, 2017). Pollution does not start decreasing at a certain level of income/capita, it is simply externalised to other places and people (UNEP, 2016), and even when it does decrease slightly (like in UK's case), it starts from an unsustainable point which would anyway require 'the resources of at least three planets' (Raworth, 2017, p. 131). The question, then, becomes: if we already know that the type of human well-being we are chasing at the moment – relying on increased economic growth and resource consumption – is simply unsustainable, why do we still steer in this direction?

Despite offering an incomplete answer to the question, this research uncovers some potential factors in this chapter's final section (5.3.7). To support these assertions, it is important though to discuss two other aspects: the collaboration between TfW and FGC's office – as a potential pathway for the future city-regional projects, and the different success indicators used by CCRCD and FGC.

5.3.5   Transport for Wales – collaborating for a more regenerative city-region?

> *'Sustainable development has been part of the Constitution for the Wales*
> *Act and I've been working on sustainable development for ten years. So I*
> *live and breathe it. I think it's been an uphill struggle to get people involved*
> *in it, it's gradually happened. The WFGA was the culmination of the work*
> *we've done and it brought everything together, made them a legal*
> *requirement. [Without it] I would have had a much harder time convincing*
> *the directors of TfW (…) So yes, I think it made a massive difference and*
> *people are talking about it, people are recognizing it as legal requirement.*

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[62] In the Sustainable Development Scheme of the Welsh Assembly Government, *One Wales: One Planet*, published in 2009.

There's lot of people not doing it right across but it's made a big difference

and it's made my job easier.' (TfWR, personal communication, 1 May 2018)

The excerpt above belongs to a WG employee who was seconded to TfW to lead the Metro's procurement process. The South Wales Metro project has been mentioned throughout this thesis various time (see sections 4.8, 5.1.2, 5.2.1 and 5.2.3). As the single largest project of CCRCD, it has sparked many people's imagination and has given the city-region a tangible, physical representation. This section focuses specifically on the work done by Transport for Wales and its collaboration with FGC. Despite certain hitches (detailed below), the procurement process conducted by TfW has been strongly influenced by the WFGA and could serve as inspiration for some of the following city-regional projects.

As a reminder, TfW is a not for profit company entirely owned by WG, set up to improve the public transport infrastructure all over Wales. The company is responsible for the Metro, and its procurement process has been a first-of-a-kind exercise for WG. Employing 'competitive dialogue, a European procurement procedure' (TfWR, personal communication, 1 May 2018), TfW worked together with the four bidding companies to develop Mark Barry's original vision. Unlike usual rail franchises where the operators compete against each other and the lowest bid wins, TfW wanted to obtain the best design and best service within its fixed budget. To reach this outcome, meetings took place for nearly one year.

Working closely with the FGC's office[63], TfW created a list of conditions that went beyond providing what is conventionally expected from a rail operator – better traveling conditions, increased efficiency, more passenger capacity, etc. The contractors were responsible for issues such as: decarbonising and ensuring all the electricity used at the stations and on the trains came from 100% renewable sources; minimising waste; safeguarding ethical employment all across the supply chain (outlawing inappropriate use of zero hour contracts and umbrella contracts, as well as modern slavery) and instituting the living wage; using local catering and contributing to the Welsh culture. In fact, the interviewee specified that TfW was keen to contribute not only socially, economically and environmentally, but also culturally by providing its employees with training in Welsh language, and using stations as community hubs to showcase and allow access to local culture and history (TfWR, personal communication, 1 May 2018). According to them, such aspects were not on CCRCD's list of priorities, like the employment and economy were.

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[63] WG's framework for thinking about proposed changes to the transport system (WelTAG) was revised in 2017 to reflect the Well-being of Future Generations Act.

TfW's well-being goals have been mapped onto the national ones and to illustrate the effort, Annex 11 provides the company's summary.

Some other progressive goals relate to working with young people – both as users who can inform the design of the transport system and of local stations, and as prospective future employees. In June 2018 TfW was hoping that the winning bidder would run an ambassador programme in schools and colleges to encourage youth to get involved with transport. Aware of the unequal gender and ethnic participation in the transport sector, TfW aimed to engage particularly underrepresented groups, such as women or BAME. Another important aspect mentioned by TfW's representative was the integration with the rest of the British transport system, as well as across various means of transport. The company was aware of a tension which tends to be overlooked or rarely acknowledged: that active transport might sometimes reduce the railways' financial profit since some customers might stop using public transport when active travel infrastructure is provided (although Wales is far from such 'perils'). Nonetheless, since active travel has substantial contribution for people and the environment, TfW required contractors to create more and safer bike storage facilities in stations, better connections with cycling and walking trails, etc.

The way in which the WFGA has informed all these actions, as well as the thinking processes behind, is noticeable. During the interview, the FGC stated she was 'quite positive about the procurement process', although she had recently 'picked up some more worrying things regarding the details' of TfW's work. The Commissioner did not make many clear references, but committed to follow up closely to ensure especially the ethical employment criteria is strictly enforced (FGCR1, personal communication, 3 May 2018).

Apart from these concerns, IWA's representative (who had been previously working for TfW) also complained about the difficulty to push forward the concept of circular economy in TfW, as well as safeguarding the sustainability vision down the line of the supply chain:

> *'You know, the first 10 contractors will say "yes, we're doing these things!".*
> *And then by the time you get to the bottom, it's not what they're actually*
> *doing. They're not employing people within 50miles, they're not going to*
> *use local materials, they're not using things that are recyclable, they're just*
> *using the cheapest, doing the easiest stuff.'* (IWAR2, personal
> communication, 14 June 2018)

Furthermore, the procurement process has been strongly criticised for being undertaken behind closed doors, and not allowing Assembly Members to 'question any aspect of the franchise until

it was presented as a done deal' (Wood, 2019). Yet, unlike the other CCRCD structures, the company committed to being open and transparent, and routinely published on its website comprehensive information regarding its operations and progress.

These critiques and hitches are impossible to assess at the moment, but there is a significant difference between TfW and the JC in terms of willingness to commit to WFGA's objectives. This has a major impact on the way projects are designed and delivered, and TfW seems more open for collaboration, not only with experts and the FGC's office, but also with local communities. Surely, considering the amount of work needed to improve public transport in Wales, TfW does not have an easy task and its ambitions might take long to materialise. Nonetheless, the organisation might have made the first large scale effort to adopt a regenerative, well-being oriented approach, which will hopefully help it contribute to areas that fall outside of its conventional remit – transport.

Still, TfW's work cannot be seen in isolation from other WG decisions – some supporting the ethos of WFGA, others contradicting it. Some of the following investments fall out of the scope of this research, but not mentioning them would leave an incomplete picture. As already said, Mark Drakeford, the First Minister, announced in June 2019 that the M4 relief road will not be built and that ministers will be looking at an integrated, low-carbon replacement. In his declarations, the Minister made it clear that this decision did not depend on the project's increased cost, but rather on the significant negative impacts for the wetlands south of Newport and the area's biodiversity (BBC News, 2019b).

In contrast with this example of progressive leadership, the Severn Bridge tolls for crossing into Wales were scrapped in the end of 2018. The Welsh Secretary considered this would bring major benefits not only for the economy, but also for the communities that had been historically separated by the fee (BBC News, 2018). Yet this would also encourage increased car-reliance, just like other new developments in the city region which were criticised by some interview participants:

> *'And at the moment we're still getting projects coming forward, they're*
> *really based upon 1970s thinking (…) Still housing schemes coming forward*
> *in the region, big ones, based upon the car. I don't know if that's [the case*
> *for] Cardiff, because you can connect that. But there's a scheme in*
> *Bridgend, in Pontyclun, on a motor junction on the M4. Why is that even*
> *still happening?'* (CUMB, personal communication, 7 June 2018)

*'And again regional land policy, you know, why are we continuing to
develop schemes – housing and otherwise – in sites where it's virtually
impossible to get to unless you drive? The new ICC, the International
Convention Centre, being built at Newport, just off the M4. Not at Newport,
just off the M4. Well, try and get to that on anything (…) other than your
car. And at the same time we're saying the M4 is too congested, we need a
new road. Well which is it? And a big housing scheme in southern RCT, just
off the M4. Actually, in reality, that's gonna be a massive scheme. But how
do you get to it other than your car? We're having more and more kind of
car based developments, but at the same time we're talking in another
room about "oh, actually, we've got to get sustainability issues on the
agenda, we've got to get more public transport investment". Which is it?'*
(CUML, personal communication, 22 June 2018)

Indeed, the government has been sending mixed messages[64]. On the one hand, WG declared climate emergency, halted the M4 relief road, and is prioritising public transport. On the other hand, it has done little in the above-mentioned cases, and it also encouraged an automotive firm to start producing four-wheel drive vehicles in Bridgend[65] (BBC News, 2019a). Needless to say, the company is not planning at the moment to produce electric cars, so besides the factory itself, this development might also increase fossil fuel consumption, road congestion and air pollution. Looking at the national well-being goals, it is impossible to argue it would contribute to any. Certainly, there are remote communities in Wales which cannot be accessed by any means other than roads and cars, yet these are mostly exceptions. If the state's goal is to decarbonise and stay within its carbon targets, the type of investments and developments sought could be supporting clean and renewable economic sectors.

Once again, the balance between economic and environmental development tends to be leaning towards financial profit, leading to inconsistent governance decisions. Nonetheless, this last 'scale' analysed aimed to acknowledge TfW's work as an example of development which seeks to embody the well-being act, instead of seeing it as a bureaucratic hindrance (as some CCRCD leaders do).

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[64] Another smaller, albeit telling example was the launching event of the WG's Low Carbon Plan. Contrary to some participants' expectations, the festive lunch provided plenty of meat options – despite widespread consensus that meat-based diets have considerable negative effects on carbon emissions.
[65] This information was first signalled by one of the CU interviewees on their Tweeter feed.

So far, this chapter has looked at different administrative levels, exposing the ways in which the WFGA has been perceived, interpreted and applied in Wales. Different sections examined the efforts done at local level through well-being assessments and plans, the legislation's limited uptake at city-regional scale, and the WG's application in the confines of transport infrastructure. The next and last section before the chapter's overall analysis, is the final step needed to understand why this middle layer – CCRCD – might have been the least receptive to the well-being legislation.

5.3.6 Different ways of assessing success – the metrics issue

Section 5.1.1 described the indicators which will guide the UK Government in assessing Cardiff Capital Region's success, releasing the following city deal funding tranches. These are: 5% GVA uplift, 25.000 jobs created and £4bn inward private investment leverage. Since changes might be difficult to observe over short periods of time, the UK Government is willing to consider some alternative measures (e.g. time and budget-compliant investment delivery).

These indicators have been debated and criticised by the CCRCD outsiders (e.g. IWA – see section 5.2.3.3, FGC and some interviewees – see below), and they are, in fact, part of a much larger debate about (i) what the economy is for, and (ii) how can we best measure its achievements. For instance, Hearne & Ruyter (2019) believe that in the context of the Brexit vote, the UK needs new indicators that can better explain regional disparities. In their opinion, GVA/capita does not measure either productivity or living standards. Instead, they suggest using two other GVA-connected indicators – labour productivity (GVA/hour) and regional gross disposable household income (GDHI)/capita, to guide future policy and reduce inequality. Borrowing the graph below (Figure 5-7) from ONS, the authors demonstrate GVA's 'magnitude of distortion', particularly in London's case, but also for Northern Ireland and Wales. This is just to show that there are various ways of comparing economic performance and manipulating different indicators can show a more nuanced picture for the whole of the UK.
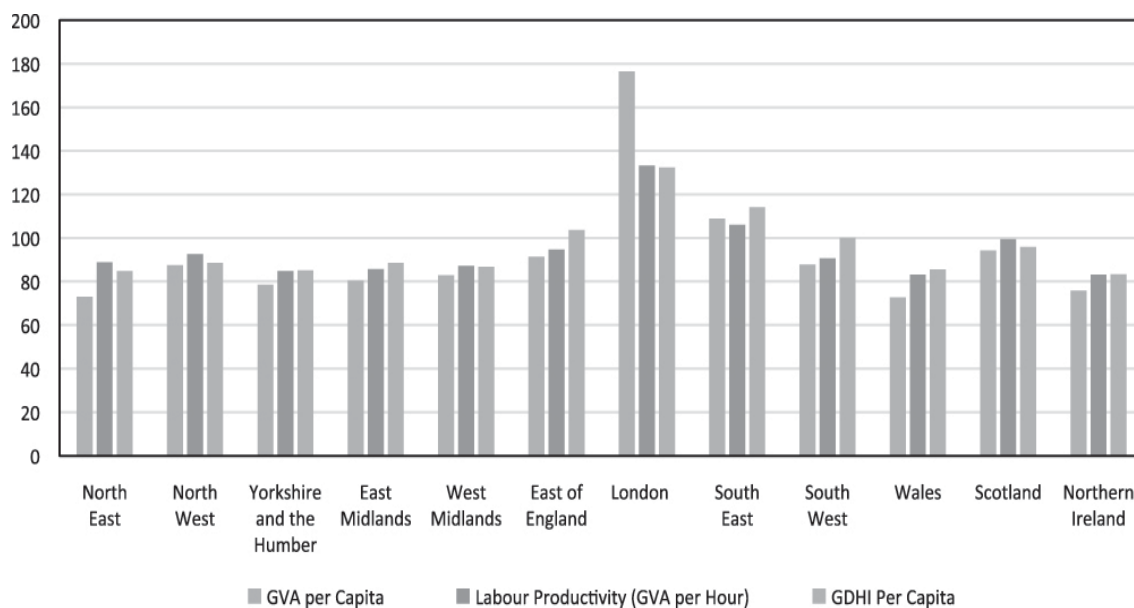
Figure 5-7: Comparative economic performance

(Hearne & Ruyter, 2019, p. 17, citing ONS)

More critically, Lang & Marsden (2017), as well as Raworth (2017) and Fath, Fiscus, Goerner, Berea, & Ulanowicz (2019), position the economy within social and environmental limits, questioning whether it still needs to grow. Instead of growth, they suggest that more regenerative and distributive economic systems would allow humanity to thrive in the confines of the planetary boundaries.

Why should metrics be debated? Because whatever we measure is what we aim to improve and what we focus policies and actions on. If our ambition is to improve the quantity (whether that is the total value of goods and services produced in an area, the number of new jobs created, or the amount of money invested by private companies in CCRCD), chances are that we will not be following the quality, distribution, and even less the (often negative) environmental effects. Yet this is not a new debate. Since one of the interviewees referred to JFK's seminal speech, it is worth quoting his passionate explanation for what is wrong with the current economic indicators[66]:

> *'Too much and for too long, we seemed to have surrendered personal*
>
> *excellence and community values in the mere accumulation of material*

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[66] Despite the differences between GNP, GDP and GVA, the same criticism applies to the three of them. In brief, they only capture the market value of goods and services produced in an economy, and cannot paint an accurate picture for standards of living/quality of life or environmental degradation. In fact, Simon Kuznets, the first person to have come up with the GNP, also became 'one of its most outspoken critics, having warned from the start that "the welfare of a nation can scarcely be inferred from a measure of national income"' (Raworth, 2017, p. 30).

things. Our Gross National Product (…) - if we judge the United States of America by that - that Gross National Product counts air pollution and cigarette advertising, and ambulances to clear our highways of carnage. It counts special locks for our doors and the jails for the people who break them. It counts the destruction of the redwood and the loss of our natural wonder in chaotic sprawl. It counts napalm and counts nuclear warheads and armoured cars for the police to fight the riots in our cities. It counts Whitman's rifle and Speck's knife, and the television programs which glorify violence in order to sell toys to our children. Yet the gross national product does not allow for the health of our children, the quality of their education or the joy of their play. It does not include the beauty of our poetry or the strength of our marriages, the intelligence of our public debate or the integrity of our public officials. It measures neither our wit nor our courage, neither our wisdom nor our learning, neither our compassion nor our devotion to our country, it measures everything in short, except that which makes life worthwhile.' (Robert F. Kennedy, University of Kansas, 1968)

To reiterate, there can be numerous events that increase a nation's economic output, which might not necessarily be beneficial for the whole of the society (e.g. an increase in the illegal drugs trade, an oil spill being cleaned up by the government, etc.). At the same time, less visible work – like domestic work and most of the charity sector – is not counted, simply because it 'does not involve a monetary exchange', as Bank of England's chief economist said (Haldane, 2019, p. 6). Last but not least, evidence shows that in countries like the US, economic growth and life expectancy are now disconnected – while the first keeps going up, the latter has been decreasing for three years in a row (Solly, 2018). In the UK too, research relying on ONS data showed that 'life expectancy across the whole of the UK for both women and men' started decreasing from 2015 on, allegedly as a result in public spending cuts (Dorling, 2019).

Still, despite a widespread consensus regarding GDP's limited functionality, this indicator continues to be widely used today. It guides political speeches and popular media representation for the entire economy, and even European structural and cohesion funds are allocated according to it. Its popularity and persistence might come from the fact that it is relatively easy to measure, and it has been adopted internationally – making it possible to compare different places. Yet its simplicity is perverse, hiding important facts we ought to be considering.

As mentioned, in spite of the discourse change in the more recent CCRCD documents, where words such as 'prosperity', 'regeneration' and 'well-being' have been co-opted, the success is measured in the same way as it was suggested in the initial deal signed in 2016. During a visit to the PMO's office, the former Programme Director mentioned they were looking to develop other indicators to complement the existing ones. They were willing to include any aspects 'which were not fluffy' and could be quantified. That work had to be postponed due to the approaching deadline of the Business Plan, and no evidence of their existence could be found until today.

Considering the more recent personnel changes in the PMO office, the WFGA framework could be the 'complement'. However, the WFGA sits at the opposite extreme from the CCRCD, establishing 46 national indicators to 'measure progress towards the achievement of the well-being goals' (National Assembly for Wales, 2015, p. 8). The list includes economic data such as GVA/hour worked relative to UK average, GDHI, and employment levels. The sheer number and the effort it would take to process all these at city-regional level determined one of the interviewees – who is extremely supportive of the legislation otherwise – to say:

> *'If you look at that Act, if you look at the goals, the ways of working, the*
> *indicators, you put all those three things together: what is it? Seven goals,*
> *five ways of working, 40 plus indicators! I may have said this to you before,*
> *that to my mind, when you add it up, it constitutes cognitive overload. Even*
> *a well-resourced public body would find it very time-consuming and*
> *probably impossible to address that.'* (CUKM, personal communication, 30
> May 2018)

Nonetheless, the interviewee did not support the current economic reductionist approach by which LA leaders thought that 'fixing the economy fixes everything else', and believed there ought to be a middle ground. The FGC referred to this, too, as she was aware that the CD had been designed by the UK Government:

> *'Now the challenge in terms of the conflict is, obviously, the UK Government*
> *– the kind of third element of that partnership, isn't covered by the WFGA*
> *and [the UK Government] set the sort of primary driver of CD as being to*
> *improve GVA in the region. Now, you know, not that the Act would say "you*
> *shouldn't improve GVA", but actually, that shouldn't be the sole driver. And*
> *the Act requires us to think in a far more holistic way about, you know, GVA*

is a means to an end, not the end in itself.' (FGCR1, personal

communication, 3 May 2018)

The FGC did not necessarily see the metrics as mutually exclusive, as long as leaders would be willing to 'craft a way which allows improving GVA' while still complying with all the other requirements of the WFGA. Virtually all CCRCD leaders seemed to agree, apart from one person who acknowledged that there might be tensions since building road infrastructure was necessary for the region's economic success, albeit environmentally damaging (LAR5, personal communication, 26 February 2018).

In fact, Waite & Bristow's (2018) academic work posits that it is exactly the well-being legislation which might allow CCR to adopt more pluralistic policies and change its course from the limited competitiveness focus. The authors use a three-level framework to assess how different relational and territorial geographies intersect, and how growth-centred approaches might be balanced with well-being ones. Their multilevel framework highlights at micro level the policy actors and their activities, at meso level the institutions which co-ordinate between the micro and macro, and at macro the wider policy settings. Applying this to CCR, Waite & Bristow posit that as new discourses and priorities emerge (e.g. inclusivity, well-being, etc.), new city-regional dimensions might complement the 'overt competitiveness agenda' to 'secure public buy-in'. Since it is still early days, the scholars believe there are two future changes at micro and meso levels which could indicate that well-being objectives have started 'disrupting' city-regional competitiveness-oriented approaches: (i) if the gateway reviews will incorporate other indicators than the ones initially agreed upon in CD, and (ii) if third sector members will be included in advisory boards, and social enterprises and environmental projects will receive more attention.

Indeed, as both CCRCD and the well-being legislation mature, and new actors come to the forefront, there are windows of opportunity to reassess not only discourses (which have already started changing), but also the narrow way in which economic development is envisioned. Although not emphasised by the abovementioned study, there are two other factors which might lead to a change in policy orientation and metrics for success: the accelerating concern for climate breakdown and Brexit. The UK's withdrawal from the EU is predicted to have significant impacts on all economic sectors and at the moment of writing, although there are only 5 weeks left until 31 October 2019, the agreement with the EU is entirely uncertain. In this light, UK's GDP is expected to suffer considerable fluctuations, and judging CCRCD's

achievements solely on this indicator would be unfair. LA leaders and WG could use this argument to renegotiate the CD metrics, if they wanted to.

To conclude, tensions between economic growth and well-being approaches continue to co-exist in the Welsh city-region, often without recognition, and more time needs to pass before a middle ground emerges. As this section showed, the indicators imposed by the UK Government through the CD can be contested, yet the Welsh well-being legislation will also need simplification before becoming operational at city-regional level. The next and last part, will discuss this chapter's learnings and bring conclusive remarks from the regenerative development literature.

5.3.7   Conclusions

> *'It's a good start for a legislative policy, showing our aspiration (…) I'd say*
> *it's probably the biggest challenge for CCRCD and for Wales as a whole, to*
> *try to develop a collective capacity to implement those aspirations (…) to*
> *deliver what's already part of our strategy in well-being.'* (CUKM, personal
> communication, 30 May 2018)

The third part of the empirical evidence supporting this thesis has focused on the legislative context in which Cardiff Capital Region has evolved. The Well-being of Future Generations Act enshrines in law the principles of sustainable development and places a duty on Welsh public bodies to protect the interests of current and future generations. Through its emphasis on both outcome and process, WFGA is akin to the regenerative development paradigm, yet at the moment, they both remain highly aspirational and difficult to operationalise.

Like regenerative development, WFGA requires a holistic approach to development. It requires public bodies to craft integrated policies which contribute to all seven national goals. Besides, thinking in the long term, taking action to prevent problems from occurring or getting worse, and involving a range of people who reflect the area's diversity are at the core of planning. Last but not least, collaboration is an essential principle which allows public bodies to establish and reach goals, while also ensuring objectives are not acting against one another. A commissioner for future generations, together with her office, challenge, guide and support public bodies in making decisions which help Wales thrive by only using a fair share of earth's resources.

Nonetheless, the beginning of this chapter showed that CCRCD is a special case among Welsh public bodies: while the individual authorities and WG are subject to the legislation, the CCRCD,

and obviously the UK Government, are not explicitly listed. Despite this glitch, the FGC has tried to intervene early in the city-regional project, although it has not always been easy to communicate to the city-region's governance structure. FGC and her office were concerned that CCRCD's main aims, to increase GVA and number of jobs, were not aligned with the wider well-being goals and might even work against a 'more equal', 'prosperous, low-carbon Wales' goals.

Furthermore, this chapter showed that the FGC's job is not an easy one, as application of WFGA even at local level has proven that 'policy communities across Wales aren't really that well developed, (…) [being] in a sense, data rich, but analysis poor' (CUML, personal communication, 22 June 2018). Discussing local circumstances has helped to see a well-rounded image of the external barriers (e.g. short term funding, legislative complexity, reporting and audit requirements) which are provoking PSBs' 'compliance, rather than stimulating the innovative and outcome-focused response that is hoped for' (Auditor General for Wales, 2018a, p. 25). Internal barriers such as a lack of institutional capacity and insufficient financial support, as well as some negative perceptions regarding the Act and the FGCO's role, have limited the legislation's impact on actual practices.

> *'(…) therefore we're asking the public sector to raise its game to a level that it's never attained in the past, at a time when their budgets and their payrolls are being completely eviscerated. I mean at one level that's almost comical, if it wasn't tragic…'* (CUKM, personal communication, 30 May 2018)

Acknowledging such barriers, PSBs' efforts were widely recognised as a first iteration of well-being assessments and plans which opened new avenues for ways of thinking and collaboration. Similarly, both the well-being legislation and the city-region, as emerging projects, should be seen as processes and not events, requiring time to ripen. In fact, studying various city-regional documents chronologically has showed an increasing co-optation of the Act, at least in terms of language. Certainly, it is too early to declare whether the transition from nominal attention to a well-being focus will really affect practice and city-regional schemes.

As the chapter has shown, even at the national level the evidence is mixed. While the FGC's office would have expected the WG to take a stronger position in negotiating the CD and the success metrics (FGCR2, personal communication, 26 April 2018), the government's decisions are not always consistent with the WFGA. While declaring climate emergency, making plans to de-carbonise and investing in an integrated public transport system, WG has also eliminated road tolls and invested in an SUV plant in South East Wales. This inconsistent positioning is

undermining the legislation's effect, while also sending 'mixed messages' (CUML, personal communication, 22 June 2018) to the other administrative levels, and the communities, too.

Unfortunately, these decisions are a sign that economic growth maintains the highest political support and the aims for *growing* are rarely questioned. In Raworth's words (2017, p. 31), growth is not a policy option, but 'a political necessity and the de facto policy goal' and admitting that growth might sometimes be undesirable or impossible is considered a 'political suicide'.

Yet, as the last section showed, a nation's economic growth tells little about the quality and distribution, and even less about the nation's well-being. Conversely, the WFGA's metrics are also criticised as the sheer number adds to the complex public bureaucracy, overwhelming public bodies. Meanwhile, academics and policy makers across the UK (and the world) are working to develop new ways to conceptualise and measure economic development, in a way which respects planetary boundaries and puts an emphasis on lessening inequality (Fath et al., 2019). The end of the previous sections has tried to show some key aspects which could help this reconciliation in CCRCD. These included a renegotiation of indicators and aims with the UK Government considering the different British (Brexit) and global phenomena (climate breakdown), as well as new stakeholders that are able to influence the city-region's agenda (both insiders holding key roles, and outsiders from the voluntary sector).

