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Following the Signs: Applying Urban Regime Analysis to a UK Case Study

Abstract

As the debate continues regarding the applicability of urban regime analysis in a UK context, three aspects stand out as highly significant, i.e. the target for analysis, the mode of scrutiny, and the context of local governing arrangements with its implications for interdependence as an impetus for co-operation. This article will examine urban regime analysis and the move from government to governance in order to answer why and how the private, voluntary and public sectors might be inclined to collaborate in regimes. In addition, the regime analysis will provide the parameters for examination whilst the issue of governance will afford context for local governing arrangements. Although some issues require slight reframing to reflect the UK context, the paper will follow a rigorous framework for examination utilising the full weight of regime analysis as articulated by Stone such that it could not be accused of "concept stretching". Far from it: through the examination of an informal partnership; a coalition of actors from the public, private and voluntary sectors, that has been in existence for more than 13 years, the paper focuses, specifically, on the long-term, less visible aspects of local governance. As such, it is able to demonstrate how economic and political change can have a tangible effect on the manifestation of interdependence as an impetus for co-operation, not only for this specific locale but also for other cities facing similar challenges.

Introduction

As the debate continues regarding the applicability of urban regime analysis in a UK context, three aspects stand out as highly significant, i.e. the target for analysis, the mode of scrutiny, and the context of local governing arrangements with its implications for interdependence as an impetus for co-operation. For example, in this journal, Jonathon Davies (2003) acknowledges the existence of "small-scale partnership initiatives focused on delivery" which, he shows are "demonstrating a degree of collaborative synergy" but fail to constitute a regime. Here, having focused his case studies on single initiative regeneration partnerships, the line of inquiry is immediately restricted in its ability to examine the long-term, less visible features of business participation in local governing arrangements that might point towards a regime. Stone, in response to that article, suggests that perhaps we should stop measuring the performance of localities by some "litmus test" to see if they measure up to the urban regime found in Atlanta. Instead, he underlines the importance of context and the necessity to look beyond the short-term telling us that "Inquiry needs to focus on the character of local governing arrangements, what enables them to pursue an

agenda, and what shapes the strength and direction of a locality's problem-solving efforts" (Stone, 2004, p. 9). However, the development of a comparative framework for investigation has proved a useful tool for scholars (see, for example, Davies, 2003; Dowding et al, 1999; John and Cole, 1998; John, 2001) and the two modes of examination need not be mutually exclusive, rather, they *can be* mutually informative. According to John the necessity, here, is not to weaken the analytical weight of regime theory by ignoring the original precepts laid down by Stone nor to "side-step" the key issues through the elaboration of typologies or in the interests of interpretation (2001, p. 50). Context, as Stone iterates, is fundamental to the examination of a locality (1989, p. 220) but it should not alter the components of regime analysis such that the study, when applied outside of North America, loses its salience. The importance then, is to follow the signs of regime analysis in a rigorous examination of a well-targeted case-study, without allowing context to skew the analytical framework.

What cannot be ignored, however, is the motivation that context has been for the vast body of research that seeks to establish a link between UK local governing systems and the US style urban regimes. Over the past thirty years or so, with varying levels of success and consistency, the nature of governing at the local level in the UK has been re-moulded by central government which, arguably, has attempted to 're-centralise' the power of political ideology by disabling the local authority's role as provider and enforcing its status as enabler (see, for example, Davies, 2003, 2004; Jessop, 1995; Holliday, 2000; Peters and Pierre, 2001; Rhodes, 1997; for a wide debate on this issue). Extending this still further is the proliferation of multi-level statutory and non-statutory agencies/bodies that now share the power, responsibilities and resources of the local authority, adding to the complexity and fragmentation of sub-national political arrangements (Harding et al, 2000). Some authors argue that this shift from government to governance is a reaction to wider influences such as international competition, the Europeanization of policy structures and new forms of public management (Jessop et al, 1999; John, 2001; Harding et al, 2000). Whatever the causes may

be, this paper contends that there has been an obvious change in the context of local governing arrangements and a subsequent increase in the opportunities for private enterprise to enter into partnerships (prescriptive or otherwise) with local governing bodies thereby laying the foundations for a level of interdependence greater than that which existed before.

