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Abstract:

City-regions have received increasing attention from both scholars and policy-makers as an ideal functional space for economic development and subnational governance. The discourses of city-region governance predominantly focus on city-regions' capacity to achieve agglomerative growth and compete in the global economy. Given that consensus-building and joint working is central to city-regions' success, the inter-municipal relations and territorial politics within a city-region warrant research attention. This study investigates such relations in urban regeneration and place marketing policy areas through a case study of an inner-city waterfront district in Greater Manchester, North-West England. The nuanced findings of this study show the relationships between the local authorities were path-dependent and were often driven by self-interest, competition and rivalry. The study encourages scholars to take into account internal territorial politics when assessing the evolution of city-region governance for a more context specific analysis.

Key words: city-regions, city-region governance, local government, inter-municipal relations, urban regeneration, place marketing

Introduction

With the deepening of globalisation and neoliberalism, the national states' dominance in economic regulation has greatly weakened. Instead the role of cities has become more important as investment increasingly takes place as a form of a negotiation between global capital and local powers (Peck and Tickell, 2002). "Engendered by the nexus between mobile investment capital, inter-city competition, and public entrepreneurialism" (Sager, 2011: 147), city-regions have therefore received growing attention from both scholars and policy-makers as a key space of governance and economic development in recent years (Coombes, 2014; Harrison, 2012b; Kantor and Nelles, 2015; Waite and Bristow, 2019).

Literature on city-regionalism has started to expand beyond its earlier focus on global megacities such as London, New York, Tokyo and Paris (e.g. Kantor et al., 2012; Sassen, 2001) and on city-regions in Europe and North America. Increasing studies now examine city-regionalism in the global South (e.g. Hudalah et al., 2014; Li and Wu, 2018; Phadke, 2014), and also second-tier city-regions (e.g. Brady, 2016; Camagni et al., 2015; Cardoso, 2016; Parkinson et al., 2015). These diverse studies demonstrate that the top-down, deterministic interpretation of city-regionalism driven by the narratives of global competition do not fully reflect "the essentially political character of city-regional responses" (Kantor, 2008: 125) and demand for a more "context-sensitive perspective" to research city-regionalism (Li and Wu, 2018: 314) considering national, regional and local contexts (Brenner, 2009).

In response to this, this paper takes a bottom-up, context-sensitive approach to investigate city-region governance by examining the relations between neighbouring local governments within a city-region in two urban policy areas – urban regeneration and place marketing. Post-industrial urban regeneration and the related place marketing policies epitomise the neoliberal and entrepreneurial ideology in city-region governance. Yet, such activities usually take place within the administrative boundary of local governments and are thus also territorial by nature. Urban regeneration and place marketing therefore provide an interesting urban policy context to examine inter-municipal relations within a city-region and to develop a more nuanced understanding of city-region governance and

1 bring its locally sensitive nature into clearer focus.

2

3 The paper now critically reviews city-region governance literature and highlights the need for
4 contextualised understanding of city-regional governance and the importance of inter-municipal
5 cooperation within it. Following the detailed introduction of the case study, The Quays, an inner-city
6 waterfront district in Greater Manchester, North-West England, findings are presented in relation to
7 inter-municipal relations in urban regeneration and place marketing. The paper concludes by
8 considering how and to what extent inter-municipal relations can affect urban planning and place
9 marketing, and their implications for city-region governance.

10

City-region governance

11

12

13 The rise of city-regions as a key space for subnational governance and economic development is
14 closely associated with changes in the capitalist political economy, namely globalisation and
15 neoliberalism, and the related changes in urban governance, namely urban entrepreneurialism.
16 "Geographic rescaling after Fordism has emphasized the supra- and sub-national scale modes of
17 regulation: "hollowing out" the nation-state and making cities increasingly responsible for realizing
18 international competitiveness" (Leitner et al., 2007: 2). In response to global competition, cities aim
19 to maximise their attractiveness in order to lure global capital and a skilled workforce (Harvey, 1989;
20 Leitner et al., 2007; Peck and Tickell, 2002) and urban governance is dominated by "a set of core
21 neoliberal ideas about local economic development which has come to constitute a new and
22 pervasive consensus" (Deas, 2014: 2285).

23

24 The neoliberal model of urban governance usually involves "the 'entrepreneurialisation' of urban
25 politics, the restructuring of relations between the private and public sectors, the transformation of
26 'public' sector priorities and practices …"(McCann, 2017: 317; MacLeod, 2011). With "characteristics
27 once distinctive to the private sector - risk-taking, inventiveness, promotion and profit motivation …"
28 becoming central to urban governance (Hall and Hubbard, 1996: 153; Parker 2011), a growing
29 emphasis is given to network-based governance (e.g. Jessop, 1997; Rhodes, 1996; Stoker, 1998a) and
30 the key roles of local elites, both political and business, and their partnerships in steering urban
31 economy (Logan and Molotch, 1987; Stone and Sanders, 1987; Lauria, 1996; Stoker, 1998b). Judd and
32 Parkinson (1990: 22) state "the capacity of cities to respond to external threats or opportunities"
33 actually refers to "the success of local elites in projecting a coherent interpretation of a city's
34 intentions and of its economic and political environment – in other words, its image".