Thus, this thesis presented a more optimistic image compared to Netherwood et al. (2017, p. 5) who fear that WFGA's assessments might be an example of 'how political mainstreaming of sustainability leads to bureaucratisation', instead of encouraging policy communities to get a broader understanding of social, environmental, cultural and economic capital in their communities.

Although CCRCD is a very specific case, there are lessons to learn for city-regionalism as a whole. Probably the main message is that having a supportive legislative context (WFGA) encourages city-regional leaders to think outside of the narrow economic development frame they adhered to in the beginning of the project. However, this is not enough since there might be historical tensions between stakeholders (between LAs, between Cardiff and WG, between WG and UKG), as well as well-ingrained mentalities about how the future should look like (economic development that solves all other problems). As the level of acceptance varies widely across stakeholders, it is essential to have strong leaders who are able to convey the legislation's significance and find ways to reconcile economic development with social aims and environmental regeneration (FGC and her office, new prime minister, and potentially CCRCD's new programme director, etc.). In this regard, findings support other studies that showed

scepticism regarding the Act's application, considering it often relies on political will and personalities (Davies, 2016, 2017). Nonetheless, the collaborations established between the city-regional institutions and FGCO, although they took significant time and effort to establish, have started bearing fruits, at least in terms of discourse change.

Having analysed the Welsh city-region through a tripartite lens, the last part of this chapter brings together the most important themes observed in CCR.

5.4   Part 4: Cardiff Capital Region – progressive, collaborative, regenerative?

This research project created a new conceptual framework to study and better understand city-regional development. The starting hypothesis was that although city-regions are often established for economic growth purposes, these new administrative layers cover complex territories which share more than mere commuting patterns. City-regions nurture dense cultural, social and environmental features which deserve an equal focus in the developmental agenda. For this reason, three different theoretical strands were linked, trying to address the various gaps identified in the city-regional literature. After demonstrating their theoretical synergies, the research applied the conceptual framework on an empirical case study: Cardiff Capital Region.

As reiterated throughout this text, city-regional development is a lengthy process which can only be fully understood when studied in its context. Thus, to illustrate a comprehensive image of South East Wales, the first empirical part (Chapter 4) adopted a historical perspective and showed that regional interdependencies go back as early at the 18th century. Various trends and patterns prove relevant to this day, as they can still be observed in the contemporary establishment.

First, the city-region was shaped by antagonistic relations: between the coast and the valleys, and between the local and national level. While CCRCD is a proof that politicians have understood the need to collaborate and overcome resentment, some interviews and meetings revealed that there are still conflicts and a certain degree of mistrust. Second, the city-region was constructed on competing narratives which have long co-existed in Wales: sustainability vs. growth/competitiveness. As seen, even today very few leaders acknowledge the tension between them and consider that economic growth will automatically have positive spill-over effects, both for environmental protection and socio-spatial distribution of benefits. Third, the city-region inspired local authorities, the government and non-state actors to design differing visions, yet CCR only materialised through a city deal arrangement.

The CD model, 'imported from the English sub-national policy context' (Waite & Bristow, 2018, p. 6) has prescribed the city-region's format, determining a power structure where the British and Welsh government hold considerable strength. Thus, while the CD was instrumental to 'overcome an entrenched regional fragmentation' through 'incremental processes and complex institution-building' (Sites, 2004, p. 767), it also determined a rigid agenda and performance criteria, as well as a specific institutional architecture. As with other city-regions across the UK, CCRCD demonstrates that the state is not withdrawing and that the devolution is, in fact, not as

revolutionary as claimed. Instead, city-regions are becoming national geopolitical projects through which the state is trying to impose itself as a competitive actor on the international scene (Jonas & Moisio, 2016).

For this reason, the second empirical chapter (5.1) uncovered the narratives driving the city-region and the extent to which both socio-economic and socio-ecological issues are prioritised. The analysis showed that CCRCD's programme shares more commonalities with the new regionalism body of thought, rather than progressive regionalism. The city-region was established to pursue economic growth, and the internal collaborations were considered instrumental for local authorities – otherwise too small – to compete globally, attract investors and skilled workers. Its borders were defined based on commuting patterns, and investment in transport infrastructure and high tech industries became main objectives. While virtually all city-regional leaders hoped to reduce intra- and inter-regional disparities, they rarely questioned the pathway chosen, despite growing evidence of exacerbated inequality around the UK (OECD, 2020; ONS, 2019). Projects supported through the Wider Investment Fund were mostly prioritising urban centres (Cardiff and Newport), leaving few prospects and limited financial means for smaller and rural areas to foster endogenous development.

Despite this limited agenda, local leaders had higher aspirations for the city-region's future, suggesting that future rounds of funding could be invested in other fields. Still, CCRCD was hardly ever portrayed as a socio-ecological space, and there was limited concern for environmental protection, although the area holds great natural potential to support activities such as sustainable tourism, regenerative agri-food practices, or even community stewardship of land (Blake, 2019).

Furthermore, as in other parts of the UK, the city-regional governance structure only allowed a very select group of actors: local and national politicians, businesses and sometimes higher education representatives, with the civil society effectively excluded. Even so, a complex governance arrangement was created in order to convince Whitehall that South East Welsh local authorities could be trusted to spend a part of the money. Unlike in other British city-regions, the biggest investment is not handled by local governments, but by WG, raising further questions regarding the devolution character of the city deal.

Thus, the third empirical part (Chapter 5.2) untangled the governance structure and assessed whether collaborations could enable a more progressive city-regional agenda. The chapter showed that through its institutionalisation, the city-region gave rise to a number of issues. First, the different substructures (whose name and composition changed various times) were not only

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perplexing for outsiders, but sometimes created confusion even among insiders. In particular, the leaders' portfolios, as well as the roles and differences between the advisory bodies were the most problematic areas. Second, as aforementioned, the unresolved tensions between local authorities surfaced with regards to voting rights (currently equal among all authorities, regardless of size and financial contribution) and the distribution of investments. While interviewees accepted that not all LAs could get funding, the minimal aspiration was that their communities could access the new opportunities created elsewhere. Third, the city-region appeared as an impenetrable structure because its decision-making processes lacked 'codified protocols and procedures' (O'Brien & Pike, 2018, p. 17), were not clearly documented and often obscure for the public.

Several bottom-up initiatives transpired and reacted to these deficiencies, putting forward 'counter-hegemonic visions' (Etherington & Jones, 2017, p. 19) and demonstrating a variety of possibilities for the area. Enthused by the potential to rethink spatial development beyond LA's borders, some of these ideas tapped directly into the city deal arrangement, while others were only connected to the city-region scale. Regardless of their impact, these projects made two major points. First, they showed that CCR's story can be told differently, enlarging the narrative to include tourism, culture, participatory design, place-making and democracy. The outsiders' discourses were almost never about economic growth, since this was rather seen as an outcome of other social and spatial interventions. Second, similar to other parts of the UK (Flinders et al., 2015), the civil society showed a strong desire to participate in creating the city-regional vision. These outsiders volunteered with their time, work and financial means, not being discouraged by the sometimes limited replies and recognition from the CCRCD's side.

Faced with these alternatives, CCRCD representatives reacted and sometimes honoured the invitation to attend public events. However, the governance structure has not proactively sought to engage the public and civic spheres in debates and decision-making, showing that its collaborations were rather limited. The official city-region's events have, at best, been used as occasions to inform business representatives about future plans, without necessarily trying to involve or make use of this knowledge source.

Even so, these bottom-up initiatives, as well as the diversity of topics they focused on, helped CCRCD come closer to the idea of a progressive, regenerative region – which succeeds in marrying various goals, while also enriching the resources it depends on, by working together with the people and places affected by future decisions. An even more supportive aspect in this sense is, in fact, the legislative context in which CCRCD has evolved: concomitantly with CCRCD's

institutionalisation, Wales was one of the first countries in the world to create laws which care for the future generations and prioritise well-being, for people in Wales and beyond.

Thus, the forth empirical chapter (5.3) analysed the city-region's interactions with the WFGA, uncovering the opportunities and impediments for city-regional regenerative action. A multi-scalar view was used to explain the difficulties in applying the well-being legislation, especially considering that CCRCD is not directly listed among the public bodies bound by the Act. The 10 local authorities created their own well-being assessments and well-being plans – albeit of varying quality – and the WG operationalised the act in the Metro's procurement process. In contrast, at city-regional scale, the Act received limited attention and was often seen as a bureaucratic burden. The leaders' political will to embody the act was oscillating, as warned by Davies (2016), and the well-being legislation became an add-on that would be dealt with after other priorities, such as the Business Plan.

Nonetheless, the multiple interventions from the Commissioner's side, the changes in city-regional and WG leadership, as well as an increasing global awareness regarding the biodiversity and climate crises, might be turning the tide. More recent documents and social media posts have co-opted a different language, placing adjectives such as 'good', 'inclusive' and 'regenerative' next to the ubiquitous 'growth'. Whether the discourse change will lead to a change in the way CCRCD operates, and in the goals it pursues, remains to be seen.

Certainly, CCRCD is struggling to strike a balance between the opposing narratives of the two partnering governments: one endorsing well-being (albeit inconsistently) and the other growth. At city-regional scale too, 'the financial, social and political addiction to growth' deters the possibility to envision an economy which supports human and environmental well-being, whether GVA is 'going up, down or holding steady' (Raworth, 2017, p. 152). As long as CCRCD's funding continues to hinge on measures of economic output, and as long as WG and the 10 LAs do not confront Whitehall to bring about change, it is unlikely to see the city-regional agenda or the governance structure transform.

Yet, while political leaders gathered behind closed doors to discuss future plans for economic growth, children and young people from all over the world have taken to the streets, asking for change. Inspired by a 16-year-old who went on strike 'for the future', and joined by other adults and organisations concerned about the impending climate breakdown, young people – the first *future generation* to be affected by current decisions and the first to see the devastating impacts of the climate crisis – are determining adults to rethink priorities. Unfortunately, the *Fridays for Future* and *Extinction Rebellion* movements coalesced at the end of this project's fieldwork

stage, so they did not affect the research direction and the methods used. Nonetheless, they are a strong endorsement for the final question this thesis has aimed to answer: to what extent can future generations affect city-regional development? Some possible answers are given in the next and last empirical chapter.

6   CCR and its future generations

Overall, this research aimed to highlight the potential that city-regions hold for regenerative development. In doing so, it looked for both actors and circumstances which would allow CCR to overcome its narrow economic manifestations. Given the WFGA legislation, the issue of *future generations* appeared to be a blind spot in city-regional governance. Thus, some questions arose while this project's aim was still being scoped out, in conversation with partners from WG: who are the future generations and to what extent are they enabled to contribute to city-regional development? Are there any windows of possibility in the governance structure to engage youth, and which methods might be attractive for participants, while also yielding meaningful results? The following chapter deals with these issues, answering the last part of the third empirical question.

Certainly, the issue of *future generations* and our responsibilities towards them, or the lack thereof, is a moral one and will not be dealt with here. However, a conceptual clarification needs to be made. Nolt (2017) defines future generations as humans *and* non-humans who, at a given time, are not alive then, but will be later. His article presents the arguments for and against intergenerational ethics, and concludes by saying:

> *'It is commonly accepted that we have no responsibility for events whose*
>
> *occurrence we can in no way predictably alter. But our acquisition of*
>
> *knowledge and power has been so rapid that we are now able to initiate a*
>
> *mass extinction, whose predictable ramifications last for millions of years.'*
>
> (Nolt, 2017, p. 11)

While this thesis fully agrees with this conclusion, it suggests a different definition for *future generations* which helps simplifying the debate regarding responsibilities. Thus, instead of seeing them as the ones who will exist at a later time, in order to improve public policy and focus on long-term outcomes, one can see future generations as the first humans and non-humans that will be affected by the policy, having to live the longest with its consequences. While this bears a risk of reducing long term to less than a century, it makes this issue much more tangible and can potentially sensitise policy makers in this regard.

Following this reasoning, the chapter is composed of two parts. The first one starts by framing *future generations*, to make this abstract concept more concrete. Simply put, this research suggests that the children and young people who live in CCR today are the first *future*

generations who will be affected by the current city-regional developments. As explained in the methodology chapter, the target group was restricted to 16-24 years old[67], due to the limited time and the additional administrative burdens in doing research with underage persons. Even so, this part of fieldwork lasted over one year and used a mixed-method approach. As predicted, even by narrowing the age range, the results showed great variations among participants: CCR's children and young people are not a homogenous group and any city-regional policy or programme requires flexibility to adapt to multiple factors (physical location, socio-economic and health characteristics, personal aspirations, etc.) to be relevant and legitimate.

Section 6.1.1 summarises the findings of the quantitative analysis which allowed a better understanding of this age cohort. Besides revealing general characteristics of CCR's young people, the statistical data available also underscored the large amount of information missing for this specific age group. Issues related to everyday mobility, interaction with nature, political engagement or personal relationships – to name only a few, are unfortunately, caveats. Nonetheless, this section outlines a couple of alternative approaches that the city-region could use in working with youth.

After the brief lead-in, the next two sections analyse the youth's *sense of the city-region*, based on the two creative methods used. From the first days of fieldwork it became obvious that the majority of young people had never heard of Cardiff Capital Region, and the research strategy was adapted to overcome this potential barrier. While web-mapping workshops revealed the areas which individuals considered to be *their* city-region, Photovoice showed their issue with and aspirations for those areas. Finally, based on young people's contributions, the concluding part suggests potential lessons for the city-region.

The second part deals with a different outlook on the questions of engagement and future generations. Section 6.2.1 analyses CCRCD's public engagement more generally, while section 6.2.2 zooms into the roles that city-regional leaders ascribe to young people, as well as the ways in which they imagine youth could contribute (or not) to CCRCD. Criticising the various facets of adultism city-regional leaders have shown, the chapter ends by admitting that youth engagement can indeed be troublesome and present many barriers – as experienced in this project during fieldwork.

Finally, the conclusion brings these threads of inquiry together, positioning them in a rapidly evolving context determined by the increasing presence and influence young people have

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[67] This age group is used interchangeably with 'youth' and 'young people' throughout the entire chapter.

gained today. It argues that given the option, CCR's youth would make significant contributions to the city-regional agenda, helping to shape relevant projects for their generations.

> *'Creating better cities will require a multi-tier, long term approach. While no*
> *single project will magically result in an urban environment that meets*
> *young people's needs, each will be an important step in the right direction,*
> *affecting change not only in the physical environment, but also in the lives*
> *of those who participate in bringing about change.'* (Driskell, 2002, p. 22)

6.1 Understanding future generations

6.1.1 A quantitative outlook – who are they and what do we know about them?

As mentioned, this research project started a few months after the CCRCD agreement was signed. Then, the information available for the city-regional scale was scarce[68] and often outdated[69], and statistical data had rarely (if ever) been aggregated for the age group targeted. Trying to get a better understanding of this cohort, the fieldwork started with a quantitative analysis. Despite the inherent restrictions imposed by limited, dated quantitative information, the analysis rose awareness regarding this age group – as the first generation affected by the decisions currently taken – at a time when youth was still a blind spot in CCR. Moreover, it showed significant particularities, while also highlighting the unknown facts regarding youth[70]. The results were published in May 2017 in the report provided in Annex 3[71], and due to space limitation, this section summarises the key findings.

Together, the 10 local authorities are home for more than half of all people aged 16-24 in Wales. CCR's proportion of youth (12.4%) is, in fact, higher than the average of Wales and UK. Like all means, this indicator hides intra-regional disparities, since almost 60% of all youth are concentrated in three authorities (Cardiff, RCT and Caerphilly). In addition, all local authorities except for Cardiff seem to have lost a part of their younger inhabitants between 2011 and 2015. Despite these figures, in 2011 CCR had a positive net migration rate, mostly due to Cardiff's attraction force, and to a much smaller extent, to RCT's and Newport's. Yet, while Cardiff is deemed the fastest growing core city in the UK and 'the best city for young people in Britain'

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[68] Quantitative data was available for various scales (e.g. local, national, lower and middle super output areas), but indicators had not been aggregated for Cardiff Capital Region.
[69] E.g. the most recent Census was conducted in 2011.
[70] As mentioned in the previous paragraphs, no disaggregated data was available for topics such as mobility, access to nature, political engagement, etc.
[71] For sources regarding the statistical data cited, please refer to the last page of Annex 3.

(Cardiff Public Services Board, 2015), the ten-year projections show that all the other nine local authorities will see their youth numbers declining by 2025. While these indicators only answer 'what' and not 'why' questions, they already show the superior position of the capital city, indicating problems of youth depopulation for the rest of CCR.

Besides these demographic differences across the ten local authorities, there are also significant socio-economic variations. In 2011, more than 60% of all young people were economically active in CCR, and unsurprisingly, Cardiff hosted most students and highly qualified persons. Youth unemployment rates peaked at 26.3% in Blaenau Gwent, compared, for instance, with Monmouthshire (16.7%). Worryingly, the authorities where youth was economically inactive also showed higher proportions of people suffering of long-term sickness or disabilities and larger proportions of young carers. The same patterns showed up in the deprivation indicators, too, revealing discrepancies which ranged from 25% in Blaenau Gwent, to 12% in Monmouthshire.

The last set of indicators analysed youth's health and well-being. In CCR, a much smaller proportion of young people evaluated their health level as poor or fair, compared to the total number of people aged 16+. These self-assessments matched weight indicators, as numbers of overweight or obese young people were smaller than for the rest of the population. Nonetheless, it is important to mention that the situation is alarming overall, considering that over 20% of all people living in CCR are obese, and 60% are overweight. While this has become typical for developed countries, the situation in the UK is among the worst across OECD countries (OECD, 2017) and it highlights a variety of societal problems: from mental health issues, to obesogenic environments and food desserts where fresh and healthy food is scarce, while high-caloric, non-nutritious options proliferate. Combined with low levels of physical activity, considerable amounts of alcohol consumption and smoking, these issues show that unhealthy lifestyles are very common both among young and adult CCR inhabitants.

Despite providing an incomplete image of CCR's youth, this report revealed some significant facts. As expected, the capital city attracts the largest number of young people, who are generally higher skilled, and (have the possibility to) lead a healthier lifestyle than in other local authorities. These aspects are clearly interconnected and are also probably linked to the better prospects offered by the local authority: healthier and more diverse food sources, diverse leisure options and access to a bigger variety of work opportunities. In contrast, the more remote areas, particularly in the Head of the Valleys, struggle with opposite conditions. Since CCR's agglomeration strategy looks at further developing the urban centres, young people outside of

Cardiff remain disadvantaged and might have to face two options: move to Cardiff, or wait until Cardiff grows sufficiently and, as a by-product, development starts flowing into other areas, as some interviewees suggested (LAR9b, personal communication, 03 April 2018).

Conversely, the city-regional agenda could adapt to tackle the pressing, existing issues, in an integrated way. As an example, based on this very limited quantitative analysis, local authorities could work together with their young inhabitants to discover the skills, talent and passions already existing there. In a local authority where fresh food is scarce and the High Street only offers unhealthy fast food options, young persons could be supported in opening a co-operative café in a previously vacant space. This could source local, seasonal products and train differently-abled persons in preparing healthy and affordable means. A larger space could be combined with various facilities (e.g. a small library, computers with internet access, games, performance space, etc.) to enhance the social infrastructure available[72]. An adjoined small permaculture garden, or a rooftop vertical farm, could provide both the ingredients for the café, and an educational opportunity for people of all ages to learn about endogenous plants, companion fruits and vegetables, the importance of eating mostly local products and the impact our diets have on carbon footprints. Surely, this might sound less glamorous than a *compound semiconductor plant* and definitely provides a smaller number of jobs, yet there is no reason why the two models of city-regional development could not co-exist. Similarly, local authorities where living conditions are improper (overcrowded dwellings, no central heating, etc.), could learn from social initiatives such as *Down to Earth* (briefly described in 2.3.3). The enterprise employs disadvantaged young people in constructing sustainable buildings, combining local materials and traditional techniques with the newest technology available, while prioritising the employees' well-being.

Certainly, these are only two examples of the possibilities laying in the region. Regardless of the pathway chosen, a more progressive city-regional governance would endeavour to plan not only *for* its future generations, but also *with* its future generations. Persuaded that the only way in which development can become more regenerative is by co-creating spaces with the people who inhabit them, this project has tried to embody a similar research philosophy. The following two sections present the findings of the two creative methods used, attempting to do research *with* young people, and not *on* them.

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[72] As the following sections will show, many young people complained about the lack of facilities in their communities to spend spare time and socialise. At the same time, interviews revealed that spaces of social infrastructure were among the first ones to suffer due to austerity (MIRR, personal communication, 6 June 2018).

6.1.2 Youth's city-region(s)

While quantitative indicators can provide relevant information to understand the context and well-being preconditions, 'information concerning whether lives are meaningful and fulfilling can only be obtained through participatory investigation and analysis' (Chawla, 2002, p. 21). The following sections analyse the two types of participatory workshops that used creative visual methods to understand young people's perceptions of CCR, or in other words, their sense of the city-region[73].

These two engagement methods did not involve any scenario building, visioning, planning or deliberation exercises. On their own, they would be insufficient to make CCR's governance structure a more collaborative[74] one. Nonetheless, these workshops could be a first step in familiarising young people with city-regional concepts and logics, while also eliciting their perspectives on the areas they inhabit and allowing them to support their arguments through visually compelling outputs.

The first workshop focused particularly on defining the city-region's span, in a way which reflects the participants lived experience. This thesis has argued that administrative boundaries are a constantly changing social construct with real effects for people and places – both within and outside those borders. A city-regional level established primarily using commuting patterns might seem rather arbitrary for some individuals, as they might not identify with that particular demarcation. For this reason, the workshop used web-mapping (a technique based on online geographic information systems) to enable young people to define their own city-regional boundaries, while also eliciting features they considered significant within that territory.

However, since almost none of the 26 participants was familiar with CCR or the concept of a city-region, each workshop started with a small conversation to define[75] and discuss these notions, allowing participants to ask clarifying questions. Inspired by hand-drawn participatory mapping

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[73] *Sense of place* is a notion often used in social sciences and increasingly within sustainability studies, and it refers to the 'collection of meanings and emotions that people assign to a particular setting', as well as 'the way people experience, use, and understand place' (Grenni, Soini, & Horlings, 2019). Kevin Lynch was the first scholar who referred to *sense of a region* in 1976, suggesting that spatial planning and design must strive to harness human perception of the physical form of cities and regions in order to improve their qualities, and thus, people's and places' well-being.

[74] According to Ansell & Gash (2008), collaborative governance requires participants to engage in collective deliberative, decision-making processes with the aim to implement a public policy or manage public assets.

[75] As mentioned in 3.3.2, participants were instructed to think of their city-region as the area that expands beyond their hometown, where they might travel occasionally (for leisure, shopping, education, medical services, etc.) and to which they felt connected in some way. They were also told that boundaries did not have to be very precise, that each map is a personal artefact and no answer was wrong.

and crowd-mapping, the web-mapping method was created and adapted to each group[76], aiming to be an enjoyable and useful experience for them too. Thus, young people were provided with a step-by-step written guide, as well as continuous assistance. Each of them used a computer or a laptop and worked independently on their own online map, using the map creation feature in *Google Maps*. After inputting general information (name, age, place of residence), each participant had to complete three tasks: (i) mark the boundaries of their city-region based on the aforementioned discussion; (ii) mark places of personal significance which they appreciated, indicating in a comment why; (iii) mark place they disliked and would like to see change, explaining why and how.

The workshops' outputs show wide variations and endless interpretations of the city-regional concept, indicating primarily the lack of a uniform city-regional identity or a sense of the city-region (further discussed in the conclusion). The web-mapping workshops have been attended by 26 participants of diverse ages, socio-economic backgrounds, and residence (see Annex 6b). While the sample's size does not lend to generalise results for the whole of CCR's youth, the small groups and sometimes individual meetings allowed in-depth conversations with and among participants. The richness of information is summarised below, presenting also some of the visual outcomes. Yet before discussing the results, it is worth emphasising that these maps are influenced by a variety of factors and would most certainly change throughout a person's life, as experiences and place-connections fluctuate.

Needless to say, none of the youth maps came even close to the official CCR demarcation. Figure 6-1 demonstrates the diversity of interpretations, using only five out of the 26 resulting maps. The wide, black border plays a functional role, emphasising the
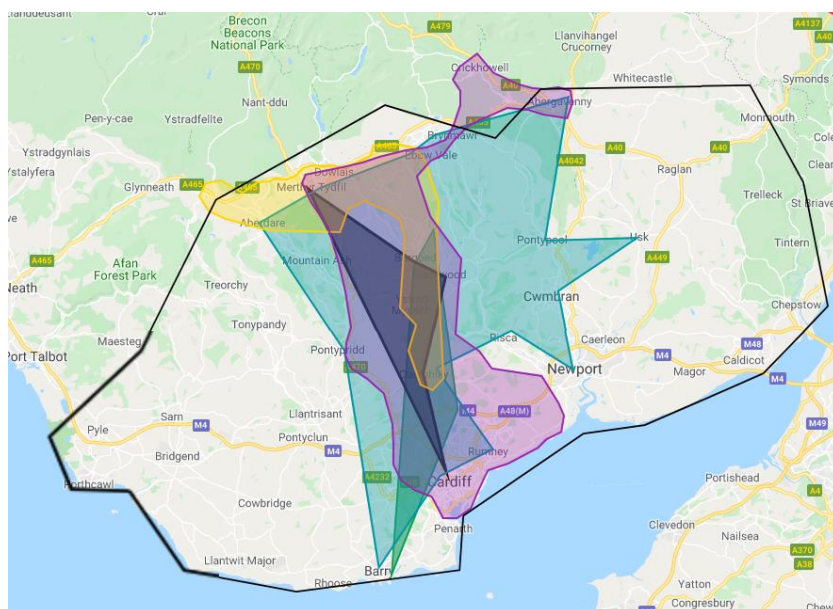

Figure 6-1: Example of five city-regional representations within CCR

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official CCR designation of the 10 local authorities. The creators of these maps are of similar ages and live in the same authority (Caerphilly), which explains the overlapping sections. The differences account for their various connections to other parts of CCR (family and relatives, leisure preferences, etc.).