35

36 Neoliberal and entrepreneurial growth strategies, such as "waterfront regeneration, the fostering of
37 gentrification and the adoption of city marketing", have "become part of policy orthodoxy"
38 (Paddison and Hutton 2015: 10) as cities try to enhance competitive positions in what Jessop (1998:
39 95) calls "international beauty contests". Many cities use prestige regeneration projects as a "large
40 advertising hoarding" (Smyth, 1994:21) to provide "visible symbolic evidence of success and
41 renaissance" (Loftman and Nevin, 1995:303) in their attempt to reinvent and reimage themselves
42 after industrial decline. Place marketing is the most commonly adopted entrepreneurial form of
43 urban economic development strategy (Wilson, 1995; Jessop, 1998) and a significant amount of
44 public money is spent on these activities (Hall and Hubbard, 1996; Zenker and Martin, 2011).
45 Projecting "an image of offering innovative, exciting, and creative life-styles and living environments"
46 (Britton, 1991: 470) has become important as "quality of urban life has become a commodity for
47 those with money, as has the city itself" (Harvey, 2012: 14). The related concepts of place promotion,
48 marketing and branding are now more fully incorporated into urban governance discourses as pro-
49 growth strategies (Boisen et al., 2018; Eshuis and Edwards, 2013; Evans, 2003; Paddison, 1993;
50 Vanolo, 2018). This includes managing "perceptions of opportunities within a place and its identity,

1 and ... ideas about economic and spatial development" (Eshuis and Edwards, 2013: 1067).

2

3 Cities and their suburban areas have become increasingly important geographical foci and
4 institutional laboratories for neoliberal policy experiments (Brenner and Theodore, 2002). They have
5 been "subject to a variety of experimental attempts to devise new arrangements for subnational
6 territorial governance and local economic development policy-making" (Deas, 2014; 2285). Despite
7 ongoing debates on the definition and nature of city-regions (see Harding 2007; Harrison, 2010;
8 Nelles, 2013; Neuman and Hull, 2009; Parr, 2014; Waite and Bristow, 2019) city-regions are often
9 understood as the functionally "ideal scale through which economic competitiveness can be
10 promoted and nurtured" (Waite and Bristow, 2019: 693; Coombes, 2014; Etherington and Jones,
11 2009; Parr, 2014; Scott, 2019) and such arguments are often based on the benefits of
12 agglomeration economies (Combes et al., 2005; Duranton and Puga, 2004; Glaeser, 2011; Scott, 2001;
13 Scott and Storper, 2015). The success of the city-region depends on "the development of consensus
14 around policy and institutional structures intended to promote economic development based on
15 agglomerative growth" (Deas, 2014: 2302). The emphasis on the entrepreneurship and leadership of
16 local elites continues to be central in the discourses of city-regional policies and politics, as city-
17 regional governance relies on "the ability of actors in a city-region to recognize collective challenges
18 and opportunities, assemble relevant actors, debate alternatives and secure agreement on solutions,
19 and take collective action" (Nelles, 2013: 1351). In this context, effective place-based leadership built
20 on "collaboration, power-sharing and trust" has become more important for the success of city-
21 regions than ever before (Beer and Clower, 2014: 18)

22

23 Yet, this widely accepted city-regional narrative anchored firmly in globalisation and neoliberalism is
24 criticised on several counts. Firstly, critics argue that the strong focus on competitiveness and
25 agglomeration economies "promotes economic development and growth over other outcomes"
26 (Waite and Bristow, 2019: 692) and creates 'democratic deficit' (Anderson and Pierre, 2010;
27 Swyngedouw, 2005). Several commentators offer the critique that city-regional governance becomes
28 a "post-political, value-free managerial exercise" which grants a small group of elite actors with
29 decision-making power whereas oppositional, popular voices are excluded, and subordinates socio-
30 spatial equity and redistribution to agglomerative growth (Deas, 2014: 2286; McLeod 2011;
31 Swyngedouw, 2009, 2010). Anderson and Pierre (2010: 232) argue that city-regionalism is "a way of
32 purchasing operative and managerial efficiency at the expense of traditional democratic control and
33 oversight, [and] legitimacy becomes tied to the performance of the strategic region". Such a
34 democratic deficit may be overlooked as long as a city-region delivers its economic promises
35 (Anderson and Pierre, 2010) and "whatever is necessary to transform ... to ... a global city will be
36 tolerated" (Phadke, 2014: 2471).

37

38 Secondly, many authors criticise the deterministic assumption that the pressure to improve global
39 economic competitiveness brings a smooth transition to new city-region governance arrangement.
40 City-regions are "social constructs that do not rise in a vacuum but ... [as the] contested results of
41 power relations" (Paasi, 2009: 133) and therefore city-regionalism should be understood as the
42 "ongoing, dynamic, and conflict-ridden politics of and in space ... rather than a smooth switch to a
43 post national era of capitalist territoriality" (Ward and Jonas, 2004: 2134). Some authors comment
44 that the view directly relating the growth of city-regionalism to the relative decline of the state
45 power may only apply to "a few successful 'super-star' regions and cities, [and] neglect all other
46 'ordinary' places" (Hadjimichalis and Hudson, 2014: 213; Etherington and Jones, 2016; Jonas and
47 Ward, 2007) whereas Kübler and Lefèvre (2018) argue that the state holds strong legal, financial and
48 policy authority and unwilted influence in urban governance even in such megacities. City-
49 regionalism should be therefore understood as part of state rescaling through which the state
50 manifests and maintains its influence on economic regulation and governance (Etherington and