Some of the more comprehensive maps crossed a few local authorities, often straddling all the way to Cardiff. For those young people who resided elsewhere, the capital city offered more opportunities than their local authorities. These ranged from education and employment, to shopping (clothing, but also more specialised products such as records and photography equipment) and leisure facilities (concerts and festivals).

Conversely, some participants had a very localised interpretation of the city-regional concept, marking tiny sections which included only their residential areas and sometimes their colleges. Such differences can be observed in Figure 6-2 where two demarcations have been juxtaposed on one layer to show the variation. The blue icons were kept to indicate the participants' places of residence. In some cases, variations could be explained by age, with older participants becoming more independent and able to travel more often. In other cases, though, participants stated they did not identify or feel attached to the rest of the territory, and they rarely travelled outside of their local authorities. Furthermore, in some cases, young people expressed their attachment to areas which were not contiguous, asking whether one can have 'more than one city-region'. They were instructed to map all of them – using separate polygons if desired, since this would constitute relevant information for defining mobility needs, for instance.

Although participants were also asked to mark personally relevant places (that explained the city-regional representations they had mapped), these will be analysed in the following section
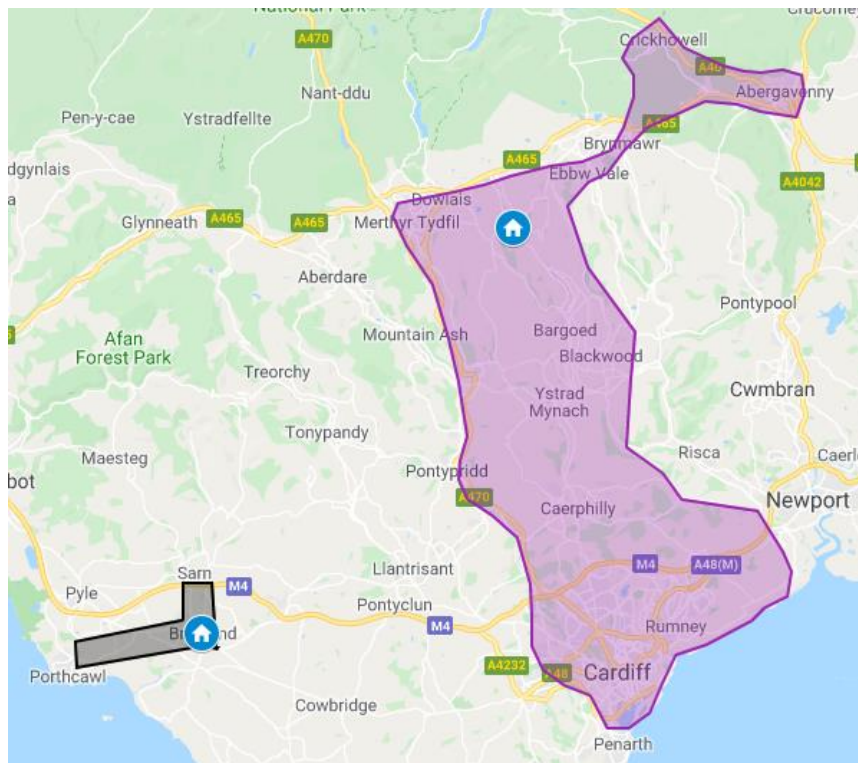
Figure 6-2: Example of a localised and a wider representation of the city-region

which discusses the second type of workshops. Using the Photovoice method, places previously mapped were often documented in photographs, producing rich visual narratives. Both types of workshops included group discussions that allowed key themes to emerge.

In general, participants appreciated the web-mapping workshops because of three reasons: (i) they had not heard about CCR and thought it was important to gain more awareness about future plans; (ii) they enjoyed expressing themselves geographically and considered this was an innovative way of eliciting their views; (iii) they were happy to have learned to make digital maps and the younger ones were actually hoping to use this skill in school projects. Thus, the web-mapping technique enhanced young people's capacity to express spatial information, and reflect on the suggested subject and the emerging themes. At the same time, it supported a shared language and understanding among all workshop participants, including the researcher.

On the other hand, apart from the one person who was familiar with CCR (as a student in Geography and Planning at CU), nearly all participants had some difficulties at first to understand what the city-region referred to. This was an alien concept for them, demonstrating the lack of information coming from CCR during its first years of existence. Nonetheless, since transport was often the most debated topic in workshops, the metro could indeed become the backbone of CCR, helping to create an identity for the city-region. As the results above demonstrate, at least in youth's case, city-regional identities are fragmented and this could turn into significant impediments for future projects and policies. If CCR's inhabitants do not see the relevance of the investment, it is highly unlikely they will support such decisions (see Stuttgart's example in Frank & Morgan, 2012, as well as the more recent gilets jaunes protests in France).

6.1.3 Young perspectives

Figure 6-3: Pen y Fan (Bethan Hill-Howells)

After outlining their city-regions spatially, young people were invited to a second type of workshop, based on participant-produced photography.

Photovoice workshops have been attended by 27 persons, one more than the web-mapping ones. Building on the previous meetings and discussions, the participants were asked to imagine they were researching their own city-region, trying to capture some of its essential features. Thus, using cameras or phones, their task was to document two places or aspects which made life worth living there, and two which they disliked and would want to see change. Also, they had to capture the way they travelled around the city-region, using whatever means of transport they preferred. These instructions were discussed at the end of the web-mapping session, and participants also received them by email. After taking all the photos, they had to write a brief caption for each image and send back everything by email. A few days later, the group met to exchange results and discuss the emerging topics. The following paragraphs analyse some of the key issues discussed, while Annex 8 is a more comprehensive photo essay[77] portraying the variety of topics documented.

The guidelines received encouraged participants to reflect on both desirable and undesirable features of their city-region, although transport rarely elicited any positive feelings and shifted the balance from appreciative inquiry towards criticism. Among the positive aspects, the most common were related, unequivocally, to CCR's environment, its diverse natural landscapes, and the opportunities to spend time outdoors. Regardless of their place of residence, participants felt a strong connection to nature, in both urban and peri-urban areas. In cities and towns, young

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[77] Yet this too, is a selection of 27 photos (out of over 150 photos) which capture the most common topics. An abbreviated version of this photo essay was included in the *Metro & Me* publication, coordinated by Mark Barry through the CU Metro Group in 2018.

people captured their local parks, rivers and lakes, while outside of urban areas, they photographed ponds, hills and the sea.

Yet, the natural environment was also used as a hook to talk about more delicate subjects, such as the stigma attached to certain areas of CCR. Referring to the Valleys, various participants from two different groups cited the lack of place appreciation among individuals and communities who had come to internalise the deprecating narratives portrayed in the media. This self-stigmatisation was deterring people from recognising any positive local features, and particularly the immense natural capital surrounding the Valleys communities.

At the same time, nearly all participants captured ways in which people had spoiled natural areas in CCR. Litter, which is a hazard for the different ecosystems and also an eyesore, was often one of the hottest topics debated. Young people found various explanations for public space littering: from insufficient bins around towns, to deficient education, as well as lack of care for places. Moreover, some thought that waste was deterring people from appreciating their areas, and this turned into a negative cycle which reinforced dumping and fly tipping (personal communication, Caerphilly, 1 August 2017). One participant decried the situation in Cardiff, where thrash is often left on streets, impeding people with reduced mobility to walk (Figure 6-4).

Encouraged to think of potential solutions during a workshop, participants found a plethora of measures in a brief brainstorming exercise. To break the negative cycle, participants agreed there was a need for a comprehensive approach which started with education and information campaigns. If people understood where materials came from, what happened when they were disposed, the time it took to decompose, the effects of improper waste collection, etc., they would become more sensitised to this issue. Being more aware would also lead people to take action, often at grassroots level through volunteering groups such as *Keep Wales Tidy*. Last but not least, young people mentioned the need to make waste disposal easier, especially in public spaces where bins were often missing. A person from Cardiff mentioned that the only place where they had seen separate-collection street bins was in the capital's centre, and that 'in most places people did not even have the chance to do the right thing' (personal communication, Cardiff, 4 September 2017).

Perceptions regarding opportunities for leisure and socialising differed depending on the participants' place of residence. Nearly all the persons who lived outside of Cardiff stated that their options were very limited as council cutbacks would often lead to closing community and youth

Figure 6-4: Roath area, Cardiff (Gweni Llwyd)

centres. In Caerphilly, for instance, spending time outdoors was not always a possibility either, since the local police would try to disperse groups of young people, especially if seen loitering in the bus station – a place where they 'hung around because there's nothing else to do' (personal communication, Caerphilly, 1 August 2017). Nonetheless, the participants were appreciative of their youth group and youth officer, through whom they could access various activities (including participating in this research project), socialise and sometimes travel to Cardiff for events. In fact, most participants considered that Cardiff was a vibrant place which hosted many cultural and musical events, while also offering more possibilities to spend spare time. Among the places mentioned were the student union building, the central library, the bay and the many shopping centres.

Some of the older participants emphasised a similar contrasting relationship when talking about work opportunities. Although they aspired to find a job closer to home (Merthyr Tydfil, Newport) and avoid the long commute, they had to 'accept that if you do want to go into something – career or a certain job – you have to move out' (personal communication, Cardiff, 4 September 2017). The current city-regional agenda is aiming to improve both employment opportunities and transport facilities, and it has potential to improve young people's lives. Still, transport improvements will take long to materialise, while the current infrastructure translates into lengthy, often uncomfortable journeys to school and work, as well as an impediment to travel

more and discover the region. Some of the younger participants aspired to get their driving license, despite the fact that their families could not afford a car anyway (Figure 6-5). While this is understandable given the current issues, any increase in private vehicles and road traffic is undesirable, meaning that public transport providers must work harder to keep young people using it past the stage when they can drive or afford a car.

In Cardiff too, youth decried public transport conditions. Although hardly any streets in Cardiff provide safe cycling facilities, many young people preferred biking instead of using public transport, since it was faster, more convenient and

Figure 6-5: From Bedwas to Nantgarw - an hour by bus or 20minutes by car (N. Hampson)

cheaper. Those who were not confident enough to cycle said they walked everywhere, as the capital city was compact and distances were manageable.

These different layers of inequality (in terms of access to leisure, employment, and transport facilities) between the capital and the rest of the region, and also among different areas of Cardiff, manifest perhaps most acutely in the growing levels of homelessness. While trying to respect rough sleepers' privacy, three different participants decided to document this in Cardiff, as one of the most critical issues that required local authorities' immediate attention. Besides the large number of homeless persons in the city centre, they mentioned a shelter located on the same street with a suite of corporate offices, which was a good reminder 'of what's actually happening on the street' (personal communication, Cardiff, 4 September 2017).

In conclusion, nature, place attachment and stigma, litter, leisure, work and transport facilities were the most common topics. Certainly, this is only a fractional representation of youth's concerns and lived experience. Still, this non-invasive research method engaged young people and effectively elicited their own perspectives on the positive and negatives aspects of living in CCR. In documenting their own city-regions, participants chose to highlight a wide range of

topics, and the paragraphs above tried to summarise some of the most stringent issues. The following part reflects on the mixed methods used in working with young people and makes recommendations that could be implemented in a more collaborative governance structure.

6.1.4 Learnings for the city-region

The combination of methods applied in a workshop format formed a well-rounded strategy through which young people could share their lived experience in relation to an unfamiliar topic – the city-region. While the initial quantitative analysis was useful to understand general trends concerning youth, the creative methods applied provided a rich amount of data, which generally escape surveys and statistical accounts. Workshops enabled participants to designate the city-regional span they identified with (via maps), show how positive and negative aspects looked like in their communities (via photos) and clarify how these affected their lives (via discussions).

Besides, these methods nurtured a more balanced researcher-participant relationship, allowing the latter to choose how they preferred to participate and what they wanted to prioritise. In return for their participation, young people could gain new skills and expand their understanding of the city-region, and of other people's insights. Despite the relatively limited number of participants, this tri-dimensional perspective on young people's experiences in CCR could be a first step in understanding and engaging the generations who are often portrayed as 'politically disengaged' (Chou et al., 2017, p. 123).

Some of the most remarkable findings were young people's critical thinking skills and their strong connections to their communities. This finding supports a widespread belief among researchers working with children and youth, that 'they are the best experts on local environmental conditions related to their own needs' (Chawla, 2002; Chou et al., 2017; Driskell, 2002; Wang, 2006). Indeed, participants took time to reflect on the tasks and questions asked, and were able to contribute with both objective and subjective arguments (e.g. juxtaposing the Valleys' natural wealth with their negative media image). This is an important lesson for CCR, who could work with young people and empower them to be ambassadors of their own areas – as a new generation that is not emotionally attached to the loss of industry and can imagine a different narrative for the future. Furthermore, since most young people enjoyed living in CCR and were hoping to find more reasons to stay, allowing them to play an active role in shaping the city-region would deepen their connection to the area and solve some of the retention issues.

The young participants have shown resourcefulness when asked about potential solutions to the problems they identified. In the case of litter, participants brainstormed comprehensive measures which would reduce environmental damage and improve living conditions in their communities, eventually also determining more people to appreciate and respect their places. Here too, CCR could harness youth's energy to solve problems which might sometimes fall outside of the economic scope, but which are nevertheless relevant across the entire city-region.

Last but not least, young people were conscious, even if sometimes intuitively, about the inequality issues which affect them and other groups of population. Participants expressed a strong sense of social justice and questioned why these problems were not dealt with directly. While understanding their authorities' limited budgets, they thought investment was often going in the wrong places (e.g. new shopping facilities like Trago Mills in Merthyr Tydfil, while shops were constantly closing on the High Street). Considering that CCR will be supporting initiatives through its wider investment fund, it is worth reflecting on the area's priorities. A growing number of cities has adopted participatory budgeting, allowing inhabitants to decide how (a part of) the public budget is spent. Such mechanisms would not only increase CCR's visibility (which based on this research is minimal, at least among youth), but would also help reduce many of its governance issues such as elitism, transparency and accountability.

Certainly, engagement in general can be troublesome and is entirely dependent on political will. For this reason, this research has asked city-regional leaders to reflect on the idea of youth engagement – whether it was happening in CCR and why it was (or not) a necessity. The following sections analyse their answers, and then present a sober analysis on the topic, based on personal experience and the wider literature.

6.2   Engagement efforts and limits to engagement

All three literatures supporting this thesis's conceptual framework emphasise the importance of stakeholder engagement and wide participation, as policies and projects should be formulated based on a mix of knowledges and expertise. Certainly, for larger areas like city-regions where direct engagement could be lengthy and sometimes even counter-productive, fair and inclusive representation of different groups becomes a complicated, yet necessary issue to be dealt with. However, it is possible to say that in CCRCD, public engagement has been minimal between 2016 and June 2018, and the few public events have targeted – and therefore represented – solely the business sector's interests, leaving out large swathes of the population.

The following sections aim to explain how and why this happened, considering that city-regions should be part of devolution project which brings planning and decision-making closer to the ones affected by it. The first two parts rely on interviews to analyse (i) how city-regional leaders generally assess their engagement efforts, and (ii) why and how youth engagement could happen in CCRCD. The third part uses personal observations and lessons from other research studies to paint a more objective image of the struggles and barriers to this issue.

6.2.1   How, with whom and why has CCRCD engaged?

Section 5.2.2 demonstrated the limited trust held by a city-regional leader in their inhabitants' capacity to discuss and contribute to economic development policies[78]. While their statement was by far the clearest and strongest expression against engagement – and actually an outlier compared to most other answers – it was representative because of two reasons. First, it helped to set a suitable tone for the rest of this section, pointing that public engagement has been close to non-existing, and city-regional leaders found a variety of explanations for this. Second, although the question asked used the word *engagement*, virtually all responses employed *engagement*, *consultation* and *information* interchangeably. As detailed in the literature review, these are distinct practices with varying degrees of citizen empowerment, and can be precursors to collaboration (Carlson, 2007). While leaders might largely be aware of the difference, they are not only verbally ignoring it, but might also be misinterpreting WFGA's requirements.

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[78] As a reminder, the interviewee said: 'I am not even sure how relevant would it be to consult people. They're not experts in economic development. They know there are no jobs and that they need jobs, but that doesn't bring jobs.' (LAR8, personal communication, 19 January 2018)

Involvement[79] and collaboration are separate, mandatory ways of working they ought to be using. Thus, the following paragraphs demonstrate that engagement approaches have been minimal in CCRCD and aim to uncover some of the reasons behind this.

Interviews revealed some shared opinions. Most leaders admitted that they were not sure how much CCRCD had reached out and tried to engage citizens, but probably these attempts had been minimal due to various reasons: (i) because of its complex governance structure, CCRCD needed time to improve internal relationships before opening up; (ii) the short deadline to submit the Business Plan did not allow much time to interact with the public; (iii) 'high level discussions did not lend themselves for public engagement' (LAR9a, personal communication, 03 April 2018), but as soon as projects from the Wider Investment Fund would starting coming in, there would be more scope for public engagement. One interviewee raised a relevant point on this topic, making an analogy with local projects and local budgets consultations. According to them, attendance at budget consultations was much lower than at local projects consultations, yet during the latter, people often asked why did the LA host the talk so late in the process. This was a 'chicken and egg question' (LAR1, personal communication, 29 January 2018), so in CCRCD's case, consultations were reserved for the future. Thus, using these arguments to legitimise their opaque functioning, most leaders were aware, without showing much concern, that many people might have never heard of CCR.

Another worrying finding was the city-regional leaders' certainty that they knew what people wanted/needed, therefore there was no need to discuss the city-regional agenda. Some said that in a representative democracy, the elected have the power to decide on behalf of their citizens, especially when strategies like the Business Plan received the approval of approximately 700 local councillors (LAR9, RTAR). Besides, local consultations repeatedly showed that 'everyone wants better paid jobs, more education opportunities and better transport' (LAR4, personal communication, 27 January 2018) and while this is irrefutable, none of the leaders seemed to ask themselves why had these issues not improved and how was CCRCD going to change the status quo. Moreover, the same leader cited above wanted to avoid 'engagement and consultation fatigue', yet again, without reflecting on why people might become tired in the first place (maybe because people's participation, time and effort have been repeatedly disregarded?). Others mentioned the need to manage expectations (LAR9, LAR9b), considering

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[79] The difference between involvement and engagement is subtler and these two words are often used interchangeably (Carlson, 2007). For the sake of simplicity and due to lack of space, this issue has not been detailed in this thesis. The absence of both involvement (described by one FGCO representative as 'doing to') and engagement ('doing with') in CCRCD reduced, in fact, the need for any conceptual debate.

the limited amount of funding. Surprisingly, none of the interviewees mentioned an online 'stakeholder consultation' initiated by the Regional Transport Authority in February 2018. Although unclear who the *stakeholders* were, these documents seemed to have been sent to representatives of local authorities[80].

Among the interviewees who said there had been some public engagement (LAR 8, LAR9 & LAR9b, LAR10), one leader thought that engagement had actually been built into the governance structure through the advisory bodies – formed of experts from relevant sectors. Besides, four persons cited the Growth and Competitiveness Commission study (which had 'mostly confirmed they were on the right track'), as well as a couple of business-engagement events. Furthermore, two leaders defined businesses as the 'main stakeholder group' and the following excerpt reveals, once again, that the city deal and the UK Government have dictated who gets a voice in city-regional matters:

> *'[…] one of the key drivers of city deal is, one of the key expectations for UK*
> *government is that businesses drive most of what's going to happen and a*
> *lot of our engagement has been with the likes of businesses.'* (LAR10,
> personal communication, 16 January 2018)

Two points appeared particularly frustrating for the persons left out: social media and public meetings. Half of the insiders interviewed talked about their online engagement through social media, and one leader even mentioned their presence on Facebook – although no such evidence was found during fieldwork. While they presented their online channels as successful outlets with 'big, big hits' (LAR3, personal communication, 18 January 2018), outsiders declared:

> *'The way they [CCRCD] use their Twitter account is, well, they use it for*
> *broadcasting. There is no engagement, no space for discussion hosted by*
> *them. It's not a platform, it's a megaphone. It's sharing information one*
> *way. And interestingly, I think they only publish the minutes of the official*
> *meetings, the ones they're required to have. The informal ones they don't*
> *publish all. They meet quarterly officially and two quarterly unofficially, I*
> *believe, from what I've heard.'* (IWAR1, personal communication, 14 June
> 2018)

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[80] I was lucky enough to receive them by mail from a person who asked for identity protection.

Indeed, a brief look on CCRCD's Twitter channel reveals that only about 3,000[81] people are following, their posts are liked or retweeted by (generally the same) handful of people, and there is no discussion whatsoever. The images here show two examples of how the city-region uses their social media to 'disseminate' the insiders' discussions and decisions taken during the cabinet's meetings.

Figure 6-6: Social media 'engagement' in June 2018

Figure 6-6 was captured in June 2018, and just for the sake of comparison, Figure 6-7 dates from December 2019. These two examples are not exceptions. This is the level of outreach that most of CCRCD's posts on Twitter have, despite some of the leaders (such as in the aforementioned example) declaring that their online presence is strong.

In spite of this social media dissemination and engagement failure, while discussing the cabinet's public meetings, one leader seemed upset that people's interest and attendance were low. However, before CCRCD started publishing more information on its website (spring 2018), it was impossible to know about these events unless one checked each authority's individual calendar. Besides, participating in one of these meetings was a rather hostile experience, as members of the public were seated on the room's edges, behind the roundtable where leaders sat. In addition, an outsider had few opportunities to contribute to the discussion since the public

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[81] Last updated on 17 January 2020.

meeting was actually a second meeting, a charade where all parties agreed on topics that have been debated in a previous, closed meeting.

Figure 6-7: Social media 'engagement' in December 2019

In conclusion, while most leaders agreed that CCRCD's future challenge was to find ways to engage with a broader range of people, from its inception, CCR defined businesses as its primary stakeholders. While business representatives got a chance to express and defend their interests, other groups (volunteer groups, trade unions, charities, etc.) and individuals remained disenfranchised, without a chance to influence the city-region's development. Young people are among these groups, and while the previous paragraphs showed how insiders legitimised their choices, the following focus mainly on the role they assigned to youth – in the eventuality that public engagement would actually happen.

6.2.2   Youth's role according to city-regional leaders

The previous section exposed the limited public engagement in CCRCD and the reasons behind it, findings which constitute a background for the following paragraphs. Focusing specifically on the question of young people, city-regional leaders were asked about the role they envisaged youth could play in CCR's future and their answers are analysed below.

When first hearing about the overall aim of this research and its particular focus on youth, most insiders showed enthusiasm, endorsing questions as relevant. Given the long-term city-regional agenda, young people were described as recipients of programmes and services, who should be 'entitled to share their opinions' (LAR11, personal communication, 9 March 2018). Generally, the same leaders who openly admitted that public engagement had largely been a blind spot, were also the ones who believed youth perspectives could be refreshing and positively contribute to CCRCD's development. For example, one leader thought that young people have different, more contemporary perceptions of the city-region since they were unattached to the industrial past, compared to older generations (LAR5, personal communication, 26 February 2018). Likewise, young people would be well-suited to challenge their authorities, leaders and universities, to make sure that programmes were attuned to their needs (LAR2, personal communication, 1 February 2018).

Admitting that the current agenda was based on assumptions regarding 'what youth want' and that these might be the 'wrong assumptions', an interviewee declared that young people '*might* be making some good points*' (LAR3, personal communication, 18 January 2018, emphasis added). This rather sceptical standpoint was accompanied by varying other facets of adultism demonstrated during interviews. Adultism refers to discriminating behaviours and attitudes through which young people's ideas are dismissed based on age and experience (Bell, 2010). For instance, another insider thought that young people already had many decisions to make and they should not be burdened with 'those mature things' and political city-regional issues (LAR7, personal communication, 25 January 2018). Furthermore, while opened to youth engagement, one person emphasised that 'sometimes, the *right*[82] individuals could help with some decision-making' (LAR10, personal communication, 16 January 2018). More often than not, young people's role was to take up the opportunities created by CCRCD (LAR2, LAR11, LAR10). In other words, the youth would better let the adults decide what was best for them and just make sure to seize the moment.

When discussing the forms engagement could take, one person thought that young people could be trusted, for instance, with handling CCRCD's social media channels (CCRCDR, personal communication, 11 June 2018). There is no doubt that CCRCD would benefit from a better social media communicator. However, that does not mean that the youth should be relegated to disseminate to a wider public the city-regional decisions made in their name, without their input.

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[82] Asked who would be *right*, the interviewee replied: 'it would be really great if there was a focus group of skilled, you know, young people with great ideas, maybe they don't have to be skilled, but people with great ideas'.

Another person considered liaising with the existing youth forums – albeit 'not all of them since there were many' (LAR3, personal communication, 18 January 2018), to have conversations about youth's priorities for the city-region's future. Last but not least, leaders welcomed any initiative that could 'do the engagement work' for them (LAR11, personal communication, 9 March 2018) – once again, without questioning how could other organisations (or PhD researchers) find resources for it, if this was not even possible for two national and ten local governments.

The TfW representative also talked about the role he envisaged young people could play in the Metro's development. Although unsure about the extent of previous engagement attempts, the interviewee mentioned that TfW was looking to work directly with schools and colleges to encourage children and youth to consider careers in transport. Aware of the gender and ethnicity imbalance in the sector, they were hoping to redress it in the upcoming years. Besides, in June 2018 TfW was preparing for its 'design and discovery phase' and was planning to work closely with different Commissioners (including Future Generations, Children's, and Older People's) to improve conditions for travellers with reduced mobility and different needs (TfWR, personal communication, 1 May 2018).

Whether this would actually happen is beyond this thesis to answer. However, unlike most CCRCD representatives, TfW seemed to have put some thought into the diversity of stakeholders whose opinions and experiences could improve transport services overall. In contrast, the variety of answers given by CCRCD insiders showed that either this issue has never been discussed among leaders, or there had been no agreement on whether youth engagement should be done at city-regional level and if yes, how. Furthermore, when interviewees saw value in collaborating with young people, they were deeply patronising, rarely considering that youth's input could influence the city-regional agenda for the better. These interviews took place before the Greta Thunberg phenomenon started and before young activists from all over the world[83] began receiving the recognition they deserved. In the past year, youth voices have relentlessly fought for their future (and the one of future generations) by taking up streets and raising awareness regarding the climate, biodiversity and inequality crises we are facing. Future

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[83] While Thunberg's impact has been astonishing, many other young people before her have been fighting for environmental issues. Among others, Unigwe (2019) mentions: Ridhima Pandey, aged 9, who sued the Indian government for failing to take action against climate change in 2017; Kaluki Paul Mutuku who has been involved in conservation and has fought to improve Kenyan women's hardship to provide their families with water; Aditya Mukarji who helped restaurants and hotels in Delhi to reduce plastic straws use; and Nina Gualinga who has been an indigenous rights activist since the age of 8 (now 15).

research could show if and how CCRCD leaders' perspectives have changed in the light of these events.