Jones, 2018; Harrison 2007, 2012b). For example, the emerging city-regionalism in China is led by the central state which puts economic and political pressure on local states to implement top-down policies, yet, the lack of participation from the non-state actors and complex administrative divisions and politics remain as obstacles for city-regional cooperation (Li and Wu, 2018; Ye, 2014). The development of city-regions is also directly associated with the state's regional and sub-regional level policy-making and implementation in democratic nations, such as the UK. Since the late 1990s, the UK government has specified three rationales for city-regionalism: "the devolution or decentralisation of democratic decision-making to a more localised scale; the improvement of service delivery; and the enhancement of economic performance. … the latter is the most compelling" (Office of Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM), 2006: 5) and introduced successive policy initiatives, such as The Northern Way in 2004, Local Enterprise Partnerships in 2011, The Northern Powerhouse in 2014, and Mayoral Combined Authorities in 2014, in which city-regions are identified as the state's "new delivery vehicles of economic growth" (Dembski, 2015: 1654; Coombes, 2014; Etherington and Jones, 2009; Harrison, 2012b; HM Treasury, 2016; Sandford, 2019; Scott, 2019). In short, city-regionalism occurs through a path-dependent layering process over inherited institutional and political landscapes at national, regional and local levels (Brenner, 2009; Harrison, 2007; Harrison and Growe, 2014; Waite and Bristow, 2019; Ward and Jonas, 2004) and these contexts need to be fully considered in city-region governance.

Thirdly, on a related note, the deterministic assumption that globalisation forces local political actors to seek greater cooperation and pursue regional competitiveness underplays local, territorial politics within a city-region (Kantor, 2008). Local governments are key actors in city-region governance and the horizontal partnership between municipalities within a city-region is central to the region's governance capacity (Nelles, 2013). However, city-region governance is fundamentally contextual and cooperation between local governments within a city-region should not be taken for granted. City-region governance capacity is determined by institutional environment, external opportunities, and civic capital, with the latter including the strength of metropolitan identity, civic networks and leadership (Nelles, 2013). It is also conditioned by a history of cooperation (Feiock, 2007), including interpersonal and interorganisational relations, local identities and political legitimacy (Anderson and Pierre, 2010) as well as "informal, intangible and complex institutional properties" (Hudalah et al., 2014: 2231). The importance of these factors are highlighted in Moore-cherry and Tomaney's (2019: 377) research in Dublin, Ireland where there is a persistent "reluctance to engage with the metropolitan as a distinct territorial scale" associated with highly centralised political system, competitive territorial politics and lack of metropolitan civic capital. This shows that the processes of city-regionalism "are embedded with a structural tension between actors and institutions struggling to define, according to their interests, the "best" territorial scale for dealing with contemporary social issues" (Boudreau et al., 2006: 11).

City-regions have complex governmental systems with dispersed or poorly organised political authority and the trend towards competitive city-regionalism reinforces inter-governmental stresses and governability issues (Kantor et al., 2012). A city or town is "not just of a contained physical area, but of an administrative jurisdiction, with its own rights and regulations … it is this unitary socio-political-physical image that still retains a strong hold" (Healey, 2015: 267). City-regions may need to compete as regional economies in the global market but local politicians tend to prioritise the development of local economies within their own jurisdictional borders and the preservation of their local political legitimacy and autonomy (Anderson and Pierre, 2010; Healey, 2015; Kantor, 2008; Kantor et al., 2012).

van de Heiden et al. (2013: 42) comment that discussion on city-region governance should take into account two local specificities: "the global competitiveness pressures the cities face and the meaning

that political actors give to these global pressures". In their Swiss examples, policy-makers in the highly globalised Zurich city-region act with coherent metropolitan policies whereas those in the more inward-oriented Berne city-region prioritise political autonomy and identity over global economic concerns. Tomàs' (2012: 557) investigation in Montreal similarly demonstrates that political actors are "trapped by their own definitions of the common good" and the need to enhance city-regional economic competitiveness is not sufficient enough "to overcome opposing conceptions of democracy, efficiency and equality at the metropolitan and local scales". Local governments' unwillingness to give up "political autonomy, resources, and power for the sake of distant benefits" (Kantor, 2008: 115) could in turn lead to "dysfunctional forms of inter-municipal competition" (Scott, 2019: 16) as they will often "resist collaborating with neighbours seen as different cities and towns" (Healey, 2015: 267). Such lack of consensus and cooperation among key local political actors can therefore potentially weaken city-region governance capacity (Nelles, 2013).

The benefits of inter-municipal cooperation may include pooling and sharing resources, therefore building economies of scale to ensure cost efficiency and professional quality of service delivery (Anderson and Pierre, 2010) although more research is required on how and to what extent inter-municipal cooperation actually achieves efficiency and effectiveness (Bel and Warner, 2015). Support from central government and access to potential funding sources, both national and supra-national, may encourage local governments to more willingly collaborate in city-region planning, "thus transforming the zero-sum context of metropolitan planning into a win-win situation" (Rayle and Zegras 2013: 885). Reducing institutional fragmentation within a city-region can also help to increase their collective agency and "gain political influence in higher governance levels and networks, from the national to the global scale" (Cardoso and Meijers, 2017: 619) and "sharpen the external and international profile of the city region" (Albrechts et al., 2003: 117). Alternatively, inter-municipal cooperation may be discouraged due to the "risk of a zero-sum game, the uncertainties of yields, and jurisdictional fragmentation" (Anderson and Pierre, 2010: 235). Discord between municipalities is often noticeable in spatial planning because it ultimately relates to the local governments' authority "to govern land use within their jurisdiction" and city-regions experience conflicts "when deciding what functions to place in which land, how to redistribute the benefits of high-profile activities, and how to distribute the cost of less profitable developments" (Savini, 2012: 1875). It is difficult to achieve collective action in city-regional spatial planning when local governments believe the potential benefit of bringing private investment will be exclusively enjoyed by the municipality that receives the inward investment. Such 'zero sum' beliefs work as "rather powerful disincentives to collective action" (Anderson and Pierre, 2010: 226).