Nonetheless, trying to portray a balanced picture, the following paragraphs discuss the engagement barriers faced during fieldwork, regarding youth and then CCRCD's insiders. This research was conducted by a single person, with limited capacity and resources, and her conditions cannot be compared to the ones of a local authority for instance. Nonetheless, some of the lessons learned have softened the critical perspective adopted initially, and helped to show more empathy and understanding towards city-regional leaders' reluctance to public engagement.

6.2.3 Realities of engagement

This part aims to provide a balanced image of engagement and avoid an idealised representation of afferent processes and achievements. The following ideas are based on personal experiences gathered during the empirical stage, and are structured in two parts: engagement of young people and of CCRCD's leaders.

Choosing to work with young people has been both a blessing and a course. The initial ambitions – to recruit 8-10 persons from each local authority in CCRCD – proved unattainable as soon as fieldwork started. The first major barrier has been to find young people and get in contact directly with them. For a newcomer in Wales, snowballing and recommendations were the only channels to reach youth organisations, groups and forums, as well as schools and colleges. While many (adult) persons offered their help, they often acted as gatekeepers and communication would pass through them before reaching potential research participants, possibly diluting the message. Still, reaching young people directly did not necessarily automatically lead to recruitment either, since sometimes people were simply not interested to participate in the two workshops proposed. The literature suggests that a truly participatory research would have proceeded differently, allowing young people to change/choose research methods too, possibly being more efficient in recruiting participants (Beale, 2008; Wang & Burris, 1997).

Furthermore, even when youth chose to get involved, workshops often had to be postponed, cancelled or adjusted. Weather, family issues, health conditions and school overloads were all reasons that required a lot of flexibility and patience. In fact, all workshop sessions ended being different in terms of number of participants, type of location, and sometimes even structure.

These issues were further complicated by logistical questions. Consciously trying to create a safe space which would allow participants to feel comfortable and share their views, workshops were initially planned outside of institutional environments. However, this proved problematic (particularly for the younger ones) as it was easier for youth to attend sessions in their schools, colleges or youth forums. Moreover, this research proved particularly difficult when trying to play two roles at the same time, as both researcher and facilitator. Although this topic is rarely discussed in the literature, facilitation skills are crucial for a successful participatory workshop, and two persons would have been more efficient in hosting and collecting data.

Last but not least, a sensitive issue also mentioned by CCRCD leaders was managing participants' expectations. Many young people were enthusiastic that their voices could be heard and could make a difference. As much as this project aimed to be impactful outside of the academic sphere, the findings regarding CCRCD's governance structure brought a lot of scepticism. Participants were promised that their messages would be passed on, yet they were informed that the capacity to influence the uptake was minimal.

Despite all these problems, when young people could be reached and did choose to participate, when the set-up was fit and everyone agreed on the goal, youth engagement workshops became the silver lining of a dull, exhausting and often frustrating experience of researching Cardiff Capital Region. The participants' energy and dedication, as well as the articulate and critical conversations they prompted have been, indeed, refreshing.

Conversely, discussions with city-regional leaders have, more often than not, demonstrated that deeply ingrained ways of thinking – from fixation with economic growth, to lip-service paid to environmental concerns, or limited roles assigned to citizens in general, and young people in particular – would take much more time to change. Furthermore, to even have the opportunity to initiate these discussions, a variety of tricks were used to reach leaders and secure interviews. Sometimes, the FGCO representatives' recommendations were useful, albeit only in a few cases. In some instances, repeated calls and emails determined leaders to spare an hour (or less) of their time. When these channels failed, public posts on social media proved the most effective way.

Obtaining an interview was only half the work, since these meetings were probably the least important event on leaders' agenda. Thus, interviews were often cancelled, postponed or shortened. Annex 6a is an account of the effort required to secure interviews, as it tracks the number of attempts and the channels resorted to. Out of the 20 CCRCD representatives contacted, only four responded to the first appeal, either by phone or email. The most extreme

case required two phone calls, one Tweeter post, eight emails with the leader's personal assistant, one cancelled meeting, to finally be offered 30minutes for an interview. It might have been easier to contact the queen.

Although initially the empirical stage did not rely on interviews, methods had to be adapted since it became obvious that city-regional leaders would not agree to take part in other types of activities. Lack of time was cited when refusing to participate in scenario development or Photovoice workshops, and despite apparent enthusiasm for a photo exhibition, none of the persons invited attended it.

In fairness though, talking to local leaders also helped to understand their own struggles – with budget cuts, mounting deprivation and social problems in many cases, as well as the novelty of both city-regional collaboration and the focus on future generations. Some leaders have indeed showed me their packed agendas, apologising for postponed meetings, and at least half of them dedicated approximately an hour of their time for this research.

To conclude, engagement – of both young people and city-regional leaders – took enormous amounts of energy, resources and preparation. Sometimes, despite best intentions, sessions got cancelled and all efforts seemed in vain. Nonetheless, while it is true that 'democracy costs' time, energy and money, the empirical exploration has also confirmed that is also 'an important social investment that can have long-term benefits' (Flinders et al., 2015, p. 49) for both the ones involved in discussing the future of an area, and the place itself. Despite its limited impact, this research has bridged between young participants and city-regional leaders, raising awareness of each other's existence and offering 'insights into worlds from which they are ordinarily insulated' (Wang, 2006, p. 156).

6.3 Conclusions

This final empirical chapter has furthered the analysis of CCR by focusing specifically on its future generations and their potential to influence the city-region's development. Aiming to depict a double-sided perspective, the project sought the youth's direct input, as well as the standpoints of CCRCD's leaders in relation to prospective youth engagement.

The first part analysed findings of a quantitative exploration of CCR's young people aged 16-24, offering a general understanding of this age group in terms of numbers, social, economic and health characteristics. The limited range of statistics available increased the need for further inquiry and, in the spirit of this project's conceptual framework, participatory creative methods seemed most suitable to engage with young people. Thus, a series of workshops used visual approaches to elicit young people's lived experience in the area, successfully overcoming the general lack of awareness regarding the city-region's existence. Their contributions and commitment to this experimental approach offer valuable lessons for the city-region, yet any future initiatives to formally engage young people is highly dependent on political will.

Thus, the second part assessed the city-regional leaders' willingness to enhance collaborative modes of governance by initiating public engagement. In general, engagement attempts proved extremely limited at city-regional level. While some studies suggest that politicians might fear that new forms of citizen participation could threaten their political primacy (Sønderskov, 2019, p. 321), in CCR the city deal's prescriptions might actually bear the blame. CCRCD's narrow economic growth rationale has effectively defined city-regional stakeholders, side-lining anyone who does not represent the business sector. As such, the only citizens whose participation is sanctioned in CCRCD are business elites (Beel et al., 2016, p. 523), while various other groups (such as the outsiders discussed in 5.2.3.), among which youth, do not have an opportunity to play an active role. Asked about the potential contributions young people could have in the city-region, leaders gave a plethora of answers. While many showed patronising attitudes, only a few could think of youth's capacity to challenge them and affect positive change.

Nonetheless, as the Nobel laureate economist Joseph Stiglitz has recently said, 'the world is facing three existential crises: a climate crisis, an inequality crisis and a crisis in democracy' (Stiglitz, 2019). Recent events, as well as the empirical work done with youth, have shown that young people are fully aware of these emergencies. Though often criticised as politically apathetic, these future voters, consumers, leaders, employers and employees, have chosen different ways to raise their voices than by casting a vote. Estimates show that around 4million activists attended 2500 events in over 163 countries on all seven continents (Barclay & Resnick,

2019), demanding their leaders to take action against climate breakdown and biodiversity loss. Indeed, a school strike initiated by a 16-year old might have been more efficient in communicating the dangers of inaction, in exposing political lethargy to environmental concerns, and in mobilising people, than all the work done by researchers and international organisations such as UNFCCC. Although this project's empirical stage ended before these events unfolded, in hindsight, they validate the topic's relevance and the trust instilled in youth's power to influence decision-making towards more progressive, regenerative approaches. Besides, they also demonstrate that youth politics and participation occurs in different spheres and ways (campaigns, protests, and online movements) than conventionally expected, outside of mainstream political arenas (Chou et al., 2017, p. 123).

7   Discussion

This chapter reflects on the entire research experience, analysing the interrelations between the conceptual framework and the empirical case study. The theoretical synergies between the three bodies of literature used – progressive regionalism, collaborative governance and regenerative development – have been explored in section 2.4. Furthermore, the key empirical findings have been summarised in sections 5.4 and 6.3.

These form the basis for the final discussion and without entirely reproducing them, the following pages summarise the core arguments made by this thesis, structured according to the conceptual framework. Then, the second part reviews the research contribution. Aiming to continue telling a multifaceted story, the chapter's third section discusses the ways in which the integrated conceptual framework has facilitated understanding and analysing city-regional development. A different perspective is offered in the fourth part, looking at the contributions made by the empirical research experience to the conceptual framework. Building on these, section 7.5 outlines four design principles which could guide city-regions in general, and CCR in particular, towards a more regenerative developmental programme. Finally, the last part discusses this project's limitations and future research challenges.

7.1   Summary of core arguments

This research aimed to find alternative city-regional developmental narratives that could balance the narrow economic rationales conventionally supporting such projects. For this reason, a novel conceptual framework was designed based on the synergies between three literature strands: progressive regionalism, collaborative governance and regenerative development. This tripartite lens was employed on a single case study where a specific legislative context led to a conceptual refining, adding a further focus on youth engagement in city-regional collaborations.

The research showed that city-regions are still driven by ambitions to increase economic growth, agglomeration and international competitiveness. This happens despite recurrent calls from academia to conceptualise city-regions as complex spaces, where socio-economic and socio-ecological aspects intersect, requiring equal attention. Furthermore, this hegemonic understanding of city-regions influences the ways in which leaders frame collaborations and the issues they prioritise for spatial development. As a consequence, environmental aspects are

side-lined and 'sustainability' is rather used to refer to social or economic aspects, lacking an overview for how different 'pillars' (or silos) affect each other.

Furthermore, the governance structure in a city-region can include numerous collaborations, without necessarily being 'collaborative' in the way the word is employed in the collaborative governance literature. In fact, determined by its funding scheme and influenced by other spatial scales, the institutional design can lead to a democratic deficit because of the often opaque, difficult to trace processes and structures. Moreover, the city-regional governance structure deems certain stakeholders – particularly businesses – as apt contributors, while other groups, including young people, are disenfranchised from city-regional planning and decision-making.

Nonetheless, despite limited windows of opportunity for intervention, grassroots initiatives emerge and sometimes attempt to counter some of the perceived limitations within the current city-regional project. As the case study showed, their focus comes closer to issues emphasised by progressive regionalism, such as democracy, community engagement, a place-making approach to development, culture, and the interrelations between all these.

Finally, this project showed that the regenerative paradigm remains aspirational even when there are laws to support it. Regenerative action relies on a different worldview, away from anthropocentrism, and depends upon political will, institutional capacity, as well as shared aspirations for the future. When translated into a legislative framework, it bears the risk of becoming excessively bureaucratised and overwhelmingly complex, yet it can also lead to mind-set shifts and affect changes in the long term.

7.2   Research contributions

This thesis tried to respond to various research gaps and academic calls, as discussed in Chapter 1.3.

Theoretically, the project contributes firstly to the growing body of progressive regionalism that aims to offer alternative narratives to the 'economic reductionist readings of agglomeration' (Beel et al., 2016, p. 518). To this end, the thesis created a conceptual framework that bridges between three literature strands, allowing an interdisciplinary study, analysis and understanding of city-regional development. The framework puts an emphasis on regenerative action, not just sustenance, for an agenda where the well-being of humans and more than humans becomes a primary goal. Such aspirations are based on a holistic understanding of the nested ecosystems

forming the city-region, and rely on collaborations that can utilise different types of knowledges and expertise.

Secondly, the thesis also contributes to the field of collaborative governance, demonstrating the potential barriers, as well as the opportunities to nurture collaborations at city-regional level. Showing that city-regions embody both formal and informal projects – in other words state-sanctioned, as well as civic initiatives – the thesis reveals how imbalanced power configurations lead to limited links between such projects, and potential missed opportunities for a broader city-regional agenda. Furthermore, the additional focus on young people uncovers some of the roles attributed by the ones in power to the generations who are subject of their decisions.

Thirdly, the thesis contributes to the literature on regenerative development, by operationalising the concept at city-regional level. Through an analogy with an existing legislative framework, this research shows the mutations suffered in real contexts, and also the potential such a paradigm can have on creating projects that bring benefits beyond their strict remits.

Besides the theoretical contributions, this project offers a robust methodological strategy which can be replicated in further research. Applying a mixed-method approach on a single case study, the project succeeded to collect and analyse data to paint a rich picture of the actors, the struggles, the aspirations and the numerous narratives composing a new spatial scale. Furthermore, the research design included creative, visual methods which proved effective in working with young people. A series of workshops elicited youth's lived experience in the city-region and, despite their previous limited awareness of this spatial scale, yielded a robust visual and textual assemblage of the young participants' perspectives.

Last but not least, the thesis contributes to the relatively limited literature documenting Cardiff Capital Region. Illustrating the scarcity of data previously available, the research sheds light on the city-region's origins and its development until June 2018, including the institutional format and the stakeholders affecting its programmes, the ones aspiring to do so, as well as the assistance or hindrance that legislative acts can have.

7.3   How did the conceptual framework help understand city-regional development?

This project's overarching goal has been to find pathways to balance the narrow economic focus underpinning city-regional development, conventionally centred on a particular model of

economic growth and international competitiveness. Inspired by ideas from three different literature strands, this thesis designed a novel framework which allowed a well-rounded exploration of an empirical case study. This interdisciplinary lens became almost an antidote to the 'instrumentally significant narrative' (Morgan, 2016) driving city-regional agendas, and contributed to an endeavour formulated more than a decade ago by progressive regionalists: to articulate larger problematics (Kipfer & Wirsig, 2004) that portray city-regions not only as engines of growth (A. J. Scott, 1999), but also sites of political contestation where social, cultural and environmental issues require equal attention.

The dissertation map (Figure 2-3) in Chapter 2.4 provided a visual representation for the connexions established between the literature strands, the research questions and the methods employed to answer them. Despite using an inductive approach (as further explained in the next section), the project's research questions were designed based on the conceptual framework. As a reminder, the framework helped to formulate the following research questions:

1. What are the narratives driving the city-region and to what extent are both socio-economic and socio-ecological issues prioritised?
2. How is the city-regional governance structure designed and to what extent are collaborations enabling a more progressive agenda?
3. What are the opportunities and impediments for city-regional regenerative action and how do current collaborations influence it? And to what extent can future generations affect city-regional development?

In line with the conceptual framework, the project relied on a flexible research design which used mixed methods to answer these lines of inquiry. Attempting to portray an array of actors and initiatives that sprang between April 2016 and June 2018, the project employed, besides traditional research methods, some participatory techniques which allowed a variety of forms of expression. The thesis was structured according to the abovementioned lines of inquiry, and the empirical investigation meant to deconstruct a socio-spatial phenomenon: Cardiff Capital Region.

To this end, it started with a historical account for city-regionalism in South East Wales. This *longue durée* depiction proved consistent with some of the normative principles encompassed by the conceptual framework, showing primarily the multiplicity of narratives, actors and worldviews existent in this space. This part demonstrated that regional interdependencies could be observed since the end of the 18th century (Gooberman, 2018), when the area's identity was starting to take shape around coal and trade. Various rounds of spatial restructuring followed

different rationales, and a variety of regional projects proposed ways and reasons to collaborate, without much uptake though.

A particularly significant event was the Welsh devolution, 'a process and not an event' (Davies, R., 1998, as cited by Torrance, 2018, p. 4), through which the UK Government ceded a number of powers and responsibilities to Wales, effectively creating a sub-national or regional level. The Welsh Government became a pioneer by making sustainable development its explicit duty (Editorial Team, 2002), but it also maintained a political gridlock for city-regional establishment (Morgan, 2014) despite showing this scale's relevance in its planning strategies.

Only in 2012 did the Welsh Government show stronger commitment, and as a result, two city-regions were established in Wales. Their success depended on adequate governance and funding, and city deals – an approach controlled by Whitehall which has become popular all over the UK (Waite & Morgan, 2019) – was deemed the best model. This happened despite the fact that unlike the WG's narrative which was built around sustainability, city deals focused on agglomeration and international competitiveness. Cities as engines of growth and 'motors of the global economy' (A. Scott et al., 2001, p. 5), a mantra often encountered in the new regionalist literature (Overman, 2013; A. Scott, 2001), was unquestionably embraced by the UK Government (see, for instance, HM Government, 2011) and adopted by Cardiff Capital Region (e.g. Cardiff Capital Region, 2015) and the Welsh Government, too.

Thus, building on document analysis and interviews, this chapter concluded that the state(s) played a key role in city-regional development and that despite opposing, possibly incompatible narratives, the city-region became synonymous to the city deal. Besides, supported by the conceptual framework, this context-setting chapter uncovered patterns which proved important to understand the future course of events in Cardiff Capital Region.

Furthermore, the theoretical synergies shared by the three literatures used in this research (detailed in Chapter 2.4) have been used to examine CCR's case. As a project which brings together two national and ten local governments, CCR has been founded on a similar *philosophy* to other British city-regions: collaborate to compete. Collaboration became, thus, a means to improve an underperforming economy and to make the city-region, as a unified entity, more competitive nationally and internationally. Unfortunately, this path did not make any strong commitments to a de-carbonised approach to economic development, or one that ensures equity among people and places. Paraphrasing Bristow (2010), British city-regions hardly ever aspire to compete on becoming the most equal places or the most environmentally friendly. It

is rather increases in economic output that determine their competitiveness, and as discussed before, leaders rely on growth to distribute benefits despite contradictory evidence.

To be sure, CCR's philosophy to improve the economy is neither inherently positive nor negative, as long as the city-region is not reduced to this socio-economical conception, and, as long as economic growth does not become an end in itself (instead of a means to improve the existing social and environmental systems). CCR is institutionally, politically, culturally and socially very complex, and, as Bristow (2010, p. 132) points out, a community rather than an 'economic ensemble of commodities'. Her demand for broader regional environmental or social objectives, instead of economic growth for the sake of competition, is still valid today, especially considering the performance criteria to assess the city-region's success.

Various scholars have tried to explain this gap between the academic and policy-making worlds and narratives. For instance, Raworth (2017) believes that the wide acceptance of 'growth as good', as well as of simplistic indicators such as GDP, leads to an ingrained perspective that capitalism can only exist as long as there is growth. Challenging this becomes a 'political suicide'. Others explain it through divergent beliefs regarding the capacity of technological innovation to eventually solve humanity's problems (P. Jones et al., 2017), making it a safer trajectory which allows maintaining the status quo.

In CCRCD too, city-regional leaders assumed that the benefits of economic growth would spill across the city-region, and that improving the transport system was unequivocally going to tackle issues which have historically affected the entire region. However, the Metro might end up enlarging the bigger cities' advantage, and although it could be changing the transportation hierarchy, help de-carbonisation or give the region some common identity, it should not be seen as a silver bullet for all the city-region's socio-economic problems (Lang, 2016). A well-functioning transport infrastructure is an essential asset for an interconnected city-region, but it can also lead to unintended consequences such as urban sprawl, hollowing out smaller, rural areas, rising real estate prices, or even being inaccessible for underprivileged communities.

Besides, as already flagged by numerous other studies (e.g. Harding, 2007; Healey, 2009; Hodson et al., 2019; O'Brien & Pike, 2018), a philosophy based on competition leads to a selective investment in projects and areas which might already be benefitting from improved socio-economic conditions, worsening social and spatial inequalities. In CCR, the Wider Investment Fund has so far prioritised the two biggest cities, Cardiff and Newport (see Figure 5-1 and Figure 5-2), despite a declared intent of 'geographic balance' (CCRCD, 2017). This determined leaders from smaller local authorities to hope that their inhabitants would at least be able to have

improved transport connections, to access employment and leisure facilities in other places. Thus, CCRCD pointed towards a certain hierarchy of places, centres and peripheries, distancing itself from a regenerative approach that supports a more balanced, distributed model.

As a consequence, the city-region's *focus* fell narrowly upon GVA uplift, the number of jobs created and private sector leverage. Critically, its funding from the UK Government depends on reaching these targets, without any regard to the type of economic output produced, the quality of jobs created or the sectors which grow as a result of city-regional investment. This is very different from principles found in the three literatures, which ask for 'eradicating root causes of poverty, injustice and environmental degradation' (Pezzoli et al., 2009, p. 337), as well as the decentralisation of power. With regards to this last aspect, this thesis has in fact demonstrated that through the city deal approach, the state has not lost any power. In fact, the national state reasserted its position, possibly 'orchestrating international' (Jonas & Moisio, 2016, p. 17), as well as inter-regional competition which exacerbates inequalities (Etherington & Jones, 2017). Indeed, CCR's leaders still need to find ways of collaborating with the other Welsh city-region, Swansea Bay, as well as with the rest of the country. So far, the two city-regions seem to have assumed a rather antagonistic and competitive positioning towards each other, and an exploitative one towards natural areas such as the Brecon Beacons National Park.

Similarly, the approach has limited the city-region's *extent*, excluding any actors or spheres of development which are not considered instrumental for economic growth. As repeatedly mentioned, this project does not intend to minimise the importance of economic development, as long as there is recognition that the economy is embedded in the society, and that the society is nested within the environment (Giddings et al., 2002). Without the latter, the former two cannot exist. While city-regional leaders demonstrated they had wider aspirations for their areas, often touching upon equality or quality of life, interviews proved that the environment is rarely on the leaders' minds.

This 'light touch on the environment', signalled previously by other city-regional studies across the UK (Etherington & Jones, 2009; P. Jones et al., 2017; Lyall et al., 2015), lead to a limited representation of CCR's *setting*. Thus, this administrative scale came to describe mostly a one-dimensional socio-economic space shaped by commuting patterns, and the city-regional agenda failed to recognise or build upon a more holistic, territorialised understanding of the interrelations between all of its ecosystems. Furthermore, although the city deal arrangement reduced the disconnection between local authorities and recognised the interdependencies

between urban and rural areas, interviews proved that some leaders are still concerned that the project might be a zero-sum game.

Finally, while the evolving governance structure proved extremely intricate and dynamic, the current city-regional approach enabled certain *actors* to participate in planning and decision-making, while excluding or not even representing many others. Here too, unfortunately, CCRCD detached itself from the three literatures supporting this thesis's conceptual framework. CCRCD failed to harness the social and collective actions sparked by the idea of a city-region, as these alternative proposals were not necessarily seeking to contribute to the economic growth model formally aimed for. This fissure might continue manifesting due to the leaders' well-ingrained way of framing city-regional development, a funding model which maintains this perspective by channelling and assessing programmes based on a certain kind of 'success', as well as an old-school view that politicians are the representatives of communities and can make decisions on their behalf, without always seeking their input. Judging by the findings in this research, though, the city-region could benefit from a more holistic approach of policymaking and governance born out of concerted efforts of diverse stakeholders (Girardet, 2015).

To conclude, the different lenses discussed in this section helped to unearth the narratives driving the city-regional agenda, the collaborations sanctioned and the ones emerging outside of the formal governance structure, as well as the opportunities and impediments for regenerative action. Certainly, after uncovering the commonalities of the three bodies of literature, it became impossible to assess whether they had different levels of contribution to this research. It was their combination which facilitated a robust and multidimensional exploration of the city-regional concept, and the case study selected.

While confirming many of the critiques found in the literature, Cardiff Capital Region proved to be a constantly evolving project, in part due to the exceptional legislative context in Wales. Indeed, the Well-being of Future Generations Act – a reaffirmation of WG's commitment to sustainable development – has had noticeable influence (at least) on the discourses present in the city-region. Apart from that, the WFGA has played a key role in this research, and its impact on the conceptual and empirical exploration is analysed next.

7.4 What did the empirical experience add to the conceptual framework?

The conceptual framework helped to frame city-regions as spaces where collaborations can lead to regenerative action, ensuring that humans and other ecosystems thrive within the planetary

boundaries. It built on ideas already existing in three literatures, yet which had never been connected before. Certainly, the concepts were used in their 'idealised' form, and the literature review tried to discuss some sobering perspectives, too. Indeed, there is no city-region in the UK at the moment which could be defined as progressive, collaborative and regenerative, and this project aimed to uncover the reasons which deterred CCR from developing some of these features. Undoubtedly, the framework had a direct impact on the case study and methodology chosen, and in return, the case study helped to refine and focus this project, anchoring it in a messy and complex reality. The following paragraphs deal with these aspects.

CCR has been a particularly well-suited case to apply the conceptual framework due to the national legislative context in which it developed. The Well-being of Future Generations Act was described in this project as akin to the regenerative development concept and section 5.3.1 clarified this analogy. To summarise, the Act requires all public bodies to ensure that their actions contribute to the well-being of current and future generations, within and outside of Wales. The Act defines well-being through seven key aspects (resilience, equality, health, prosperity, culture, vibrant communities and global responsibility) and recommends five ways of working to make contributions to each of these goals (thinking in the long term, collaboration, involvement, integration and prevention). This change in paradigm is as much about the outcome, as it is about the process, allowing for a more participatory and inclusive public policy-making. Thus, it requires a variety of knowledges and experiences, and determines decisions to be considered in a much wider context.

Unfortunately, Chapter 5.3 has showed that, similarly to the theoretical concepts used in this research, the WFGA is more complicated to apply in reality, sometimes due to lack of determination and negative personal perceptions, and sometimes because of the considerable amount of work it involves. Ontologically, CCRCD and WFGA are underpinned by differing perspectives on 'economic development', with the latter making specific requirements for an equitable and low carbon approach that recognises global environmental limits. From this point of view, studying the WFGA has helped to understand some of the aspects preventing regenerative action in the city-region. Hence, the case study demonstrated that having a legal framework is only part of the solution, supporting Davies' (2016, 2017) conclusions that until the duties stipulated in the Act are legally enforced, their application might remain aspirational, depending on political will and personalities.