Some authors (Cardoso, 2016; Cardoso and Meijers, 2016; Cardoso and Meijers, 2017) identify the factors that condition metropolitan integration in second-tier city-regions. They include institutional frameworks, symmetry of power relations, proximity of political cultures, core city leadership, and the strength of the metropolitan idea (Cardoso, 2016; Cardoso and Meijers, 2017). One barrier often identified for metropolitan integration is the asymmetrical power relation between the powerful core and other municipalities (Anderson and Pierre, 2010; Cardoso, 2016; Cardoso and Meijers, 2017; Rayle and Zegras, 2013; Savini, 2012) which creates "the perception that the gains of one city happen at the cost of the neglect of others" and deepens rivalry (Cardoso and Meijers, 2017: 630; Stein and Schultz, 2015). Equally the lack of a leading city with the ability to mobilize resources, mediate conflicts and provide a strong metropolitan identity can also negatively affect city-region governance (Cardoso and Meijers, 2017).

In summary, city-regions "increasingly function as essential spatial nodes of the global economy and as distinctive political actors on world stage" (Scott et al., 2001:11). Advocates of city-regionalism emphasise the benefits of agglomerative economies in global competition (e.g. Scott and Storper,

2015) and also favour the devolution of decision-making power and enhancement in service delivery efficiency through city-regional governance (e.g. ODPM, 2006). Others criticise how the priority given to economic growth creates post-political city-region governance (e.g. Deas, 2014) and the discourses of global competitiveness underplay both the role of the state in shaping subnational governance and the internal territorial politics within a city-region (e.g. Kantor et al., 2012). The literature shows that whereas city-regions need to manifest unity externally, the dynamic and complex internal relations among local governments can pose challenges to the development of collective plans and actions. Nelles (2013:1355) thus asserts that "any analysis of governance capacity at the city-region scale requires an understanding of the dynamics of inter-municipal collaborative relationships and their commitment to metropolitan collective action". It is in this theoretical context that this study investigates inter-municipal relations within a city-region to provide a more critical, contextual analysis of city-region governance by focusing on urban regeneration and place marketing policy areas.

Urban regeneration and place marketing policies exemplify the essence of neoliberal and entrepreneurial city-region governance, yet, at the same time they also highlight the territorial character of local governments within a city-region. In countries, such as the UK, regeneration has primarily relied on national government grants provided to local areas on a competitive basis and neighbouring local authorities have competed with one another for the same regional and national funds for many years (Wolman and Page, 2002). Such historical and path-dependent relations play an important part in political cooperation within a city-region (Anderson and Pierre, 2010; Feiock, 2007). Place marketing is equally territorial as the related activities usually take place according to jurisdictional and administrative boundaries (Warnaby, 2018) and the local government is one of the main funding sources for such activities. Urban regeneration and place marketing therefore provide interesting policy contexts in which to study how and to what extent inter-municipal relations are affected by historical relationships and the territorial interests of local governments, and their implications on city-region governance.

Case study and Methods

This study examines the inter-municipal relations within a city-region through a case study of The Quays, Greater Manchester, North-West England, focusing on the period of 2000-2010. The Quays is a fitting example to demonstrate the neoliberal and entrepreneurial characteristics of post-industrial urban regeneration and place marketing and its geographical location also offers an apposite context to study inter-municipal relations in such activities. Greater Manchester, as a second-tier city-region in Northern England, is also an apt case to examine city-region governance with its history of metropolitan integration and institutional evolution. This section now explains the regeneration of The Quays, the development of the Greater Manchester city-region and the details of research methods used.

The Quays is located along the Manchester Ship Canal. It covers both sides of the Canal, namely Salford Quays which falls under Salford City Council, which were the sites of the Manchester Docks, and Trafford Wharfside, within Trafford Metropolitan Borough Council. It is important to note that The Quays is not a geographically or administratively defined area. It is a destination brand developed for the main visitor attractions on the both sides of Canal (this will be more fully examined later). This cross-boundary (between Salford and Trafford) character makes The Quays a good example to study the territorial and political nature of urban regeneration and place marketing. The Quays' location at the core of the Greater Manchester conurbation and its proximity to the Manchester City Centre also makes it a particularly interesting case study to examine inter-municipal relations within a city-region core, particularly where two city-status municipalities (Salford and

1   Manchester) are involved.

2

3   The Quays shares the story of many UK inner-city industrial areas which have been affected by
4   globalisation and neoliberalism. With the opening of the Manchester Docks in 1894, the area
5   became the centre of industrial and commercial growth in Greater Manchester. However, the Docks
6   rapidly declined in the 1970s due to containerisation, increased ship sizes, and new global trading
7   patterns and finally closed in 1982 (Salford City Council, 2008). The closure of Manchester Docks and
8   their related commercial activities caused serious socio-economic problems in the area, including
9   urban dereliction, falling land values, job losses and social deprivation. In order to tackle these issues,
10   Salford City Council kick-started the regeneration of Salford Quays in the 1980s through land
11   reclamation and infrastructure improvement, with the support from the then Conservative central
12   government. On the opposite side of the Canal, Trafford Park Development Corporation (1987-1998)
13   led the regeneration of Trafford Wharfside focusing on the improvement of physical infrastructure
14   and environment, and mixed-used development.

15

16   Following the early stages of physical improvement, the area's regeneration saw the arrival of
17   several flagship projects from the 2000s onwards. The Lowry (a performing arts centre) opened in
18   Salford Quays in 2000 and the Imperial War Museum North opened in Trafford Wharfside in 2002.
19   The more recent development of MediaCityUK continues this transformation and develops the area
20   home for creative, digital and media industry. The first phase of the development, completed in
21   2011, included a mixed-use development with the BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation) and the
22   University of Salford as the anchor tenants, and also including studios, a hotel, apartments, shops
23   and restaurants. In 2013, another broadcaster, ITV, has moved to MediaCityUK and MediaCityUK is
24   now home for over 250 businesses (MediaCityUK, 2019) and continues to expand. These flagship
25   developments established The Quays as a visitor destination and a centre for creative industries.

26

27   The development of the metropolitan or city-region governance of Greater Manchester has been
28   well documented (e.g. Deas, 2014; Deas and Ward, 2000; Dembski, 2015; Harding et al, 2010;
29   Haughton et al., 2016). Many of these studies emphasise a long tradition of collaboration in Greater
30   Manchester. Following the dismantling of the Greater Manchester County Council (GMCC) in 1986,
31   the ten local authorities[1] of Greater Manchester formed the Association of Greater Manchester
32   Authorities (AGMA) and continued to deliver joint services, such as health, public protection and
33   environment. City-regional governance capacity continued to develop through the establishments of
34   city-regional agencies, such as, Manchester Investment and Development Agency, Marketing
35   Manchester and Manchester Enterprises in following years (Deas, 2014; Harding et al., 2010).
36   Greater Manchester can be therefore seen as one of the "experienced coalitions of the willing"
37   (Harrison, 2012a: 92-93) which has long established joined-up working partnerships. Greater
38   Manchester is often acknowledged as a "pathfinder" (ODPM, 2006: 7) and "trail blazer" (Coombes,
39   2014: 2431) city-region in the UK.

40

41   Harding et al. (2010: 986) summarise "At the heart of Manchester's … moves towards more robust
42   and autonomous city-regional governance has been a process of internal capacity development,
43   reform of governance and ongoing negotiation with central government". In 2009 Greater
44   Manchester published the Manchester Independent Economic Review (MIER), to "legitimise the
45   emphasis on agglomerative urban growth which infuses city-regional policy" (Haughton et al., 2016:
46   363). Building on their economic and regeneration successes, focused and consistent political
47   leadership, cohesive relations between political elites and public-private collaboration, the economic

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[1] There are 10 local unitary authorities in Greater Manchester and they are Bolton, Bury, Manchester, Oldham, Rochdale, Salford, Stockport, Tameside, Trafford and Wigan.

1   review supported Greater Manchester's designation as one of the two pilot statutory city-regions in
2   2009 and subsequently the formation of Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) in 2011
3   (Harding et al., 2010: Haughton et al., 2016). Concurrently, Greater Manchester Local Enterprise
4   Partnership was also established in 2012 following the abolition of the Northwest Development
5   Agency (1999-2012). The securing of the Greater Manchester City Deal in 2012 granted the region
6   new devolved powers and functions and introduced an elected mayor in 2017.
7
8   This study mainly focuses on the inter-municipal relations observed in the regeneration and place
9   marketing of The Quays in the period of 2000-2010. This was a crucial transition period and requires
10 attention for two main reasons. Firstly this was when city-regions started to receive a renewed
11 policy interest in England (Coombes, 2014; Etherington and Jones, 2009; Heeley, 2009) and Greater
12 Manchester more proactively started to campaign for agglomerative growth and pursue its ambition
13 for a city-region status through the publication of the MIER. Secondly, for The Quays, this was a
14 pivotal decade when the area underwent major transformation with the completion of flagship
15 projects and its establishment as a commercial and visitor district. These developments in The Quays
16 started to bring changes to the inter-municipal dynamics between the neighbouring local
17 authorities. This focus on a specific time period and the particular geographical location of The
18 Quays therefore provides interesting temporal and spatial context to study inter-municipal relations
19 in a city-region.
20
21 This paper questions how and to what extent local governments in Greater Manchester demonstrate
22 their cohesiveness and collectiveness through examination of The Quays' regeneration and
23 marketing, where three municipalities - Manchester, Salford and Trafford, are involved. This
24 question was investigated through qualitative interviews and document analysis. The primary data
25 was collected through 22 in-depth semi-structured interviews conducted in 2009 and 2010. The
26 respondents had been involved in, or had interests in urban regeneration and place marketing of the
27 area and were purposely selected for interviews. 12 interviews were with actors from public sector-
28 oriented organisations: Northwest Regional Development Agency (2), local authorities (7 including 1
29 politician), the regional destination management organisation (1), and an urban regeneration
30 company (2). 5 respondents were from the private sector: property development (3), hotel
31 management (1) and retail (1). Others were 2 from third sector cultural attractions, 1 consultant, 1
32 university lecturer and 1 community member. The interviewees were mostly at senior level including
33 10 chief executives and directors. The involvement of three senior managers in the property
34 development sector in particular provided investors' perspectives on city-region governance. The
35 interviews were recorded, transcribed and analysed for issues and themes using the "thematic
36 framework" approach to qualitative data analysis (Ritchie et al., 2003). The secondary sources
37 included regional and local policy and planning documents and other documentary materials, such
38 as newspaper articles. The documentary sources cover the period beyond 2010 in order to provide
39 more updated views on how Greater Manchester's city region governance and the inter-municipal
40 relations in The Quays have evolved since then. The first results section examines the inter-
41 municipal relations in urban regeneration and the second, those in place marketing in The Quays.
42

Inter-municipal relations in the regeneration of The Quays

43
44
45 There was some evidence of joint working in spatial planning and regeneration between the three
46 municipalities, Salford, Trafford and Manchester. For instance, Salford City Council and Trafford
47 Metropolitan Borough Council (2007) jointly developed planning guidance for MediaCityUK and the
48 three local governments also co-produced planning guidance for Irwell City Park[2] (Manchester City

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[2] The River Irwell forms a boundary between Manchester, Salford and Trafford councils for long stretches. The project aims to restore the

Council et al., 2008). However, according to an interviewee, such joint working was rather unusual and only possible as all three municipalities agreed on the need for high quality waterfront developments and wanted to reflect their own aspirations for these areas (a local government officer).