Nonetheless, the chapter also showed that through numerous interventions and the collaboration established between CCRCD and FGCO, new documents and statements released

by the city-region had started incorporating different ideas and words. While it is too early to assess whether CCR leaders will 'walk the talk', and some, more cynical, might say that 'politicians might just be getting better about pretending to care' (CUML, personal communication, 22 June 2018), this thesis supports the idea that new metaphors and stories have the power to change mind-sets. From this point of view, WFGA might have potential to disrupt hegemonic narratives (a conclusion also reached by Waite & Bristow, 2018).

Furthermore, beyond these realistic perspectives on the inscription in law and implementation of regenerative development, the WFGA led this research to put a particular emphasis on the question of *future generations*. It is primarily this aspect which allows characterising this study as inductive. Without previous awareness of the legislation, the project had no intention to work with youth. However, by collaborating with the WG partners, and later on with the FGCO during the secondment, the topic appeared particularly relevant. While 'future generations' and our duties towards them constitute a moral question (as discussed in Chapter 6), this research made the notion much more tangible by conceptualising them as the first generations to be affected by the city-regional policies, and the ones who would have to bear the consequences for the longest. Thus, part of the empirical exploration aimed to make these generations – today's young people – more visible, while also striving to understand their own lived experiences in CCRCD.

This decision, then, led to an exploration of methods which promised a more participatory research approach, allowing to operationalise a principle characteristic for the three bodies of literature used: knowledge co-creation. A conscious search for less extractive techniques and a goal to offer something in return for the participation made two research methods – web-mapping and Photovoice – seem most appropriate. Employed in a workshop format, they complemented each other, eliciting spatial, visual and narrative information from young people. In return, these workshops had a strong educational component, first by raising awareness regarding CCR's existence and future plans, and second, by allowing young people to gain new skills, such as basic web-mapping, and the capacity to express themselves geographically. Young people were encouraged to adopt a critical, analytical understanding of their environments, and their visual and textual outputs demonstrate their engagement.

Yet, while this was a particularly enriching research experience and young people's contributions provided a wealth of information, the question of youth engagement did not become a central one in this project because of the following reasons. First, the lack of public engagement in CCRCD demonstrated the lack of interest and initiative on the leaders' side. Then, recruiting

participants proved much more difficult than expected, and the initial sample was significantly reduced. Finally, these two issues led to a recognition that a single person does not have the resources (finance-, time- and energy-wise) to undertake such a task. Here too, the fieldwork experience raises questions regarding the compromises or the mutations suffered when applying theoretical concepts in reality, and once again, the question of political will (as shown in sections 6.2.1 and 6.2.2) plays a main role.

Nevertheless, the findings – although not representative for all young people in CCRCD – are both an illustration of the possibilities embodied in the city-region, and of potential ways of working with youth. For this reason, outside of this dissertation, the project generated a variety of (non-academic) outputs (see Annex 1) which have better chances of reaching policy makers and a general audience.

To summarise, this research has been reflexive and interactive, building a conceptual framework almost concomitantly with the fieldwork stage. While the framework offered three synergistic lenses to analyse an empirical case, the realities encountered during fieldwork helped focus the project, added a specific line of inquiry, and unravelled some of the challenges of translating theoretical concepts or policy aspirations into practice.

7.5   Design principles for regenerative city-regions

The previous two sections have analysed the interactions between this project's integrated conceptual framework and the empirical research experience. As mentioned, the framework proved useful in studying and understanding contemporary and unfolding city-regional policies and practices, while also having the potential to suggest improvements or alternative pathways. The next paragraphs discuss these potentialities, presenting them not in the form of prescriptive policy recommendations, but rather as design principles to guide the formulation and enactment of policies at city-regional level. Although written based on the realities encountered in Cardiff Capital Region, most of these principles are conceptually wide enough to be relevant in other city-regions, too.

The first principle relates to a basic first step in city-regional development: (re-)thinking what a city-region is and what role it plays, by adopting a holistic perspective. This reframing would widen the socio-economic function attached to city-regional development to include the region's 'several nested ecosystems', as identified by its different communities (World Resources Institute, 1996, p. 4). For CCR, and probably other British city-regions, it could help to

redress the limited narrative and manifestations caused by the funding scheme – city deals. As the empirical section showed, CCR is an assemblage with an evolving learning curve, amassing a variety of city-regional initiatives which are based on alternative definitions and pathways for development. Furthermore, CCR benefits from a supportive legal framework and the FGCO's assistance in (re-)inventing itself, yet this requires political will and more inclusivity in the governance framework.

From this stems directly *the second design principle*: (re-)defining who the stakeholders are and making the current circle (centred on elite business and political representatives) more permeable, to allow and include the interests of all categories of communities. Certainly, this raises important questions regarding the governance structure and the forms it can take to become more inclusive without compromising efficiency. Considering the latest waves of protest and the 're-emergent citizenry' (Hodson et al., 2019, p. 209) challenging the current power structures, a regenerative city-region could channel such energy into more democratic and participatory decision-making arenas. Experiments with citizen juries, advisory boards or participatory budgeting are currently taking place all over the world and could also be suitable in city-regions. In CCRCD, the various bodies and boards could be simplified, because as seen in section 5.2.1, CCRCD is handled by a relatively small group of people that unite in various committees. A first simple transformation could happen within the advisory bodies, making them more inclusive fora with enhanced power to influence decisions, in a transition towards more radical changes. In any case, CCRCD's current forms of interaction with its inhabitants are clearly limited (see Figure 6-6 and Figure 6-7) and in dire need of new methods.

The third design principle refers to the pathways chosen for development. Instead of, or along with relying on external investment, city-regions could support people and communities to uncover their potential, fostering place-based collaborations for regenerative action. In South East Wales, Project Skyline (see Blake, 2019) is one of the most recent examples suggesting that communities are ready and apt to become land stewards who manage their local assets in ways which do not compromise the needs of future generations. Years ago, when the foundations of CCR were being laid, others advocated for a regional park around the Welsh Valleys that would protect natural and historical heritage, while also fostering tourism. Working together in such projects would ease local authorities' collaboration, instead of turning the city-region into a zero-sum game where if one place receives inward investment, the others might not (CUKM, personal communication, 30 May 2018). Moreover, these two examples share similar logics, requiring decentralisation and a departure from the agglomerative logic currently noticeable in CCRCD, where a certain hierarchy of places seems to transpire.

The fourth and last principle refers to the city-region's interaction with lower and higher scales, as well as with other city-regions. As CCRCD showed, national governments can both encumber and support regenerative action, making multi-scalar integration essential. With regards to other city-regions, a different logic than international competition could facilitate knowledge and experience exchanges. This is particularly important in the context of Brexit, as the Welsh Government's positioning towards EU remains an opened question. As an example, looking elsewhere for progressive initiatives to solve three of its major issues (transport, homelessness, and food quality), CCR could collaborate and perhaps adapt and adopt some of the following initiatives. Metropolitan Barcelona aims to tackle congestion and air pollution with a programme through which citizens can receive a free 3-year public transport pass in exchange for their old, polluting cars and a commitment to refrain from buying another car for 3 years (TMB, 2019). Helsinki has successfully combined the 'housing first' principle – which sees housing as a basic human right – with other types of support (psychological, career, financial) to curb homelessness, and some evidence suggests this could work in the UK, too (Bretherton & Pleace, 2015). Finally, Freiburg Regionalwert AG is a citizen shareholder corporation that supports organic farming and the regional economy, promoting cross-collaborations for social-ecological added value (Schiller, Gonzalez, & Flanigan, 2014). These progressive models, while probably not perfect, do not have economic growth as departure point, yet they can all contribute to an economy in which more people can participate, without taking a toll on the environment.

7.6   Limitations and further research challenges

As any other PhD project, this research had to constrain its scope and the time invested in fieldwork. From here stem the three major caveats, which are certainly interconnected. The following paragraphs discuss the project's limitations, suggesting how future research could deal with them.

First, although the fieldwork took over two years, it was at the end of this stage that some changes seemed to be happening within CCRCD. A different narrative, a new leadership, more experience and maturity within both FGCO and CCRCD, as well as key words sprinkled in public announcements could be a sign that the tide is turning. Possibly as a result of the increased global awareness regarding the need for climate action, the uncertainties posed by Brexit, and a potential 're-emergent citizenry' (Hodson et al., 2019) led by youth, CCRCD is coming closer to what this project hoped to find when it began. A recent social media post on the city-region's Twitter channel showed that CCRCD was looking for low carbon energy project ideas for the

region (CCRCityDeal, 2019). Still, similar to all its other posts, it seems to have only reached a handful of people (as showed in 6.2.1. too). Nonetheless, using the refined and refocused conceptual framework, future research could look into the impact that youth strikes for climate and biodiversity have had on city-regional narratives in CCRCD, and whether in combination with the well-being legislation, they led to more progressive and regenerative action.

Second, as detailed in the Methodology chapter, this project was initially designed to focus on both Welsh city-regions. However, the slow development of events in Swansea Bay determined a single case study. While this decision enhanced the quality and robustness of findings within CCR, it lacked a comparative analysis. Using the trilateral conceptual framework, future research could ask similar questions to the ones used in the current project, to explore similarities and differences between the two city-regions. While their deals differ (Swansea Bay signed a growth deal a year after CCRCD, in March 2017), their proximity and evolution in a similar political and legislative context makes them comparable.

Last but not least, using the knowledge amassed by this project and the connections forged, further research could build on the participatory side of the methodology. Partnering with some of the outsiders identified in sub-chapter 5.2.3, and attempting once again to tap into the official institutions, a future project could use visioning exercises to bring together people with different backgrounds and encourage them to imagine the future of their city-region. Learning also from this project's failures, any future attempt should start from the premises that (i) such an endeavour requires a team of dedicated people who can help with organising and facilitating, and (ii) participants ought to be co-creators of the entire process.

8 Epilogue

'You will be among the next characters who can, if they wish, tell the most
extraordinary story of all – how human beings in the twenty-first century
came to their senses and started to protect Planet Earth.' (Sir David
Attenborough)

Written almost four years since the project began, these final paragraphs have the benefit of hindsight. Since 2016, a few major global events have been in some way connected with this research.

At the time of writing, UK's withdrawal from the European Union is only a few hours away. Despite the considerable human and financial means invested by both the UK Government and the remaining 27 countries, there is far less clarity on Brexit's aftermath than the Conservative politicians promised in 2016, ahead of the referendum. The past three years have been a continuous battle between London and Brussels, with Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland struggling to ensure their interests would not be jeopardised. Even so, there is little guarantee that Wales – a net beneficiary of EU funding – will receive the equivalent support from Whitehall from now on. While the status quo is ensured for a transition period of another 11 months, it is impossible to foresee the nature of collaborations secured and what economic, social and environmental effects these will have be.

Yet Brexit was not the only striking event in 2016. Donald Trump's election as president of the US has been shaking the world, not least with regards to environmental matters. In 2017, the US withdrew from the Paris Agreement, determining 12 of its biggest cities to join forces and step up for climate action. Rising against the national government, mayors recognised that cities have the potential, as well as the responsibility to create solutions to reduce emissions, protecting both people and the environment (C40Cities & ARUP, 2018). In the UK too, Bristol was the first city to declare climate emergency in November 2018, following the IPCC report that revealed the dangers of a temperature increase of more than 2˚C (Bristol City Council, 2018). By May 2019, Scotland, Wales and the UK Government followed numerous other cities and towns across the Kingdom (UK Climate Emergency Network, 2019).

Yet, along with UN's warnings, the world witnessed an extraordinary suite of events. In August 2018, a 15-year-old decided school was not worth attending if her future was compromised by her government's inaction to stop climate breakdown. Her message resonated with people of

all ages, leading to a global series of protests that asked governments to take action for climate and biodiversity protection. In 2019, Greta Thunberg was included among the Top 100 most influential leaders by Time Magazine (Time Magazine, 2019), and young activists from all over the world started receiving the recognition they deserved for challenging their governments, helping their communities and affecting change in their cities (Unigwe, 2019). Last but not least, in January 2020 the National Assembly for Wales passed a bill which extended voting rights to 16 and 17 year olds (National Assembly for Wales, 2020).

The same day, on 15 January 2020, the World Economic Forum released its annual *Global Risks Report*, ahead of its exclusivist event in Davos. For the first time, climate-related issues dominated all of the top-five long-term risks in terms of likelihood, and WEF declared that collaboration was needed more than ever to tackle such problems (World Economic Forum, 2020). The report also mentioned that there are significant business opportunities, and included 'agriculture through regenerative growing practices' among these (World Economic Forum, 2020, p. 37). Why does this matter? Because it means that the wealthiest and most powerful world figures are also feeling threatened by extreme weather, natural disasters, biodiversity loss, human-made environmental disasters, and climate action failure. While it is hard to predict the consequences, there is a chance that major companies and policy-makers feel pressured to move faster towards decarbonisation.

Thus, to sum up: the UK's way forward is currently being negotiated and decided, bringing both opportunities and many challenges; cities have become the 'engines' of climate action; young people have helped raise awareness about the climate and biodiversity crises, and are slowly being recognised as apt citizens; one of the most renowned economic organisations has acknowledged the risks of climate breakdown and saw collaboration and regenerative practices as means to find solutions.

Will all these changes lead Cardiff Capital Region towards a more progressive, collaborative and regenerative city-regional agenda? One can only hope!

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10 Annexes

Annex 1 – Fieldwork timeline and outputs

Research method		Data types	Period	Outputs
Desk research	Document analysis (see Annex 2)	qualitative	April 2016 – June 2018	o Article: Mehmood, A., Marsden, T., Taherzadeh, A., Axinte, L. F., & Rebelo, C. (2019). Transformative roles of people and places: learning, experiencing, and regenerative action through social innovation. *Sustainability Science, 15*(2), 455–466.
	Quantitative analysis	quantitative	February – May 2017	o Report: *Cardiff Capital Region Youth Profile*, May 2017 (Annex 3)
Peripheral and participatory observation (see Annex 4)		qualitative	May 2016 – June 2018	o Photo essay (abridged version of Annex 8) included in the Cardiff University Metro Group publication: Barry, M. et al. (2018). *Metro and Me*, pp. 47-50. (shorturl.at/cfl28)
Interviews (see Annexes 5 and 6a)	11 experts	qualitative	May – September 2016	
	32 stakeholders	qualitative	January – June 2018	
Creative methods (see Annex 6b)	Web-mapping	qualitative (visual and textual)	March 2017 – June 2018	o Photo essay (Annex 8) o Guest blog post on *City at Eye Level*: *Visualising young lives in a city region*, April 2018 (shorturl.at/kMOU6) o Exhibition during *Cardiff Festival of Social Science*, Chapter Arts, Cardiff, November 2018 o Video: *Engaging youth in city-regional development*, January 2019 (shorturl.at/fly67) o Children's book: *Once upon the future. Everyday adventures that change the world*, forthcoming (shorturl.at/rK089)
	Photovoice	qualitative (visual and textual)		

Immersive research – secondments	Future Generations Commissioner for Wales Office – document analysis, participatory and peripheral observation, interviews	qualitative and quantitative	June – August 2017	o Blog post: *Three months among the guardians of future generations*, April 2018 (shorturl.at/dejrF) o Guest blog post on FGC's website: *Sea levels are rising and so are they – school strikes and how we could embrace them in our soft infrastructures*, March 2019 (shorturl.at/pzSV2)
	Royal HaskoningDHV – 10 expert interviews (see Annex 6a, Phase 3)	qualitative	June – August 2018	

Annex 2 – Key documents consulted

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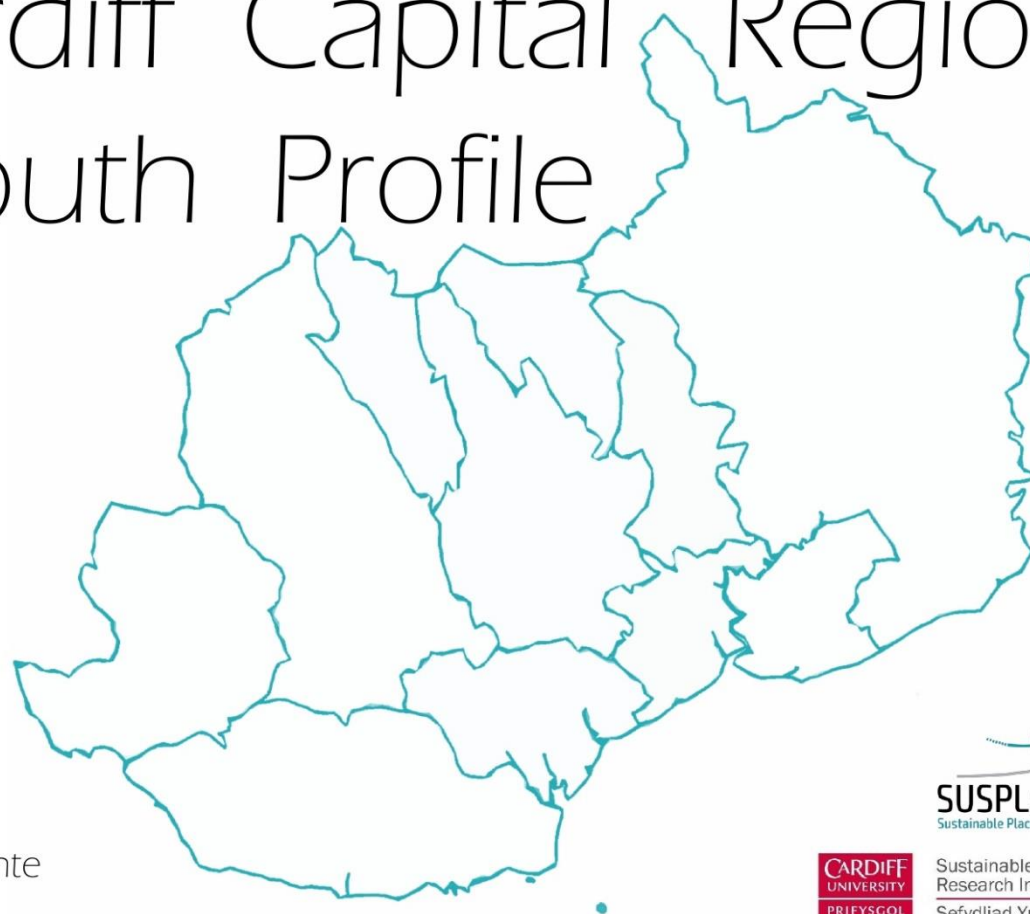HM Government. (2011). *Unlocking growth in cities*.

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Cardiff Capital Region
Youth Profile

Lorena Axinte
May 2017

SUSPLACE
Sustainable Place Shaping

CARDIFF UNIVERSITY
PRIFYSGOL CAERDYDD

Sustainable Places
Research Institute
Sefydliad Ymchwil
Mannau Cynaliadwy

THE CASE FOR A REGIONAL YOUTH PROFILE

CARDIFF CAPITAL REGION AND ITS FUTURE GENERATIONS

This 'Youth Profile' represents an attempt to raise awareness about the future generations of Cardiff Capital Region. The broader research project that it is a part of looks at bringing together the city-region – as an establishment of major importance in the development of South East Wales, and the 'The Well-Being of Future Generations Act'. This innovative piece of legislation represents an extraordinary asset for Wales, marking a significant change of narrative towards inscribing sustainable development at the heart of all public bodies' upcoming choices.

In this sense, the study looks at a specific age group – persons between 16 and 24 – considering that today's youth will be the first one affected by the important decisions currently taken. At the same time, it also intends to make readers conscious that 'future generations' are not a distant and abstract entity; they are here and now, so the directions chosen for developing the city-region should include their values, aspirations, needs and expectations as well.

This is not an exhaustive piece of work. However, the study allows a deeper understanding of general socio-economic characteristics of the young people living in the city-region. Besides the obvious constraints that arise from a quantitative-only analysis, others are caused by the outdated data available (the most recent Census was conducted in 2011, for instance) or even its absence for this particular age group and this particular territory. Several topics deserve to be explored more thoroughly (issues related to everyday mobility, interaction with nature, political engagement or personal relationships – to name a few), and some of them will hopefully emerge in the later stages of the project. For this reason, the current work should be regarded as an on-going project, one that is in the making and will be enhanced as time goes by. Meanwhile, the more complex 'State of the City Region' report (published by Cardiff University's City Region Exchange) can help complementing some of the areas.

YOUNG PEOPLE: HOW MANY AND WHERE?

Cardiff Capital Region hosts more than half of the population aged 16-24 currently living in Wales. This age group represents 12.4% of the city-region's total inhabitants, a fraction that is higher than the averages in Wales and in the United Kingdom.

Among the ten local authorities, Cardiff, Rhonda Cynon Taff and Caerphilly host the highest number, accounting for almost 60% of the total.
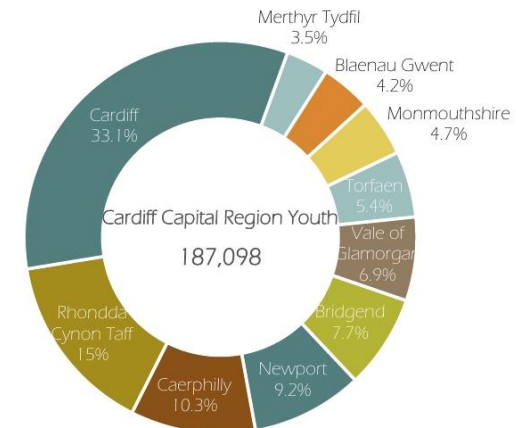

Fig. 1 - Number of young people in each of the ten local authorities forming Cardiff Capital Region, 2015

Fig. 2 - Proportion of young people in each local authority, out of total youth in CCR, 2015
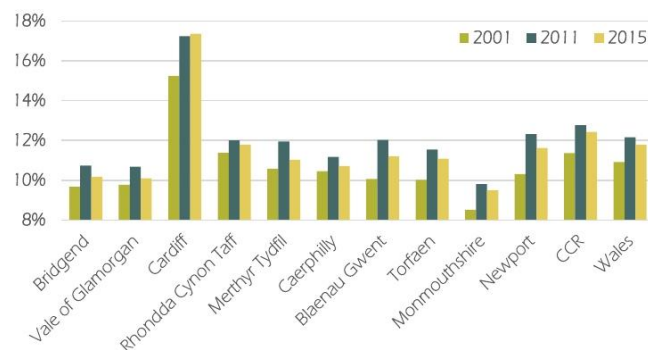
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Fig. 3 - Proportion of young people out of total population

In terms of overall population growth, all local authorities have experienced positive rates between 2001 and 2015, with the sole exception of Blaenau Gwent where the population declined. However, examining the evolution of the youth group in particular shows interesting trends. Although the proportion of youth was still higher in 2015 than in 2001, all local authorities except for Cardiff have lost a part of their younger inhabitants between 2011 and mid-2015. Merthyr Tydfil and Blaenau Gwent seem to have been affected the most.

The latest 'Cardiff Liveable City Report' states that Cardiff is one of the fastest growing core cities in the UK, while the version published in 2015 mentioned that the capital city was considered 'the best city for young people in Britain' (Cardiff Public Services Board, 2015). Indeed, the overall population projections show that the capital city will gain almost 50,000 new inhabitants by 2025, half of the total number expected at city-regional level.

Among the ten local authorities, Blaenau Gwent and Monmouthshire are the only places where the total number of inhabitants is estimated to decline.

Nonetheless, looking specifically at the young residents, the projections are very different. All local authorities apart from Cardiff are expected to see their youth numbers declining, with Blaenau Gwent, Monmouthshire and Torfaen being most affected.
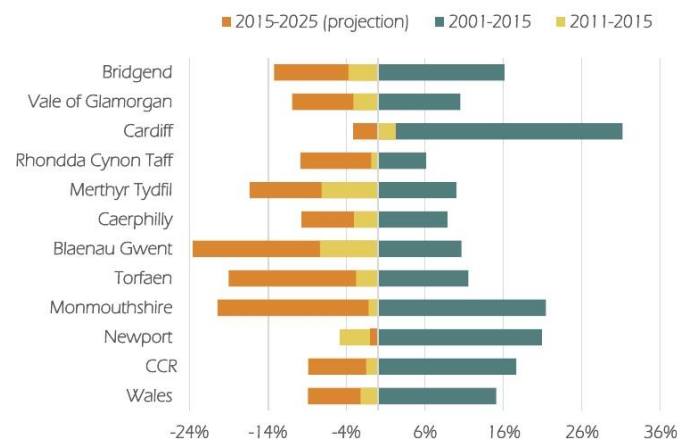

Fig. 4 - Percentage change in young population, actual and projected

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At city-regional level, the population pyramid shows a relatively equal distribution among age groups up to 74 years, and smaller percentages of people over 75. Women outnumber men in these categories, determining a slightly unequal gender distribution.

Overall, the youth (16-24) is well represented and the group 20-24 is actually the largest one in the city-region. This situation is influenced by Cardiff, the only local authority where this particular age group is considerably higher than all the others are. This is probably due to the large number of university students the capital city accommodates. On the other hand, Monmouthshire stands out by showing an ageing population and significantly smaller number of adults aged 25-39.
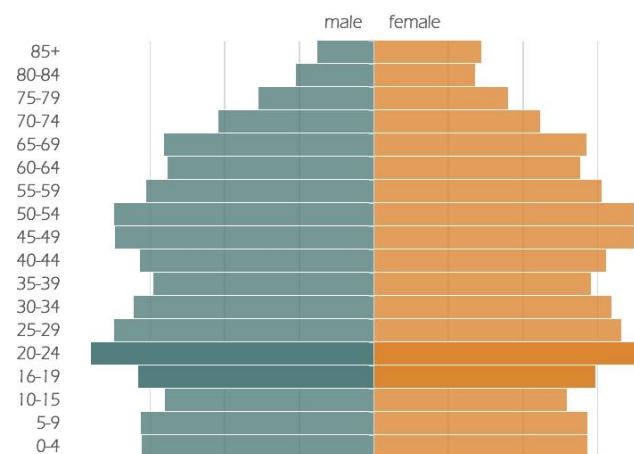

Fig. 5 - Cardiff Capital Region population pyramid, 2015
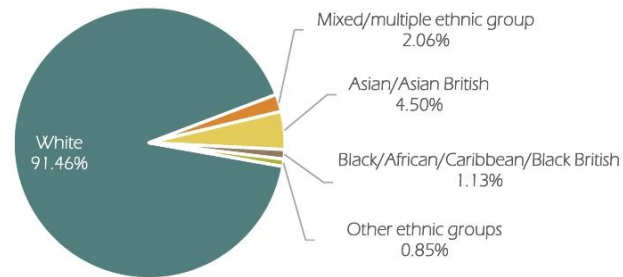
HOW DIVERSE AND HOW MOBILE?