The interview findings showed that the inter-municipal relationships between the three neighbouring local government were mainly characterised by competition and rivalry. The three local governments were actively engaged in short-term forms of inter-place competition, place-marketing, and regulatory undercutting to attract investments and jobs (Leitner and Sheppard, 1998). The municipalities tried to attract as much inward investment, both public and private sector funding, as possible to their own districts, and this led to inevitable competition among the neighbouring authorities as "all the individual districts want the best there is for their districts" (a local government officer). The relationships between the local authorities were path-dependent based on competition, rivalry, and mistrust which had formed over decades. These relationships greatly affected both urban regeneration and place marketing in the case study area.

Manchester City Council, the regional capital of Greater Manchester, was acknowledged as the dominant force in the political economy of the region. The asymmetrical power relation between Manchester City Council with other municipalities in the region was described as a "big sister, little sister" relationship (a property developer).

> "Manchester City sees themselves, quite rightly you may think, as the leader authority, as one who should be taking control. … and they would like to extend their authority over the rest of it [Greater Manchester]" (a property developer).

> "They [Manchester and Salford] are trying to make an equal relationship these days. That's going to have twin problems because Manchester isn't used to having equals… now Salford … is finding its own feet and struggling a bit with newly found authority, I suppose. We are in an interesting transition" (a property developer).

Manchester City Council however was criticised as they tried to extend their influence on development issues in other municipalities by often objecting to or holding back development activities in other local authority territories. Such dominating behaviour of a leading city in a city-region was described by Anderson and Pierre (2010: 229) as "the first among equals feathers its own nest at the expense of others".

> "Manchester City Council did not want The Trafford Centre [a large regional out-of-town shopping centre located in Trafford] to happen because they saw it is taking businesses away from Manchester City" (a property developer).

> "Local authorities have different approaches, quite often driven by self-interest. … They [Manchester City Council] have been very good at creating developments within the city, and I take my hat off to that. But they take it too far. Their idea of promoting their own interests extends to trying to stop others from promoting theirs. They want it all in the city centre and I think that goes too far" (a property developer).

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neglected River Irwell and create an urban park celebrating its industrial heritage, to attract new waterfront development and to improve connections to the regional centre (Manchester City Council et al., 2008).

Manchester and Salford are both 'cities' with strong local identities and the competition and rivalry between them were noticeable. A property developer noted that "you have got two big metropolitan authorities that aren't used to working together". When asked about the relationships between the two City Councils, interviewees recalled their past experience, which were clearly ridden with conflicts and mistrust.

> "Salford and Manchester distrust each other profoundly, it was put to me almost every day, 'Oh, Manchester! Don't believe a word they said!' It was absolutely fearsome. It is very very competitive" (a culture sector consultant).

> "The Leader of the [Salford] Council used to say to me 'when you go down there to see them bastards, you just watch they don't slip the bloody ferret in'… We would make arrangements with Manchester Council on a number of projects only to find out they were making arrangements with the Department of Environment on something completely different from what we had already agreed. So there was at that time a great deal of competition between ourselves and Manchester… we were always very, very wary of Manchester" (an ex-Salford Council officer).

Manchester and Salford City Councils competed for the same developments on several occasions in the past. This was sometimes perceived as being for purely political reasons rather than for the common good of their districts or the region overall. A local politician criticised such crude rivalry between local governments in the same city-region by stating

> "I find the authorities competing against each other when they should be working with each other, particularly in Greater Manchester. That is normal when it is Liverpool vs. Manchester or Birmingham vs. Manchester but when it is within Greater Manchester I think that is really a problem. None of them will admit to it but it goes on. … Salford will bid for something it doesn't really need to simply because it needs to bid for everything against Manchester City. So it bid for a casino and an airport. ... And Manchester City will not give The Quays its support. It hasn't encouraged the Metrolink to The Trafford Centre, it hasn't. In fact it has put its foot down quite firmly, and it is acting as Manchester City as opposed to Greater Manchester."

This demonstrates how the rivalry between local governments within a city-region could also potentially adversely affect the potential of development projects and possibly the city-region's external competitiveness. This was particularly highlighted in the development of MediaCityUK. Interviewees expressed concern that the conflicts between the municipalities might prevent the development from achieving its maximum potential.

> "There was a very big battle. Manchester had started those discussions … and Salford popped up and ended up winning them [the relocation of BBC] out at Salford Quays. That's good for the region but Manchester felt they'd lost that investor to Salford. So the relationship will perhaps take another generation …" (a property developer).

> "It can be a bit tedious at times, the local rivalries between the councils…. To us it didn't matter, it is all part of Manchester. … There are still issues as well with Manchester trying to develop itself a bit of a media industry elsewhere in Manchester. Whilst they made a public statement about supporting MediaCityUK

here in The Quays, their actions as a council are different. … [There is] a concern that if too many spreading bits of media development take place before MediaCityUK is properly established itself, the potential will be lost a little bit" (a property developer).

Based on such observation, some interviewees went on to comment on how the city-region's fragmented jurisdiction and the lack of political cooperation may affect the development of the city-region from investors' perspectives.

"Looking at it from a developer or inward investor's point of view, or what is best for the city-region… I think personally if there is one unitary authority, it will work better" (a property developer).

"Manchester plays a key [strategic] role [in Greater Manchester] but it is also an ordinary council as well. … it [Manchester City Council] tends to steer everything towards its boundary. … So it plays its role like an ordinary [council], but in that strategic role we need it to play a bigger picture. If I have my way, I will scrap Trafford, I will scrap Salford and have us all as a single authority probably with absence of Wigan and Bury because they are too far out but I would have all the urban and conurbation as a single authority" (a local politician).

Over the years Greater Manchester Strategies (AGMA, 2003; AGMA, 2009; GMCA, 2013; GMCA, 2017) have continuously emphasised togetherness as a city-region. They acknowledge the futures of the local authorities in Greater Manchester are bound together and only by working together can the region fulfil its potential and compete in the international market. The securing of the Greater Manchester City Deal in 2012 requires the local authorities to work together now than ever. Yet, "the territorial politics, rivalry and parochialism" (Harrison, 2012a: 92) are still evident in the city-region. The conflicts between local authorities in housing and investment have been reported regularly and "an overly Manchester-focused regional investment strategy" continues (Williams, 2017). The rivalry between Salford and Manchester City Councils persists as they repeated the same "bitter warfare" they had for MediaCityUK in their recent unsuccessful bid for the relocation of Channel 4 broadcasting company (Williams, 2018). Such was the rivalry between Salford and Manchester that BBC announcers are "still forced to refer to BBC Salford, not Manchester" (Jenkins, 2015).

Inter-municipal relations in place marketing of The Quays

Organisational mechanisms involved in place marketing and branding are usually associated with political administrative boundaries (Warnaby, 2018). As each local government intends to enhance their local pride by promoting their assets, including flagship urban regeneration projects, place marketing is territorial by nature. A Visit Manchester (Destination Management Organisation for Greater Manchester) senior manager explained how territorial place marketing can be:

"Certainly when I joined ten years ago, the big issue for local authorities was how many times their local authority is named in one of our publications. We've still got it to some extent but we are moving much more away from that. Some local authorities actually understand it is not matter of the number of times, but more about 'how do we fit in what Manchester has to offer'. … They understand that in the international market, there is a much higher recognition of Manchester" (a Visit Manchester senior manager).

Yet, given that all ten local authorities made financial contributions to the marketing activities of Visit Manchester, the benefits of such Manchester focused approach could be questioned by peripheral local authorities in the city-region. A local authority officer stated "We are lucky because this area [The Quays] is still perceived as being Manchester from a visitor perspective. People further out don't get that benefit… from using Manchester as a hook". Visitor economy strategies of the region (Marketing Manchester, 2017; Visit Manchester, 2008) also identify the uneven distribution of tourism benefits as a challenge and the need to improve the relationship between the city centre and the other districts.

The development of 'The Quays' as a destination brand coincided with the creation of The Quays Partnership in 2002. Soon after The Lowry and Imperial War Museum North (IWMN) opened, the main visitor attractions and hotels in the surrounding areas on both sides of the Canal and the two local governments, Salford and Trafford Councils, formed The Quays Partnership, a destination marketing consortium. Having the same name for the destination and the Partnership caused some confusion around the destination brand as a member of The Quays Partnership explained: "The Quays is a consortium of members. Things may be at The Quays but they are not necessarily part of The Quays [Partnership]. To the outsider, to tourists, it is just a destination, just a place" (a cultural sector marketing officer).

'The Quays' as a destination brand was a compromise born from political disagreement between the two municipalities. This failure to develop a coherent branding for the area caused frustration among stakeholders and was also thought to create confusion for potential investors and visitors. Given the amount of investment Salford City Council has put in to the regeneration of the waterfront area over the years, many interviewees thought it would be appropriate to brand the area as Salford Quays. However, "The last thing that Trafford would probably want to do - this is an expression of how councils do or don't work together – is to have it called Salford Quays, because that will be like surrender, wouldn't it?" (a cultural sector senior manager).

Many interviewees regarded this quarrel as petty politics and a waste of time and blamed the local governments for creating a brand which failed even to indicate the destination's location. To make things more complicated, Salford City Council continued promoting their side of the Canal as 'Salford Quays' in their own marketing campaigns. At the same time, at the city-region level, The Quays was promoted as 'Manchester's Waterfront' by Visit Manchester.

Interviewees pointed out how "place destination branding is always political" (a Visit Manchester senior manager) and expressed their frustration on how place branding decisions were made by politicians who did not always understand the visitors' perspectives.

> "You will get people on the Trafford side saying they don't like it being called Salford Quays. … They are just a bit precious. … Let's call it Salford Quays. People don't care, it is … only a few in the Council" (a local politician).

> "You'd find bigger things like The Quays, they would brand up as Manchester when it is really Salford. But that is OK again because tourists don't care. … Whilst we can strive to try to educate and influence them [politicians] … sometimes politicians just want to see results for Salford, not see the bigger picture" (a local authority officer).

> "For you and I wandering in the street, we don't know really when and where we are in Salford … but it does matter to the local politicians" (a property developer).

At the time of interviews, a potential change to the destination brand was being discussed with the development of new projects such as MediaCityUK and Irwell City Park in the area. Additionally, with an influential developer starting to use Trafford Quays to brand their developments in another area in Trafford, interviewees showed their concern about future destination branding of the area.

> "The main conflicts will be between the three Councils [Manchester, Salford and Trafford]. Branding and naming, when you have councils involved, is terribly political. This is why we ended up with that fudged name, The Quays, in the first place. That is just what worries me because ultimately politicians will take a decision ... The logical thing will be having Manchester somewhere in it. I just don't see that working politically "(a local government officer).

> "If they are not careful, it will be a question of pushing and shoving and who gets the strongest voice. But it needs to be decided collaboratively what will work best for the destination" (a cultural sector senior manager).