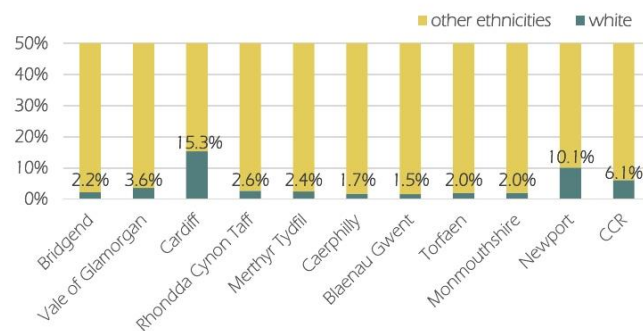Fig. 6 - Proportion of ethnic groups among the CCR's youth, 2011

Mixed/multiple ethnic group
2.06%

Asian/Asian British
4.50%

White
91.46%

Black/African/Caribbean/Black British
1.13%

Other ethnic groups
0.85%

Cardiff Capital Region's youth is slightly more ethnically diverse than the city-region's overall population yet levels are very different across the local authorities and are highly influenced by Cardiff and Newport.

In terms of migration within the UK, the CCR shows a positive net migration rate (and so does Wales), both for the overall population and the 16-24 group. Yet again, Cardiff, Rhondda Cynon Taff and Newport influence these levels, as places where the number of young people entering is higher than the number of those leaving. Actually, RCT and Newport are interesting cases since they seem to attract young people, despite losing other age groups. A counter example is Bridgend where the overall net migration is positive, while for youth is negative.
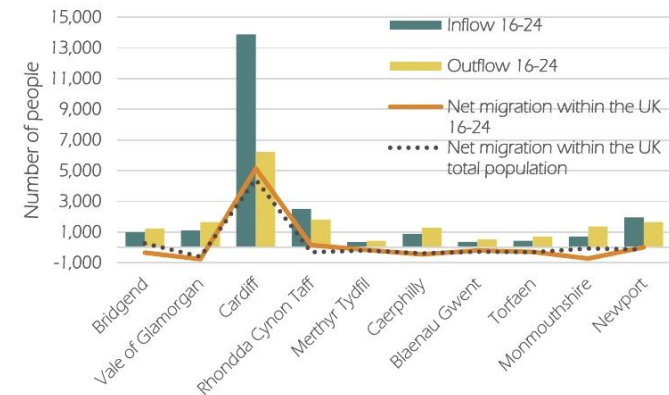

Fig. 7 - Ethnic diversity among young people, 2011

Fig. 8 - Migration of people aged 16-24 within the UK, 2011
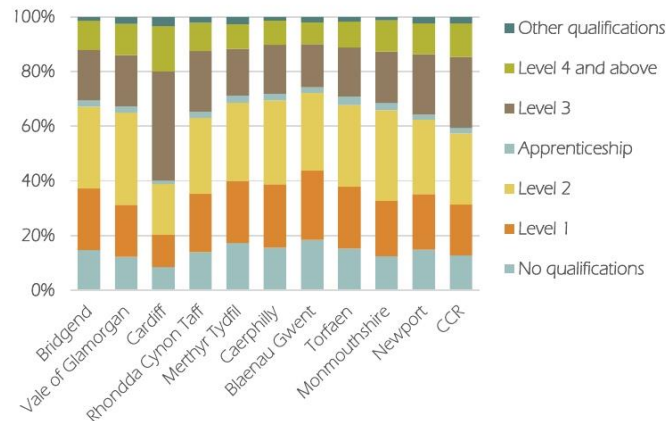
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HOW QUALIFIED AND HOW ECONOMICALLY ACTIVE?

Fig. 9 - Highest level of qualification by age (16-24), 2011

As expected for this age group, Levels 2 and 3 are most common among Cardiff Capital Region's youth qualifications. Two surprising results are the very low rate of apprenticeship (2%) and the relatively high number of persons without any qualifications (12%, almost 1% higher than the Welsh average).

Being a university city, Cardiff has the highest rate of Level 4 qualifications and above (16.5%) and the lowest for no qualifications (8.5%). Simultaneously, Cardiff has the smallest percentage of young people having any Welsh language skills (17.8%), as opposed to Rhondda Cynon Taff where the rate was 25.7% in 2011. At city-regional level, 20.8% of people aged 16-24 have Welsh language skills, slightly more than the overall population where the rate is 19.1%.

In terms of unemployment benefits, it was useful to look specifically at persons between 18 and 24 since the levels for the two other years mitigated the results. Thus, in December 2016 there were over 2000 people aged 18-24 receiving jobseeker's allowance. This is the equivalent of 1.5% of the total population in this age group.

Merthyr Tydfil (1.5%), Caerphilly (1.5%) and Blaenau Gwent (2%) are the local authorities where the rate is the highest, following the same trends for the total active population (aged 16-64).

Nonetheless, in all local authorities the number of youth receiving JSA is smaller than compared to the rate for the entire active population.
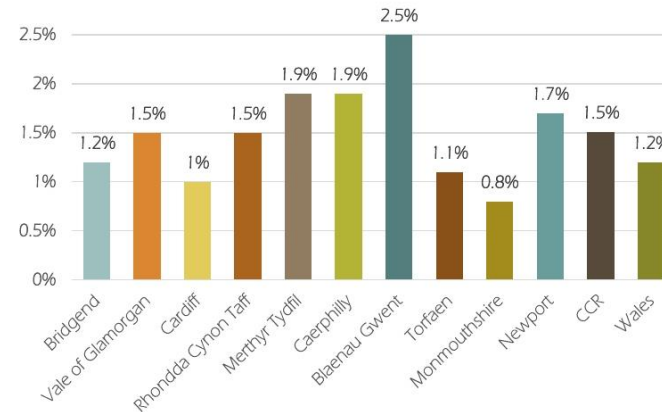

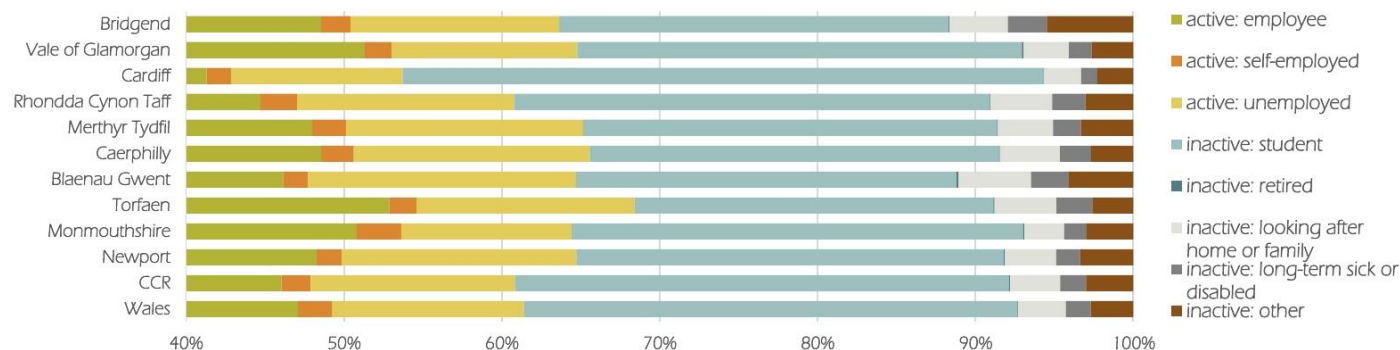Fig. 10 - Jobseeker's allowance rates (18-24), December 2016

Fig. 11 - Economic activity among young people, 2011

In Cardiff Capital Region, more than 60% of the young people were economically active in 2011. Out of them, almost 79% were in employment, with only 3.9% self-employed, showing a relatively small rate of entrepreneurship. Out of those economically inactive, more than 31% were students.

Looking at individual local authorities, Cardiff is in many cases an outlier because of the large number of students. Only 53.7% of the 16-24 declared to be economically active, whereas 40.6% economically inactive students. This is very different from Torfaen for instance, where 68.4% were economically active and only 22.7% students.

Youth unemployment (the proportion of the economically active population who is unemployed) was highest in Blaenau Gwent, with a rate of 26.3%, followed by Merthyr Tydfil and Newport. This is probably not surprising since these are also the local authorities where unemployment rates for all ages are the highest.

Furthermore, Blaenau Gwent, together with Torfaen and Bridgend are the local authorities where long-term sickness or disabilities are important reasons for the youth's economic inactivity. Their rates are approximately three times bigger than in Cardiff (2.2%).

On the contrary, Monmouthshire shows the lowest unemployment rate at 16.7%. Interestingly, Monmouthshire is also the place where the self-employment rate is the highest in CCR: 5.3% for youth and 19% for all ages. This is probably following a general trend in the UK where a lack of opportunities on the job market, combined with the need for more flexibility, as well as the technological advance that allows working from distance, determine more and more people to become self-employed (Careers Wales, n.d.).

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HOW WELL IN TERMS OF DEPRIVATION?

The Welsh Index for Multiple Deprivation is useful for exploring relative deprivation in small areas of Wales, using a combination of domains such as income, employment, education, health, etc. Unfortunately, not all indicators are available for particular age groups, so a mix of sources were used for a deeper analysis. The 'State of the City Region' has already shown that 65% of the most deprived communities in Wales are in the Cardiff Capital Region (City Region Exchange, 2017), while the 'Area Analysis of Child Deprivation' (Welsh Government, 2015) painted an equally undesirable reality, at least for Cardiff, Blaenau Gwent and Merthyr Tydfil.

Income deprivation, for which data is disaggregated, shows important variations. At CCR level, the rate of income-deprived population is 17.8%, higher than the Welsh average (16%). However, there are significant differences between the ten local authorities, ranging from Monmouthshire (11%) to Blaenau Gwent (22%).

Looking specifically at the youth group, the situation is worse for the CCR (19.5%) compared to the Welsh average (17%). In all local authorities except for Cardiff, the young people seem to be more income-deprived than the overall population. However, there is a big discrepancy between the 16-18 (23% income deprived) and 19-24 (8%) living in the capital city.

Significant differences between the overall population and the young generations exist in Bridgend, Vale of Glamorgan, Caerphilly and Torfaen where the youth is 3% more deprived than the all ages category. Newport seems to have the most stable proportions when comparing youth with the entire population, yet this average hides a significant discrepancy between the 16-18 and 19-24 split, by almost 10%.

The highest levels of youth income deprivation are in Blaenau Gwent with 29% for the 16-18 and 20% for the 19-24.
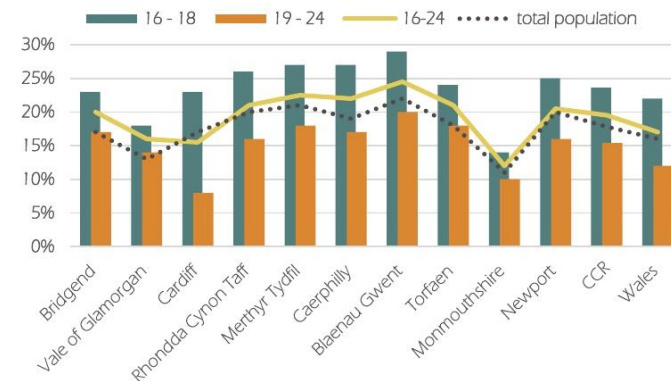
Fig. 12 - Income deprivation, WIMD 2014
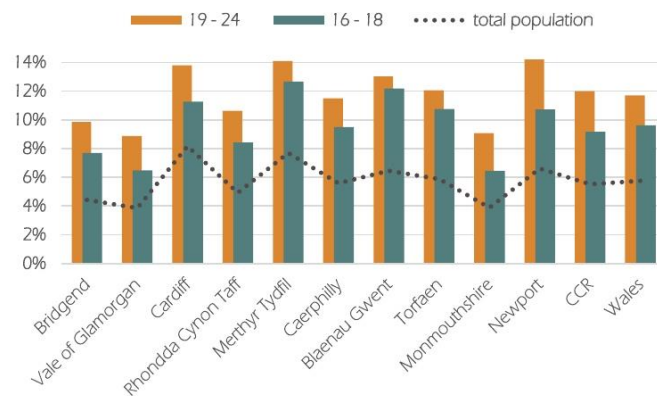
Fig. 13 - People living in overcrowded households, WIMD 2014

As opposed to this indicator, there are fewer people living in households with no central heating in CCR compared to Wales. Similarly, although differences are small, levels for young people are also generally smaller in all ten local authorities.
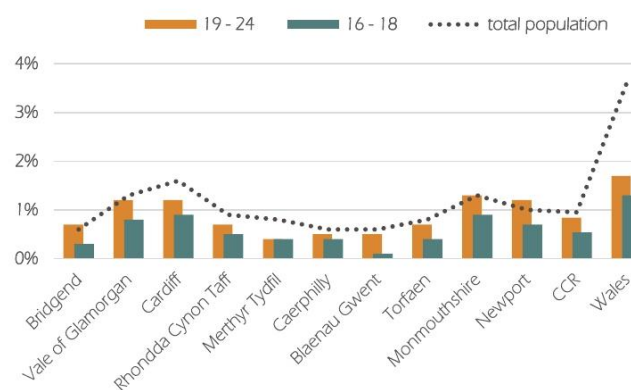
Fig. 14 - People living in households with no central heating, WIMD 2014

Housing, another domain calculated in the WIMD, is interesting because the two indicators used show conflicting patterns when disaggregated.

In terms of overcrowded households, the average for Cardiff Capital Region is similar to the Welsh one for the total population. However, among local authorities, Cardiff stands out having the biggest proportion (8.2%), followed by Merthyr Tydfil and Newport. This could be explained by the general tendency of smaller households in more urbanised, compact cities.

Looking separately at the youth group, the situation seems to be worse, rates being 4-6% higher than for the entire population. Merthyr Tydfil (13.4%) and Blaenau Gwent (12.6%) have the highest proportions, followed by Newport and Cardiff.

HOW WELL IN TERMS OF HEALTH?

Health self-assessment can be an indicator for general wellbeing and health-related quality of life (ONS, 2013). In Cardiff Capital Region, on average, only 6.5% of young people declared their health level as fair or poor, compared to 22% of the entire population aged 16+. Nonetheless, both age categories overpass the Welsh averages of 6% for 16-24 and 20% for the entire population.
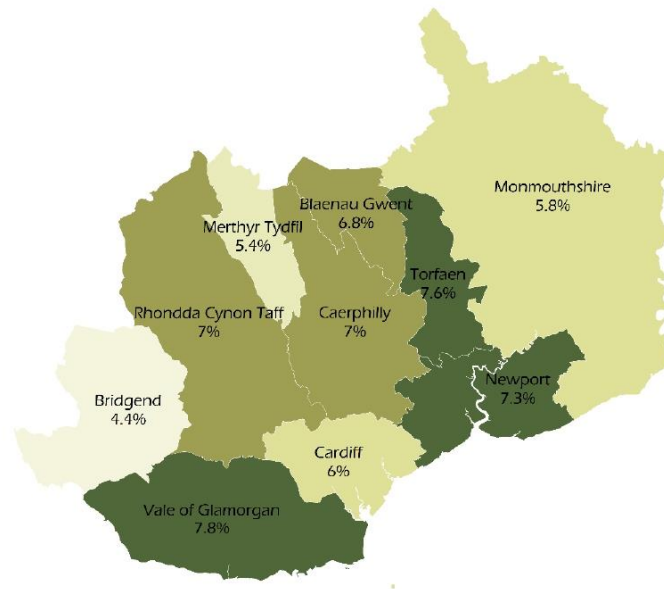
Fig. 15 - Proportion of young people with fair/poor self-rated general health, 2008-2015
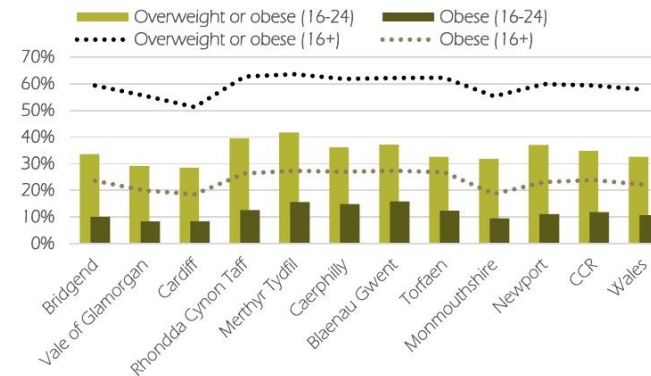
Fig. 16 - Proportion of overweight (BMI +25) and obese (BMI +30) persons, 2008-2015

An unhealthy weight is often perceived as an outcome of poor diet and exercise. Yet, studies have shown that the UK is generally characterised by an 'obesogenic environment', one that encourages people to eat unhealthily and discourages them from doing physical movement (Government Office for Science, 2007). This is an important mind-set shift, showing that tackling obesity (and often numerous other health issues) requires interventions at multiple levels, including changes in the built environment.

While the situation is worrying overall, with at least half of adults being overweight and minimum 18.5% obese, levels for young people are to some extent lower. Merthyr Tydfil has the highest proportion of overweight or obese youth, while Blaenau Gwent has most obese young persons. On the other hand, Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan have the lowest levels for both categories.

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Knowing these problems, it is maybe less surprising that almost 23% of the city-region's youth has not been physically active for at least 30 minutes on any of the days of the week before the poll. Similarly, only 28.6% have been active on five or more days. Nonetheless, although not visible in the figure, young people are doing better in both cases when compared to the entire adult population.

In terms of nutrition, levels for young people in the CCR show that only over a quarter eat the recommended amount of fruits and vegetable, compared to 31.2% of all adults (16+). It is interesting to observe that in this respect Cardiff stands out, with almost 35% of the young people meeting the nutritional recommendation. This could be related to more options, better services and accessibility to healthy food, as well as better information concerning health.
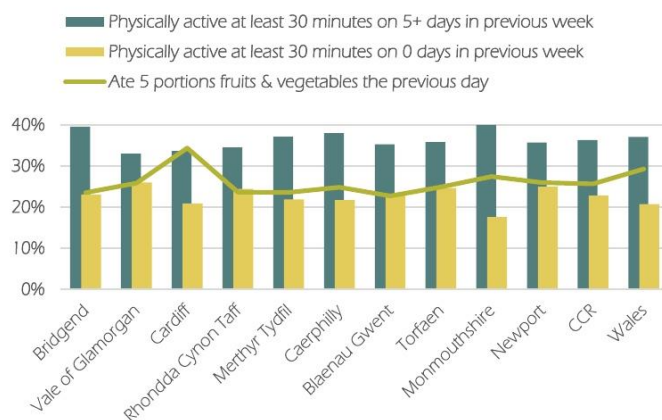
Fig. 17 - Physical activity and diet among youth, 2008-2015
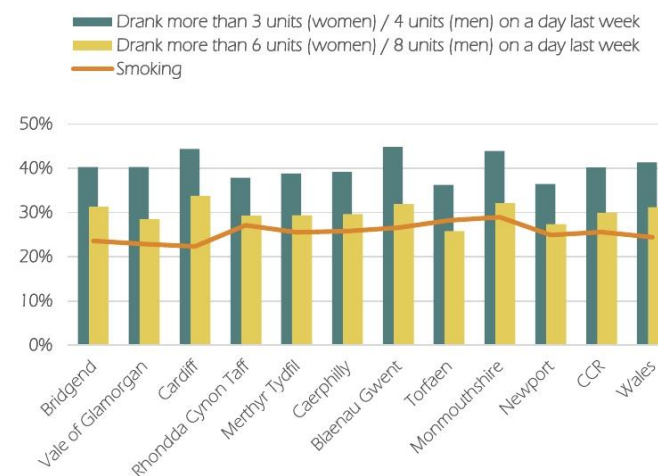
Fig. 18 - Drinking and smoking levels for youth, 2008-2015

Alcohol consumption levels seem to be slightly smaller in the city-region as compared to the Welsh average for youth. Nonetheless, in 7 out of 10 local authorities, more than 40% of respondents had consumed more than 3 or 4 units of alcohol in a day during the previous week. Similarly, more than 25% of all young people in each of the local authority had drank more than 6 or 8 units of alcohol.

On the other hand, smoking levels surpass the Welsh average, varying from 22.3% in Cardiff to 29% in Monmouthshire.

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WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED?

Although it is important to consider all inhabitants when planning the development of Cardiff Capital Region, looking specifically at the youth group has shown interesting results.

o Cardiff Capital Region hosts **more than 50% of all young people** (16-24 years old) in Wales.

o There are **significant demographic differences across the ten local authorities** *as some of them seem more attractive for young people between 16 and 24. This is probably because of the better living, studying and working conditions, as well as the proximity to Cardiff.*

o *Despite an increase in the total number of inhabitants, the* **proportion of young people is expected to decrease** *significantly by 2025, which might turn into a substantial problem for the labour force.*

o **Only two local authorities seem ethnically diverse**, *and without confusing ethnicity and nationality, this can be a sign that the others are less attractive, open or inclusive for newcomers. Migration levels reinforce this assumption, since inflow is only positive in Cardiff, Rhondda Cynon Taff and Newport.*

o **Youth unemployment** *and the associated high levels of deprivation are serious challenges for the entire city-region. Failing to address them will turn into another reason for young people to leave to other regions or countries that offer better work opportunities.*

o **Unhealthy lifestyles** *are not only determined by personal choices, but also by the surrounding environment. It is crucial, thus, to support physical activity, healthy eating and emotional well-being both through 'soft strategies' such as information campaigns, as well as through alterations in the built space to accommodate healthy behaviours.*

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FIGURE SOURCES

Fig. 1 - Welsh Government. (2016). Population estimates by local authority and year, mid-year 2015.

Fig. 2 - Welsh Government. (2016). Population estimates by local authority and year, mid-year 2015.

Fig. 3 - ONS. (2001). Census of population. ; ONS. (2011). Census of population. ; Welsh Government. (2016). Population estimates by local authority and year, mid-year 2015.

Fig. 4 - ONS. (2001). Census of population. ; ONS. (2011). Census of population. ; ONS. (2015). 2014-based projections for local authorities in Wales. ; Welsh Government. (2016). Population estimates by local authority and year, mid-year 2015. ;

Fig. 5 - Welsh Government. (2016). Population estimates by local authority and year, mid-year 2015.

Fig. 6 - ONS. (2011). Census of population.

Fig. 7 - ONS. (2011). Census of population.

Fig. 8 - ONS. (2015). Internal migration, England and Wales: Year ending June 2014.

Fig. 9 - ONS. (2011). Census of population.

Fig. 10 - ONS. (2016). Claimant count by sex and age.

Fig. 11 - ONS. (2011). Census of population.

Fig. 12 - Welsh Government. (2014). Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation.

Fig. 13 - Welsh Government. (2014). Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation.

Fig. 14 - Welsh Government. (2014). Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation.

Fig. 15 - Statistics for Wales. (2017). Welsh Health Survey 2008 – 2015.

Fig. 16 - Statistics for Wales. (2017). Welsh Health Survey 2008 – 2015.

Fig. 17 - Statistics for Wales. (2017). Welsh Health Survey 2008 – 2015.

Fig. 18 - Statistics for Wales. (2017). Welsh Health Survey 2008 – 2015.