This issue of place branding remains as a key challenge as The Quays continues to evolve with the expansion of MediaCityUK and the new developments in adjacent areas. The Quays Destination Plan 2014-17 calls for a single cohesive brand that all partners agree yet these multiple brands are still in use potentially confusing visitors and investors. A recent think tank report (ResPublica, 2017: 42) comments on how the brand of the City of Salford is squeezed between Manchester and MediaCityUK and recommends Salford develop a new identity "that will allow the city to properly market the digital and creative aspects of the cluster at the Quays" and suggests rebranding the Quays surrounding MediaCityUK as 'Silicon Salford' or 'Creative Quays'. As an interviewee summarised the situation of place branding: "everything is up for grabs at the moment and it could definitely change" (a local authority officer).

Conclusion

In the era of heightening globalisation and neoliberalism, and with the alleged "hollowing-out" of the nation-state, city-regions are identified as an ideal functional scale for governance and economic development. Yet, city-regions are not created from a clean slate and the pressure to enhance global economic competitiveness does not automatically bring on new city-region governance. It is therefore essential to consider the national, regional and local contexts from which city-regions rise. City-regions' success requires consensus among local governments and other actors on the direction for economic development based on agglomerative growth. Inter-municipal cooperation is therefore an important element for city-region governance capacity. However, cooperation between local governments should not be taken for granted as local governments by nature tend to be more interested in protecting interests within their territory. Thus, as Kantor et al. (2012:11) state, "if [city] regional political cooperation is becoming more important, it is necessary to see how this is being accomplished and over what issues". This paper responds to this and examines the relations between neighbouring local governments in a city region in urban regeneration and place marketing policy areas through the case study of The Quays, Greater Manchester, North-West England, focusing on the period of 2000-2010.

The case study findings show that there was clear acknowledgement from interviewees that more collaborative working is needed within the city-region. Although there was some evidence of joint working both in urban regeneration and place marketing policy areas, relationships between the three neighbouring local governments were characterised by competition and rivalry developed over

decades. The municipalities prioritised their own organisational "turf" (Kantor, 2008: 115; Healey, 2015; Li and Wu, 2018; Tomàs, 2012) in economic development and place marketing. This was evident in the way Salford and Manchester bid against each other in order to attract inward investment and how Salford and Trafford failed to jointly develop an effective brand to promote the cross-boundary destination, The Quays. The findings indicate the challenges in achieving political consensus and cooperation for joint action within a city-region, particularly in spatial planning and economic development (Savini, 2012), even in a city-region with a long tradition of collaboration, such as Greater Manchester. In particular, the core city's dominance appeared to cause conflicts among municipalities and thwart more cohesive planning and development. This supports the previous studies (e.g. Anderson and Pierre, 2010; Cardoso and Meijers, 2017; Rayle and Zegras, 2013; Stein and Schultz, 2015) in which the asymmetrical power relation between the core and other municipalities is identified as a barrier for city-region integration. Given that the post-industrial regeneration and place marketing are key strategic policy areas to attract inward investment and talented population to the city-region, such lack of coherence and consensus could in return have a negative impact on the competitiveness of the city-region from investors' point of view.

This paper's findings are derived from one spatially and temporally specific case study and therefore cannot explain inter-municipal collaboration in the whole of Greater Manchester or other city-regions. For future research, the paper's findings could be potentially compared and contrasted with similar relationships elsewhere in the city-region or case studies in other city-regions. Given the geographically uneven economic development and distribution of economic benefits between the south and north of the Greater Manchester city-region (Harding et al., 2010), it would be enlightening to explore the core-periphery relations between local governments located at a distance from the conurbation core, and Manchester City Council and others more centrally located.

This paper has made limited observations on inter-municipal relations in The Quays after the study period focus of 2000-2010. Future studies could conduct more in-depth qualitative analyses to compare this study's findings with inter-municipal relations in the same district since 2010 with consideration given to the changes in institutional structures and arrangements at the local, regional and national levels and how such changes affect city-region governance. Future studies may investigate the evolution of city-region governance since the establishment of Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) and the Greater Manchester LEP, and how inter-municipal relations evolve and city-region policies, particularly those related to spatial planning, are developed as these new city-regional governance structures mature. Such enquiries could examine the reasons why as well as how and where local governments advance their cooperation, where they make compromises and where tensions persist or new tensions develop. It would be interesting to examine how and to what extent the introduction of an elected metropolitan mayor in 2017 has affected the city-regional leadership (Fenwick and Johnston, 2020; Roberts, 2020) and inter-municipal dynamics in the city-region.

Another potential area for future research may be the extent to which private sector interests affect political cooperation within a city-region. Inter-municipal cooperation is also important for landowners and business groups who wish to create synergies between their projects in different municipalities in order to secure and maximize investments (Savini, 2012). This could have implications not only on planning and spatial development but also on place marketing and branding of urban districts within a city-region. Future researchers might also consider how place marketing and branding are affected by political and business interests as well as that of community (Lucarelli, 2018; Vanolo, 2018; Zenker and Erfgen, 2014) and how city-regions manage the selection and layering process of spatial identities (Boisen et al., 2011) in related marketing and branding activities.

Finally, this paper seeks to contribute to urban governance research by adopting a bottom-up, context-specific approach to studying city-region governance and in particular, inter-municipal relations within a city-region. By demonstrating the complex and fractious political nature of inter-municipal relations within a city-region, the paper hopes to encourage scholars to take on more critical views to examine city-regions as political entities. Inter-municipal dynamics and capacity need to be considered as factors when examining the success of a city-region in both achieving economic growth for and distributing the benefits to the whole region.

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