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Annex 4 – Events and meetings where observation was conducted

Date	Event name	Type	Organiser	Location	Research method
24.05.2016	Agenda-shaping in the city region: the possibilities and the pitfalls	roundtable	Cardiff University City Region Exchange (CUCRE)	Cardiff University	participatory observation
02.06.2016	Pontypool Deep Place Study (economy)	think-space	Mark Lang	Pontypool	participatory observation
10.06.2016	Pontypool Deep Place Study (community; environment)	think-space	Mark Lang	Pontypool	participatory observation
21.06.2016	Making city regions work for business - learning from others	conference	Cardiff University (CU)	Cardiff	peripheral observation
06.07.2016	Metro - Placemaking and mobilities	workshop	Cardiff University Metro Group (CUMG)	DCfW, Cardiff Bay	participatory observation
28.07.2016	CUMG	conversation	CUMG	CU	participatory observation
25.08.2016	Connections (pre-event for MUD)	presentation	Design Circle RSAW	Cardiff	peripheral observation
24.09.2016	MUD – Metro Urban Density	charrette	Design Circle RSAW	Cardiff Capital Region (various sites)	participatory observation
26.09.2016	What does the City Region Deal mean for the Valleys	public presentation	South Wales Chamber of Commerce	Pontypridd	peripheral observation
31.10.2016	What metro might do?	workshop	CUMG	Cardiff	participatory observation
01.11.2016	Partnering for change	exhibition	CUCRE	Pierhead, Cardiff Bay	peripheral observation
14.11.2016	Can the metro deliver local economic benefits?	report launch and debate	FSB Wales	Cardiff	peripheral observation
30.11.2016	All around us: the Pontypool deep place study	presentation	Sustainable Places Research Institute, CU	Cardiff	peripheral observation
02.02.2017	Smart Cities Cardiff	conference	Cynnal Cymru	Cardiff	peripheral observation

03.02. 2017	CUMG event preparation	meeting	CUMG	Cardiff	participatory observation
07.03. 2017	Should Welsh City Regions have elected mayors?	debate	IWA	Cardiff	peripheral observation
13.05. 2017	#FlashMUD1: Rhiwbina Library & Station	charrette	Design Circle RSAW	Cardiff	participatory observation
14.06. 2017	Growing Wales together	panel discussion	The Prince's Trust Cymru	Cardiff	peripheral observation
17.07. 2017	Public Services Boards – Well-being in Wales: planning today for a better tomorrow	unconference	Future Generations Commissioner for Wales	Cardiff	participatory observation
18.10. 2017	CUMG event preparation	meeting	CUMG	Cardiff	participatory observation
21.10. 2017	Industrial heritage charrette - Merthyr	charrette	Design Commission for Wales	Cardiff	participatory observation
26.10. 2017	Delivering the City Deal and developing the Swansea Bay City Region	seminar	Policy Forum for Wales	Swansea	peripheral observation
20.11. 2017	CCRCD Joint Cabinet public meeting	public meeting	CCRCD	Nantgarw	peripheral observation
22.01. 2018	CU Metro Group publication preparation	meeting	CUMG	Cardiff	participatory observation
14.06. 2019	Empowering Future Generations	conference	Swansea Bay City Region	Swansea	peripheral observation
20.03. 2019	How city deals could make a difference	conference	WISERD	Swansea	peripheral observation

Annex 5 – Interview prompts

CCRCD insiders

1. Motivation to join CCRCD
2. Overview of the city-region
3. Roles and responsibilities within CCRCD
4. Assets and liabilities in the area
5. Aspirations for the future
6. Suitability of the city deal arrangement to accommodate these aspirations
7. Integration within local council/various departments
8. Opportunities and issues within city-regional collaboration so far
9. Future steps to prevent negative cycles (e.g. deprivation, environmental destruction, etc.)
10. Public engagement within CCRCD – history, future plans, youth focus
11. The role of younger generations in the city-region
12. WFGA – connections with city-regional plans; personal perception of Act and interaction with FGCO; incompatibilities between city deal and the Act
13. Future city-regional plans
14. Other issues & further useful contacts

CCRCD outsiders

1. Details regarding person/organisation/project; connections with the city-region
2. Past and future interactions with CCRCD (motivation, outcomes, easiness to reach)
3. Assets and liabilities in the area
4. Aspirations for the city-region
5. Suitability of the city deal arrangement to accommodate these aspirations/other requirements to accomplish aspirations
6. Current city-regional agenda and strategic themes: personal opinion, potential alternatives
7. Current city-regional governance structure: personal opinion, stakeholders over/underrepresented; advantages and disadvantages
8. WFGA – connections with project; application at city-regional level
9. Public engagement in CCRCD – personal opinion; participation in events/meetings
10. The role of younger generations in the city-region
11. Other issues & further useful contacts

Future Generations Office Representatives

1. Details regarding person/role; connections with the city-region
2. Interactions with CCRCD
3. Current understanding of the Act's requirements within CCRCD; barriers for application
4. Incompatibilities between the Act and the city deal
5. Current city-regional agenda and strategic themes: personal opinion, potential alternatives

6. Current city-regional governance structure: personal opinion, stakeholders over/underrepresented; advantages and disadvantages
7. City-regional public engagement
8. The role of younger generations in the city-region
9. Other issues & further useful contacts

Annex 6a – Interview participants

Phase 1 – exploratory interviews

	Date	Name	Occupation/field of interest/organisation
1	17.05.2016	Kevin Morgan	Dean of Engagement; Professor of Governance and Development, Cardiff University
2	17.05.2016	Mark Lang	Honorary University Associate in Law and Politics; Honorary Fellow of the Sustainable Places Research Institute, Cardiff University
3	03.06.2016	Gillian Bristow	Dean for Research for the College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences; Professor in Economic Geography, Cardiff University
4	15.06.2016	Usha Ladwa-Thomas	Development Officer-Direct Delivery, Natural Resources, Welsh Government
5	17.06.2016	Mark Barry	Professor of Practice in Connectivity, Cardiff University; former Metro Development Director and Advisor, Welsh Government
6	20.06.2016	Steve Lloyd	Officer - Climate Change Engagement, Welsh Government
7	22.06.2016	Adrian Healy	Research Associate in regional innovation, economic resilience and the role of European policies in shaping regional development, Cardiff University
8	14.07.2016	Helen Davies	Head of Unit, Cardiff Capital Region
9	02.08.2016	Eurgain Powell	Office of the Future Generations Commissioner
10	03.08.2016	Mark Lang	Honorary University Associate in Law and Politics; Honorary Fellow of the Sustainable Places Research Institute, Cardiff University
11	20.09.2016	Matthew Quinn	Director of the Environment Department, Welsh Government
12	22.09.2016	David Waite	Research Associate in city region economic innovation, Cardiff University
13	18.07.2017	CCRCD	CCRCD Project Management Office
14	23.08.2017	CCRCD	CCRCD Project Management Office

Phase 2 – Fieldwork interviews (CCRCD insiders and outsiders)

	Date	Pseudonym	Organisation	Role	Engagement attempts & channels
1	29.01.2018	LAR1	Torfaen County Council	leadership	1 email, 1 tweet, 3 emails
2	01.02.2018	LAR2	RCT County Council	leadership	1 email, 1 phone call, meeting postponed, 2 emails
3	18.01.2018	LAR3	Caerphilly County Council	leadership	2 phone calls
4	27.02.2018	LAR4	Bridgend County Council	leadership	2 phone calls, 1 tweet, 8 emails, meeting postponed, email
5	26.02.2018	LAR5	Cardiff County Council	leadership	1 email, 1 tweet, 2 emails, meeting postponed due to misunderstanding, 1 phone call
6	24.02.2018	LAR6	Vale of Glamorgan County Council	leadership	1 phone call, 1 email
7	25.01.2018	LAR7	Merthyr Tydfil County Council	leadership	1 phone call, 1 message on LinkedIn, 1 email
8	19.01.2018	LAR8	Blaenau Gwent County Council	leadership	1 email (redirected from previous leader to current one)
9	03.04.2018	LAR9a LAR9b	Cardiff County Council	leadership policy	2 emails, meeting postponed, 1 email
10	16.01.2018	LAR10	Monmouthshire County Council	leadership	1 phone call, 1 tweet, 1 email
11	09.03.2018	LAR11	Newport County Council	leadership	3 emails, meeting cancelled, 2 emails to secure meeting with another leader
12	11.06.2018	CCRCDR	CCRCD	leadership	1 email
13	08.06.2018	RTAR	Regional Transport Authority	member	1 email
14	03.05.2018	FGCR1	Future Generations Commissioner Office	leadership	direct communication
15	26.04.2018	FGCR2	Future Generations Commissioner Office	representative	1 email
16	01.05.2018	FGCR3	Future Generations Commissioner Office	representative	1 email
17	01.05.2018	TFWR	Transport for Wales	representative	1 email
18	30.05.2018	CUKM	Cardiff University	academic	direct communication
19	07.06.2018	CUMB	Cardiff University	academic	1 email
20	22.06.2018	CUML	Cardiff University	academic	1 email
21	07.06.2018	CUCRER	City Region Exchange, CU	researcher	1 email, Skype meeting
22	06.06.2018	MIRR	Made in Roath	artist	direct communication

23	12.06.2018	DCR1, DCR2, DCR3	Design Circle	architects	2 emails
24	02.06.2018	KWTR	Keep Wales Tidy	project manager	1 email
25	14.06.2018	IWAR1, IWAR2	Institute of Welsh Affairs	policy officer & project leader	1 email
26	11.06.2018	BBNPAR	Brecon Beacons National Park Authority	manager	1 email, meeting postponed, 1 email, Skype meeting

Phase 3 – Additional expert interviews conducted during the secondment with RHDHV in the Netherlands

	Date	Name	Occupation/field of interest/organisation
1	04.07.2018	Cathelijne Hermans	Associate director sustainable mobility, RHDHV
2	04.07.2018	Christiaan Elings	Consultant strategy & management for sustainable transitions, RHDHV & City of Amsterdam
3	09.07.2018	Marije Ploeg	Youth engagement and political activism, RHDHV
4	10.07.2018	Monique van Dam and Alice Korsch	Youth engagement, One World Citizens
5	10.07.2018	Jasper Homrighausen	Sustainable mobility, international cycling master planning, urban planning, RHDHV
6	12.07.2018	Pieter van Ree and Bas Govaarts	Project director & international affairs officer, Nijmegen European Green Capital 2018
7	07.08.2018	Geertje Hegeman	Behavioural aspects of urban mobility, traffic education, RHDHV
8	14.08.2018	Paul Mul	Social enterprises, sustainable business plans and financial development, RHDHV
9	29.08.2018	Jantine Zwinkels	Utrecht council member & RHDHV
10	29.08.2018	Job van den Berg	Leading professional New Partnerships & Governance, RHDHV

Annex 6b – Creative methods research participants

	Web-mapping	Photovoice	Name	Local authority	Workshop location
1	31.07.2017	01.08.2017	Abby Parker	Blackwood	Ty Penallta/ Aberbargoed
2	31.07.2017	01.08.2017	Aysha Osborne	Blackwood	Ty Penallta
3	31.07.2017	01.08.2017	Charlotte Thomas	Rhymney	Ty Penallta/ Aberbargoed
4	31.07.2017	01.08.2017	Lowri Jones	Blackwood	Ty Penallta/ Aberbargoed
5	31.07.2017	01.08.2017	Matthew Diggle	Pontlottyn	Ty Penallta/ Aberbargoed
6	31.07.2017	31.07.2017	Summer Lewis	Tredegar	Ty Penallta
7	29.08.2017	04.09.2017	Georgia Rogers	Cardiff	PLACE, CU
8	29.08.2017	04.09.2017	Bethan Hill-Howells	Newport	PLACE, CU
9	29.08.2017	04.09.2017	Simona Vaipan	Cardiff	PLACE, CU
10	29.08.2017	04.09.2017	Lilly Evans	Merthyr Tydfil	PLACE, CU
11	-	04.09.2017	Charlotte Howson	RCT	PLACE, CU
12	13.01.2018	13.01.2018	Kieran Warburton	Abergavenny	Cardiff
13	17.01.2018	24.01.208	Charlotte Thomas	Ferndale	Nantgarw
14	17.01.2018	-	Leah Cadwgan	Beddau	Nantgarw
15	17.01.2018	-	Lewis Ellaway	Aberbargoed	Nantgarw
16	-	24.01.2018	Nadine Hampson	Bedwas	Nantgarw
17	08.03.2018	15.03.2018	Aaron Thompson	Pyle	Bridgend
18	08.03.2018	15.03.2018	Lisa Marie Poucher	Bridgend	Bridgend
19	08.03.2018	15.03.2018	Jordan Bray	Llanharan	Bridgend
20	08.03.2018	15.03.2018	Shaun Smith	Tan Y Bryn Brynna	Bridgend
21	08.03.2018	15.03.2018	Luke Townsend	Bridgend	Bridgend
22	08.03.2018	15.03.2018	Adam White	North Cornelly	Bridgend
23	08.03.2018	15.03.2018	Emily Rautenbach	Cardiff	Bridgend
24	08.03.2018	15.03.2018	Callum Rhys Hale	Maesteg	Bridgend
25	08.03.2018	15.03.2018	Damian Lee Crowley	North Cornelly	Bridgend
26	-	15.03.2018	Jade Elizabeth Owen	Bridgend	Bridgend
27	03.05.2018	29.05.2018	Maya Broadbank	Cardiff	Cardiff
28	03.05.2018	29.05.2018	David	Cardiff	Cardiff
29	25.05.2018	06.06.2018	Gweni Llwyd	Cardiff	Cardiff

Annex 7 – Web-mapping guide

Creating your own map with Google Maps

This guide will show you how to use Google Maps to create your own maps. Maps are very useful tools that you can use during traveling, for a school project, to share knowledge with others or to record your memories. Google Maps allows you to personalise them and you can always share the maps on Facebook, Twitter or even by printing them.

We will start with a map of your area where you will mark boundaries, your hometown, the places you like or would like to visit in the future, as well as the ones you dislike or avoid.
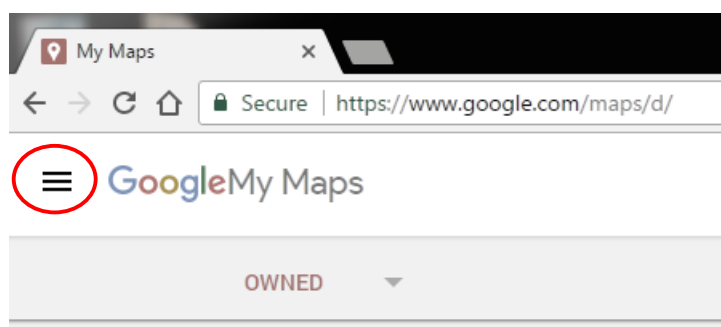
Let's get started!

1. Open your internet browser and go to https://www.google.com/mymaps/.

2. Log in with:
ID: ccryouth2017@gmail.com
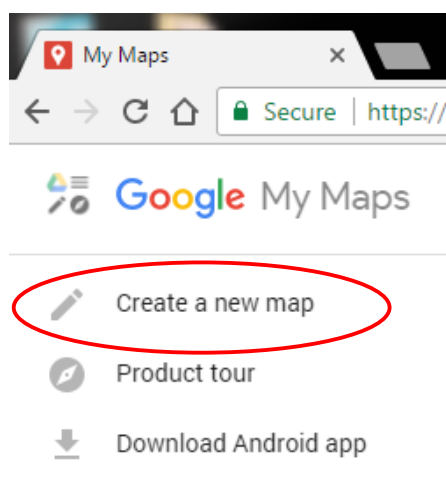Password: ▇▇▇▇▇▇
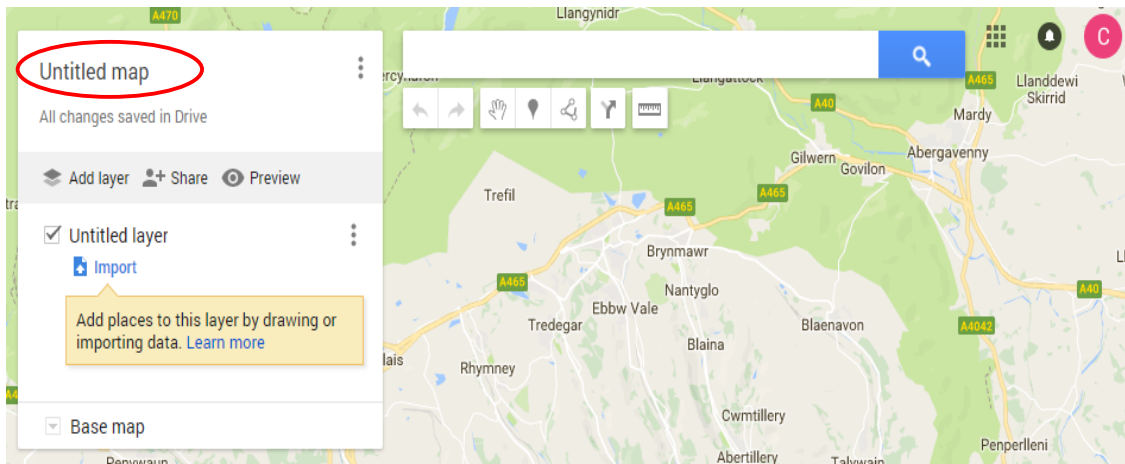
3. Click on the three lines to open the menu on the top left.

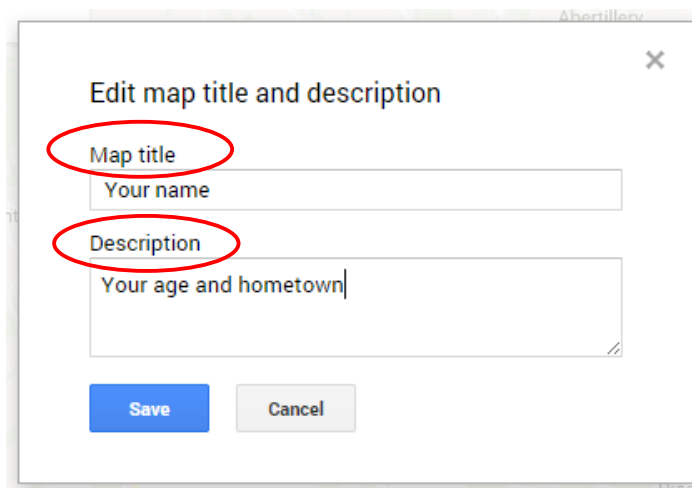4. Select Create a new map.

5. Change the name of your map by clicking on Untitled map.

Use your name for the map title and your age and hometown for description.

6. Type in Caerphilly County Borough and click on the magnifying glass to search or zoom in manually until you can see the area you want.

7. Draw the shape of your *city-region*. Think of your city-region as the area that expands beyond your hometown, where you might travel occasionally (for leisure, shopping, education, medical services, etc.) and to which you feel connected in any way. It does not have to be very precise, so do not worry too much about the exact boundaries.

Click on the triangle and select Add line or shape.
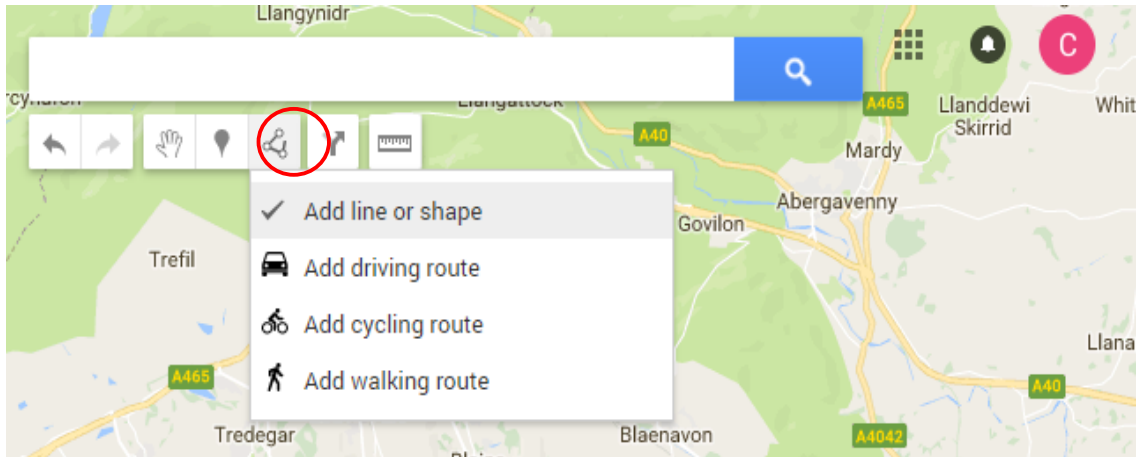
Place the cursor on the map and start clicking to draw the boundaries of your city-region. You will see the first dot and a line expanding. Keep clicking until you have surrounded the area you wanted and make sure to click again on the first dot in the end to form a polygon.

Name the polygon My city-region's boundaries and click Save.

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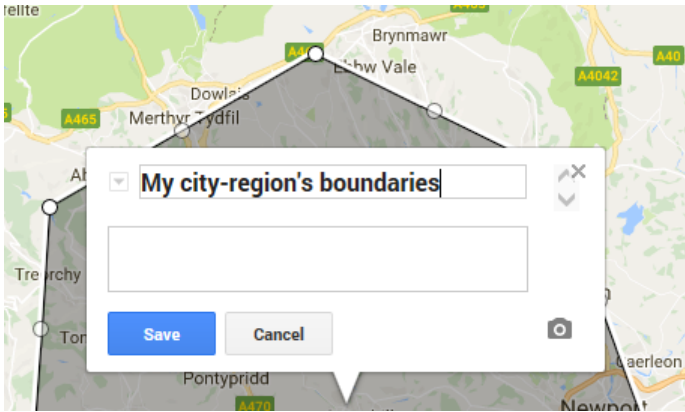
If you are not happy with the shape, you can always modify it by clicking and dragging the different circles. If you want to delete the shape and redraw from scratch, you can click on the bin icon that will Delete feature.

You can change the colour of the polygon by clicking on the Style option represented by a paint bucket.
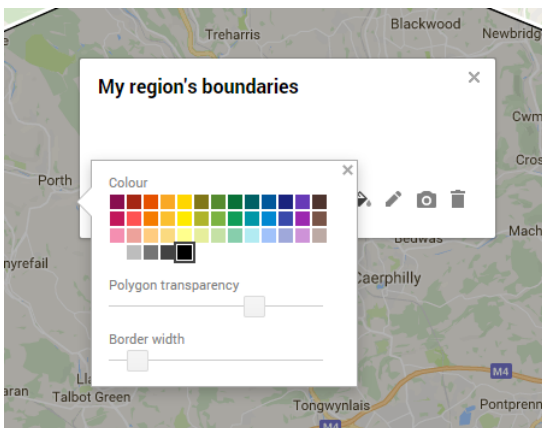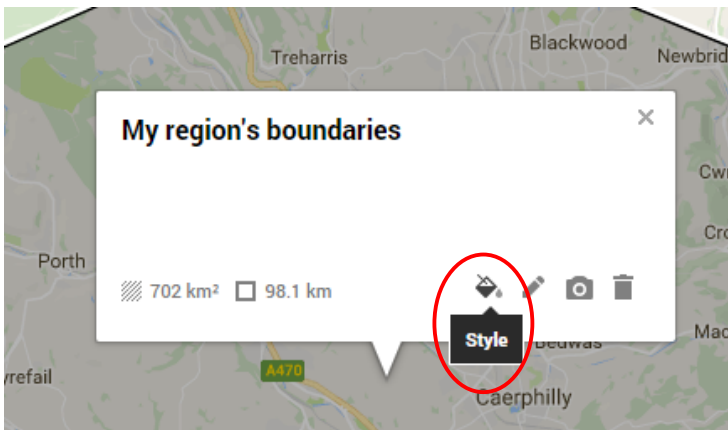
8. Now that you have drawn your area's boundaries, you can mark your hometown. You can do this in two ways:

a. Type the name of your home town in the search box and click enter. A pointer will be placed on the map. Click Add to map.
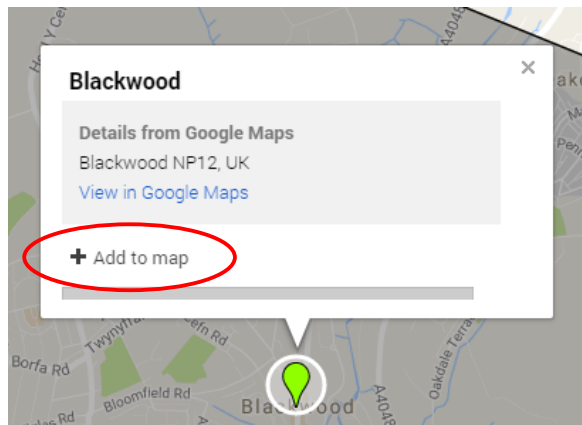
or b. Click on the tear shaped icon to Add marker and place it on the map manually. Type in the name and click Save.
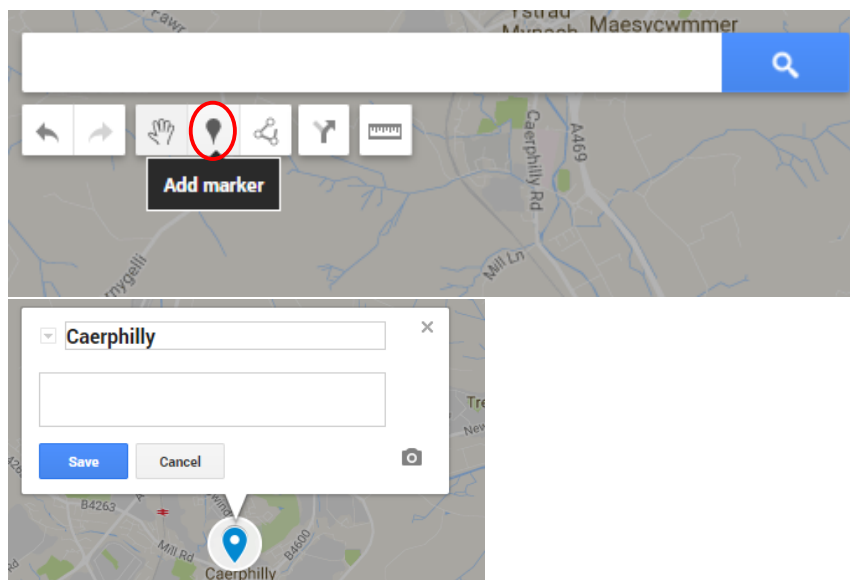
You can change the colour and the type of icon by clicking on the Style option represented by a paint bucket, just as you did for the region's boundaries.

You can move the location by keeping the left click button of your mouse pressed and dragging the icon until you are happy with its position.

9. You have so far added the region's boundaries and your hometown to an Untitled layer visible on the left side panel. You can leave it as it is or rename it 'My city-region and hometown' by clicking on the Layer options represented by three vertical dots and selecting Rename this layer.
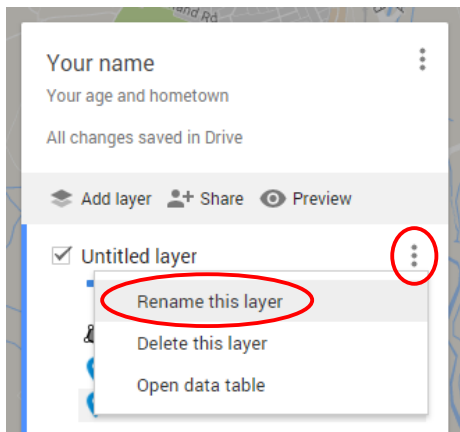
10. You will now add a new layer for the places that you like in your region. To do this, click on Add layer and you will see another untitled layer appearing in the left side panel. Rename it Places I like by following the steps above (click on the three dots next to the new untitled layer created → select Rename this layer)
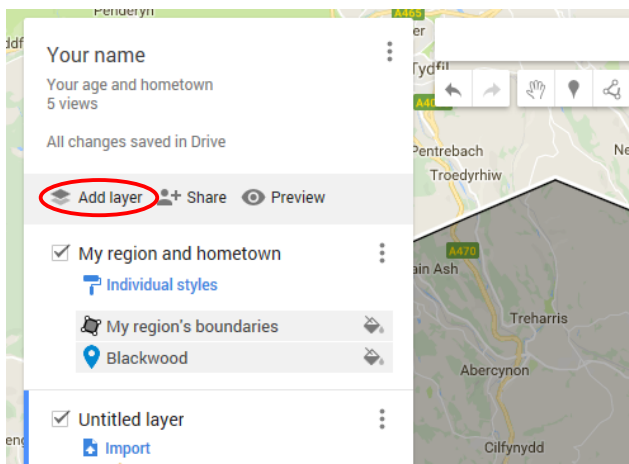
11. Start marking places you like in the region by following the same steps you made to add your hometown (step 8). Make sure to name them and add a short description for the reasons why you chose them. Do not spend too much time on selecting colours and icons, since you can always modify these later if you wish to.

You can also include places from the region you have not visited yet, but would like to. Make sure you mention why you are interested in going there, as well as why you have not done it until now.

12. Once you marked all the places you like, you will add the ones that you dislike. These might be areas you think are unpleasant, unsafe, dirty, difficult to reach or simply do not want to see and try to avoid.

To do so, add a new layer as you did before (step 10). Name this one Places I dislike.

13. Start marking the places you dislike in the region by following the same steps you made to add your hometown (step 8). Make sure to name them and add a short description for the reasons why you chose them. Do not spend too much time on selecting colours and icons, since you can always modify these later if you wish to.
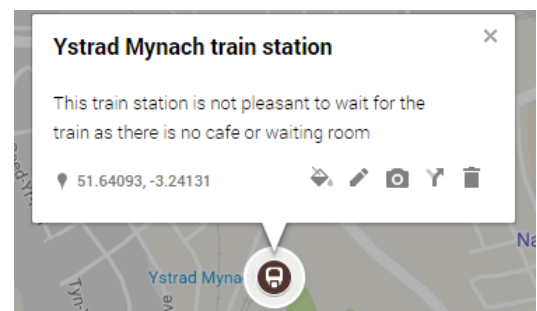
14. In the end, your left side panel should contain your name, age and hometown, as well as three different layers: one with the region's boundaries and the location of your hometown, the second with the places you like and the third with the places you dislike.

You can see an overview of your map by clicking on Preview which will open your map in a new tab.

You can print the map by clicking on the three vertical dots on the right-hand side and selecting Print map, either from the Preview tab or from the initial one where you created the map. A dialogue box will ask what output you prefer: image or PDF. Choose image if you want to share the map on Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat or any other social media platform.

You can also share the map by clicking on Share and sending the link copy+paste).
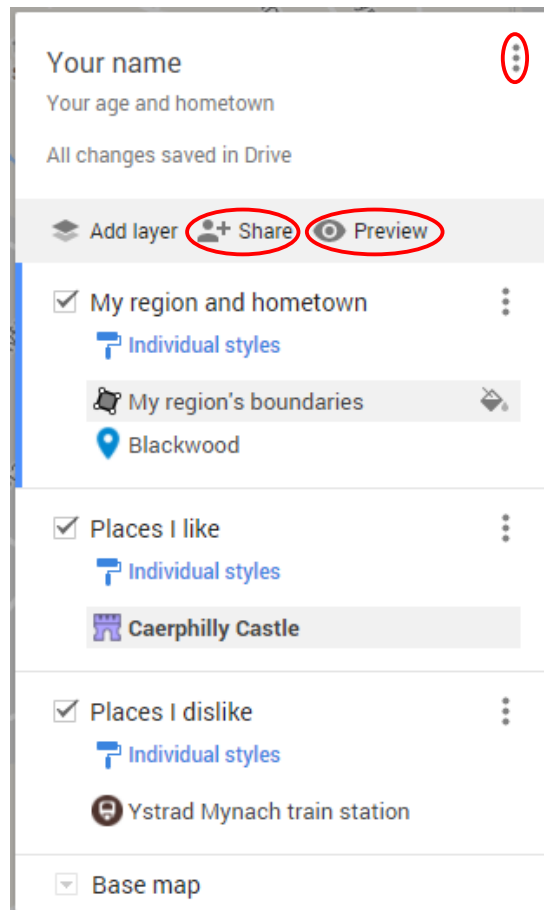
Well done!

You now know how to make your own map. For any question or problem, do not hesitate to contact Lorena by email at axintel@cardiff.ac.uk or on Twitter @lorena_ax.

Annex 8 – Photo essay

Cardiff Capital Region and its future generations. A photo essay co-created with young people

(submitted for and partially published in Barry, M. et al. (2018). *Metro and Me*, pp. 47-50.)

Cardiff Capital Region is currently home to 50% of all young people (16-24 years) living in South East Wales. Although only a few have heard about the *city-region* or the *Metro* project, the decisions and developments made at this level will have major impacts on their lives.

A Photovoice project asked them to document aspects that make worth living in their areas, issues they would like to see changing, as well as their ways of traveling. The photos are a selection of their answers.

Travelling around the city-region

Cathays train station from the train window (Charlotte Howson)
My daily commute (Treorchy – Cardiff) takes just short of an hour and a half each morning and each evening (…) in an ideal world, people would walk but you need time so you've got to take public transport, that's encouraged as better than cars, but then it is extortionate. Think of places abroad where you can take metro links and it's so cheap, whereas I'm paying £8/day on the train.

Broken timetable (Charlotte Thomas, Rhymney)

This is something I would like to see changing. I would like more reliable and trustworthy information on public transport timetables and services in the South Wales valleys.

Back alley, Cathays, Cardiff (Simona Vaipan)

This is near my house and I often walk past it. I do not enjoy walking there as it's usually dirty, smelly and full of rubbish.

The underpass at the other end of the Glebelands Park, Newport (Bethan Hill-Howells)

This area is unkempt and during the evening, especially at winter, is a hive for gangs. There are drug deals and anti-social behaviour here most nights. This area also happens to be the main walkway to Glan-Usk school. I feel this specific area needs to change (…) Residents shouldn't be afraid of coming here even though some are, especially the elderly.
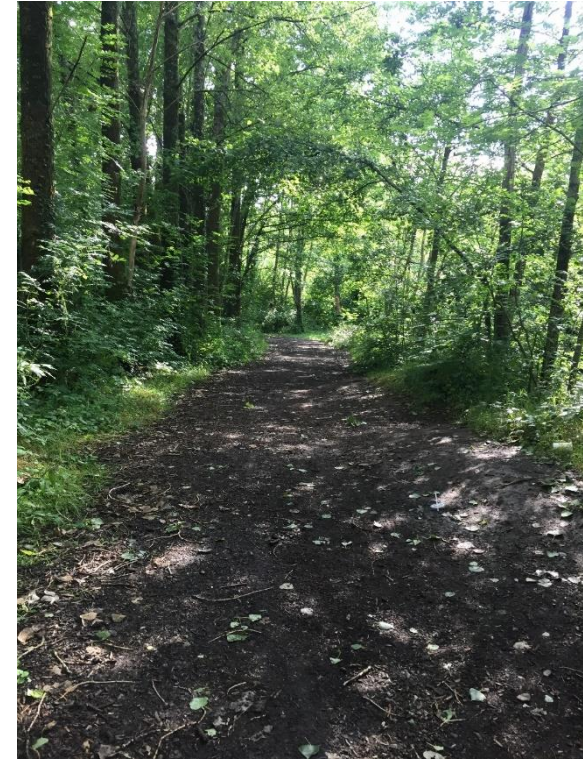
Pathway to Blackwood (Lowri Jones)

I walk through the forest at the end of street every day to go to Blackwood. It is sometimes littered but it's a nice place to relax and listen to the river and the birds.

From Bedwas to Nantgarw in an hour (Nadine Hampson)

I live on a hill and the views are amazing. When the sun rises from behind my house and the sun sets in front of it, it's magical. However, it takes about an hour to go to college because I have to walk for 10minutes to the nearest station and then take two buses. If the first bus is on time, I can catch the direct connection to the college from Caerphilly town centre, otherwise I have to wait for another 20-40minutes. Going by car would take 20 minutes, but I can't drive.

Roadside (Matthew Diggle)

Roadside is a small collection of photos, all taken along a road running between Rhymney and Tredegar. The photos are collated to explore different ideas about the location, and promote different views of my local area.

Waste (2017) - An off brand bottle of vodka inside a discount clothing brand bag.

Views (2017) - Exterior decorating.

Reflection (2017) - A small piece of natural beauty, or maybe just a puddle

Navigating the city (David McCullough)
There are a few shops here which you can't get to without having to cross 4-5 lanes. These lights take ages so I spend a lot of my morning waiting. I understand why, though, this is one of the main ways of getting into Cardiff.

Travelling by bike in Cardiff (Maya Broadbank)
I don't travel in any other way in Cardiff, I usually just walk or bike, but mostly bike. Some parts of Cardiff are really good, where there are bike lanes, while some of the junctions can be really dangerous.

Tents and grafitti next to Huggard Centre (Lilly Evans)
This exemplifies the homelessness crisis. I really like the graffiti by the Huggard centre because it's so bright and in your face and you're greeted by that before you walk on the road (Dumballs Road) with this big group of offices. It's a good reminder of what's actually going on on the street, you don't just walk past Huggard centre and think oh it's just a place with a few dodgy people

Rough sleeping outside John Lewis (Georgia Rogers)

This is one of the few (but still too many) areas where homeless people can be seen sleeping and begging. This is something I would like to see change because everyone deserves a safe place to sleep at night and more needs to be done to help those in need.

Camel - Relics of unknown origin (Matthew Diggle)

Roath area, Cardiff (Gweni Llwyd)
You would think it's something basic, but it doesn't seem like anyone respects the streets (…)
the worst is when people with pushchairs or wheelchairs try to navigate the pavement and
because it's covered with litter, they can't.

Keepers Pond (Kieran Warburton)

We went to the Keepers Pond to take photos, it's a really scenic place. The best thing about living in my region is the countryside, as it's very enjoyable to go on hikes with my friends and take pictures.

Viaduct (2017) - A depiction of nature alongside structure (Matthew Diggle)

This photo emphasises the natural features in my village, which often go unnoticed but remain consistent and brighten up the scenery. There is a lot of nature in the Valleys, but we don't really appreciate it too much.

Rhondda Valley (Charlotte Howson)

This photo encapsulates the whole of what I consider to be my region, the Rhondda Valley, and I think it shows the valley to be a place of great beauty, with a lot to offer. At the same time, I would like to see the whole of the region doing more to showcase that it has a lot of positives, in order to change the stigma and bad press that it currently has, both with those who live inside and outside of the region.
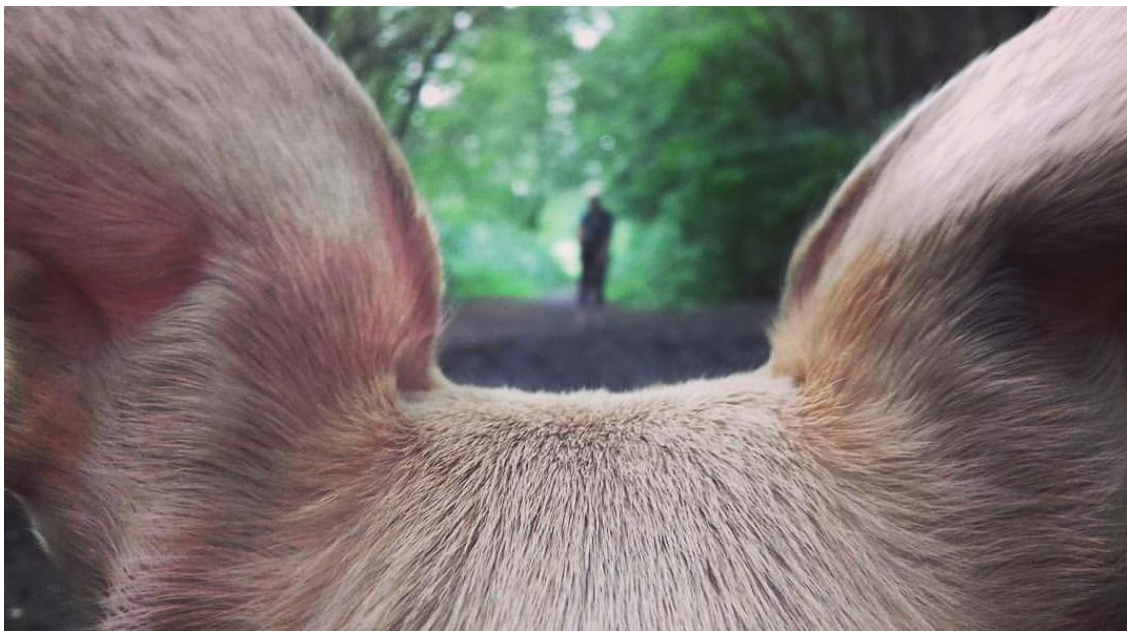
Pathfinding (Charlotte Thomas, Ferndale)

Glebelands Park, Newport (Bethan Hill-Howells)
A park that is really close to my house and where I walk my dog every day. It's peaceful, quiet and remarkably (for Newport) quite pretty.

Coney Beach (BTEC Level 1, Bridgend College)
We like the beach. Hopefully the entire area will be nicer in a few years from now, if it's going to be regenerated. It will bring back the tourists as well; people don't want to go to a place where everything is falling apart.

Trago Mills, Merthyr Tydfil (Lilly Evans)
When this wasn't there, it was just the mountains
and then the landscape changed completely.

**Community - The forgotten site where a community centre and library once stood
(Matthew Diggle)**
The library/community centre stood was knocked down due to asbestos but nothing has been
built to replace it. The railings and bordering wall stand ironically.
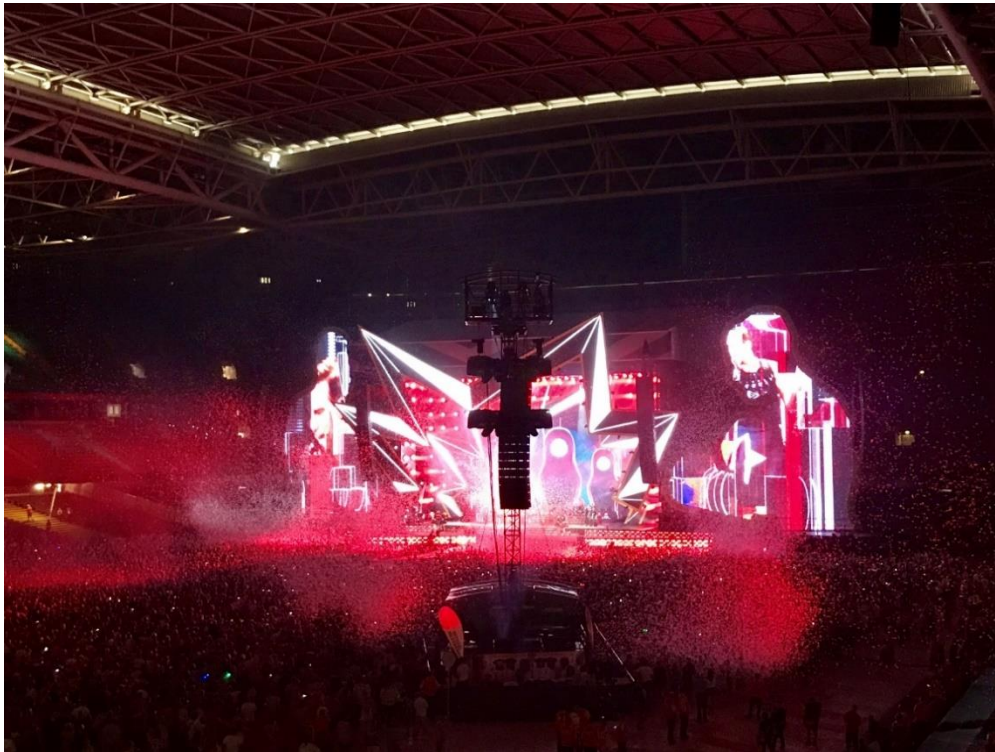
Robbie Williams concert in the Principality Stadium, Cardiff (Bethan Hill-Howells)
Principality Stadium is a real tourist destination for Cardiff as it's an excellent arena for
international rugby and entertainment. This is one of the main hubs of Cardiff.

Unchanged (Charlotte Thomas, Ferndale)
I have been living here all my life and this building has always looked like this. I
wish we could do something for the community with it.

St Mary Street, Cardiff (Simona Vaipan)
I tried to capture the lively beautiful streets in Cardiff city centre in the summer. One day I was passing by and I found the flowers really pretty.

Annex 9 – Wider Investment Fund decision-making process
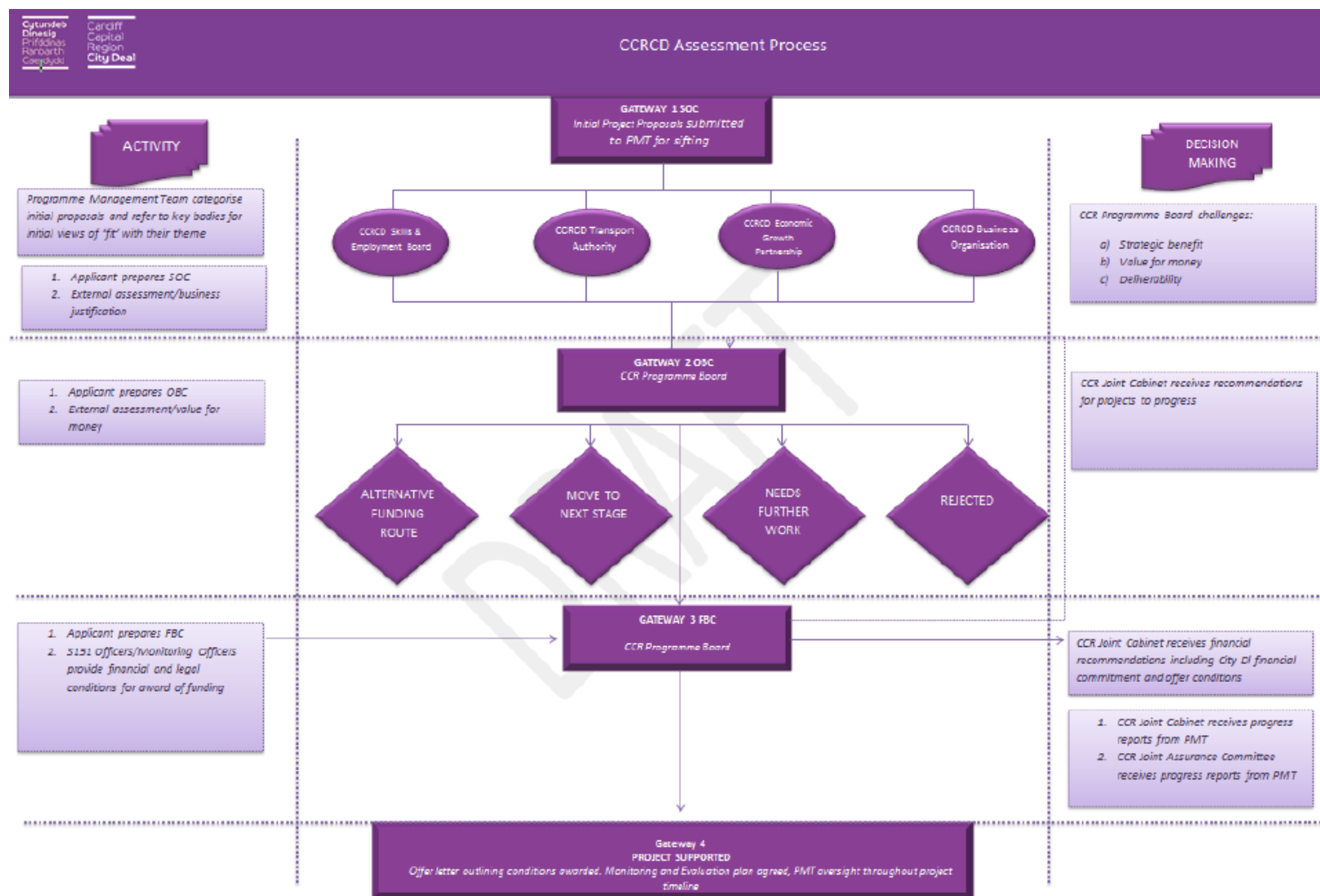
Source: CCRCD. (2017). *CCRCD Combined Document Pack*.

Annex 10a – National well-being goals, WFGA 2015

Goal	Goal description
A prosperous Wales	An innovative, productive and low carbon society which recognises the limits of the global environment and therefore uses resources efficiently and proportionately (including acting on climate change); and which develops a skilled and well-educated population in an economy which generates wealth and provides employment opportunities, allowing people to take advantage of the wealth generated through securing decent work.
A resilient Wales.	A nation which maintains and enhances a biodiverse natural environment with healthy functioning ecosystems that support social, economic and ecological resilience and the capacity to adapt to change (for example climate change).
A healthier Wales.	A society in which people's physical and mental well-being is maximised and in which choices and behaviours that benefit future health are understood.
A more equal Wales.	A society that enables people to fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances (including their socio economic background and circumstances).
A Wales of cohesive communities.	Attractive, viable, safe and well-connected communities.
A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language.	A society that promotes and protects culture, heritage and the Welsh language, and which encourages people to participate in the arts, and sports and recreation.
A globally responsible Wales.	A nation which, when doing anything to improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales, takes account of whether doing such a thing may make a positive contribution to global well-being.

Source: National Assembly for Wales. (2015). *Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015*.

Annex 10b – Ways of working, WFGA 2015

Way of working	Way of working description
Long term	The importance of balancing short term needs with the need to safeguard the ability to meet long term needs, especially where things done to meet short term needs may have detrimental long term effect;
Prevention	The need to take an integrated approach, by considering how: (i) the body's well-being objectives may impact upon each of the well-being goals; (ii) the body's well-being objectives impact upon each other or upon other public bodies' objectives, in particular where steps taken by the body may contribute to meeting one objective but may be detrimental to meeting another;
Involvement	The importance of involving other persons with an interest in achieving the well-being goals and of ensuring those persons reflect the diversity of the population of: (i) Wales (where the body exercises functions in relation to the whole of Wales), or (ii) the part of Wales in relation to which the body exercises functions;
Collaboration	How acting in collaboration with any other person (or how different parts of the body acting together) could assist the body to meet its well-being objectives, or assist another body to meet its objectives;
Integration	How deploying resources to prevent problems occurring or getting worse may contribute to meeting the body's well-being objectives, or another body's objectives.

Source: National Assembly for Wales. (2015). *Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015*.

Annex 11 – Transport for Wales, Metro's contributions to the national well-being goals

Transforming Transport – For People, For Places, For Wales
Alignment to the Well-Being of Future Generations Act

A globally responsible Wales
- Energy for stations and the overhead wires will come from 100% zero carbon energy, with at least 50% sourced in Wales
- Supporting sustainable, socio-economic development through our procurement approach
- Develop 1500 additional park and ride spaces across Wales to encourage rail travel
- Investing £738m to electrify the Central Metro network

A prosperous Wales
- Create 600 new jobs, investing in 30 apprenticeships every year
- Moving the Keolis UK headquarters and Global Rail Division to Wales
- Building a new Amey design office in Wales
- 95% of journeys will be made on brand new trains
- We will increase capacity by 65%
- We will create a true 7-day railway with new Sunday and Bank Holiday services

A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language
- Promoting the continued revival of the Welsh language through bilingual customer information, a contact centre and supporting the National Eisteddfod
- Fund all staff who want to learn Welsh and support them to learn
- Providing access to Wales' vibrant culture and natural heritage working with Visit Wales to develop a new rail and tourism strategy

A resilient Wales
- Encouraging use of public transport e.g. via integrated journey planning tools promoting onward travel and off-peak/advanced fares
- More than 50% of new trains will be assembled in Wales
- Investing £194m in building new and upgrading existing stations

A healthier Wales
- Promoting active travel, new cycle storage and safe, well-lit walking routes to encourage people to make healthier choices
- Community Ambassadors working with local communities, encouraging and training people to use the rail network
- Mental health awareness training for all staff

A Wales of cohesive communities
- Employing Customer and Community Ambassadors to encourage a greater sense of community around the rail network
- Improve business opportunities for local SME's/TSE's based in Wales
- Doubling the number of Community Rail Partnerships, with 90% of stations to be adopted

A more equal Wales
- Developing a new fares structure to ensure price is not a barrier to using the network
- Become an accredited Living Wage employer by 2021 to be cascaded through our supply chain
- During off-peak, cheaper fares will be introduced including, under 16s being able to travel free with a paying adult, and the age limit for half fares will be increased from 16 to 18 across Wales
- Close working with Disability groups to improve accessibility and set up a new accessibility panel for ongoing input

Source: Transport for Wales, Retrieved at [shorturl.at/hjsBV]

Annex 12 – Training activities and workshops within SUSPLACE, Cardiff University and other institutions

Training	Date	Provider
University induction	04.2016	CU
Equality and diversity (online module)	05.2016	CU
SUSPLACE Intro course (ethics, intellectual property rights and research rules)	05.2016	SUSPLACE
Spatial thinking in the social sciences	05.2016	SUSPLACE
Research skills	05.2016	SUSPLACE
Sustainability Project Skills – Symbiosis in Development (SiD)	05.2016	SUSPLACE
Publishing a Journal Article in Social & Economic Sciences	06.2016	CU
ESRS Autumn School – 'Researching Globalization in a Rural Context'	10.2016	Aberystwyth University
European Week of Regions and Cities 2016, Master Class on EU Cohesion Policy	10.2016	European Commission
Facilitation of Place-based Development	10.2016	SUSPLACE
Writing Techniques	10.2016	SUSPLACE
Submitting, reviewing and publishing articles in journals	10.2016	SUSPLACE
Turbocharge your Writing	11.2016	CU
Advanced French Stage E	2016-2017	CU
Information Security Training 2016 (online module)	12.2016	CU
Communication and dissemination	03.2017	SUSPLACE
Valorisation of research	03.2017	SUSPLACE
Advanced French Conversation (1 week intensive course, 5h/day)	07.2017	CU
Multimodality. Beyond the interview. Walking, hearing and picturing social worlds	05.2017	CU
Summer school: interdisciplinary	09.2017	SUSPLACE
Collaboration: the hidden research skill	12.2017	CU
Planning for sustainability (Environmental Impact Assessment and Strategic Environmental Assessment)	03.2018	SUSPLACE
Urban and regional development in practice	03.2018	SUSPLACE
Getting research funding	05.2018	CU

Mock Viva (Humanities and Social Sciences)	05.2018	CU
Creative writing (Children's Book Team)	05.2018	SUSPLACE & Pierpaolo Buzza
Children's stories on the theme of sustainable place making	05-09.2018	SUSPLACE & David Torpe
Re-learning public space: an action-research lab in Amsterdam	06-07.2018	WASS & WIMEC
European Social Innovation Competition Academy – designing, planning and running a social enterprise	07.2018	EU Commission & NESTA
Personal leadership	09.2018	SUSPLACE
On the job' training of skills during secondments (FGC & RHDHV)	2017-2018	SUSPLACE
Self-training NVivo	12.2018	-
Alternative economic models and currencies	08.2019	BOKU Vienna, Economy for the Common Good