However, opportunities and necessary conditions don't make a regime. As John elucidates in *Local Governance in Western Europe*, the formation of regimes is by far the exception rather than the rule, even when conditions are highly favourable (2001). Stone underlines this when he describes the innate challenges apparent in achieving sustained cooperation and the costs incurred by participating in collective action (1989, 2004, 2006).

With this in mind, this article will examine urban regime analysis and the move from government to governance in order to answer why and how the private, voluntary and public sectors might be inclined to collaborate in regimes. Whilst the regime analysis will provide the parameters for examination, the issue of governance will afford context for local governing arrangements. Although some issues require slight reframing to reflect the UK context, the paper will follow a rigorous framework for examination utilising the full weight of regime analysis as articulated by Stone such that it could not be accused of "concept stretching" (Davies, 2003, p. 256). Far from it: through the examination of an informal partnership; a coalition of actors from the public, private and voluntary sectors, that has been in existence for more than 13 years, the paper focuses, specifically, on the long-term, less visible aspects of local governance. As such, it is able to demonstrate how economic and political change can have a tangible effect on the manifestation of interdependence as an impetus for co-operation, not only for this specific locale but also for other cities facing similar challenges.

The Signposts of Power

One of the great strengths of Stone's articulation of urban regime analysis is his understanding of power within local governing arrangements. In his hands, a

union is crafted between various approaches of political economy and the political science of pluralism. Dowding (2001) sees this combination as fundamental to the existence of regimes moving them beyond the elite structures of the Growth Machine (see, for example, Logan and Molotch, 1984; 1987) by their potential inclusion of actors from the public, private and voluntary sectors and pressure organisations. This “broader base of potential coalition partners” is what makes regime analysis so attractive to researchers from differing traditions and ideological backgrounds as it widens the scope for examination further than the issue of growth (Dowding, 2001, p. 8).

Stone’s distinction between “power over” and “power to” (1989) and his thesis on how the two interact in every day political life form the foundation for how and in which areas of local policy delivery, coalitions are likely to form. His central tenet is that an overly assertive ideologically based framework is harder to deliver in the real world than one that can build upon a more consensual or shared vision in spite of the costs experienced by individual actors. For Stone there is a “mutual dependence” in “power to” that enables actors to achieve far more as a group than they would if they remained as individuals, thereby giving the political community “an enhanced capacity to pursue collective aims” (2006, p. 2). In coalition formation, this is a key principle, as the benefits of collective action must outweigh the costs of responsibilities, obligations and constraints incurred.

Stone argues that “an urban regime can be defined as a set of arrangements or relationships (informal as well as formal) by which a community is governed” (2006, p. 4), but that, within this somewhat loose framework, the examination of the political processes taking place should not be of the most visible aspects of policy assertion. Rather, regime analysis is interested in the less visible connexions between actors that empower them to act collectively and ‘crowd out’ other ways of acting. By stating regime analysis in this way, Stone gives the researcher not only a definition of what a regime is but also an understanding of where to look when studying the governance of urban communities.

In the field of political science, many writers have embraced the theories of regime analysis in different forms (see, for example, Dowding, 2001; Dowding et al, 1999; Harding, 1997; John and Cole, 1998; Stoker, 1995; Ward 1997; etc. for a wider discussion). However, urban regime analysis is a much contested, as well as applied, paradigm for governing arrangements at the local level. For Davies (2003), the work of Stoker and Mossberger (1994) “stretches the regime concept too far” by attempting to remove the more ethnocentric elements from regime analysis. Here, ‘systemic power’ enters the debate as an essential element of coalition formation. Stone (1989) identifies systemic power as those embedded features of the socio-economic system that underpin the motivations of public officials to favour the interests of some groups over others. For John this underlines that Stone’s work is not merely a restatement of pluralism as it recognises the power of the private sector in shaping the trends of coalition interests (2001, p. 42).

Davies, meanwhile, examines this notion of systemic power as part of the issue of interdependence, which, for him, is a major barrier to the successful application of regime theory in the UK. The fiscal structure of local US economies is very different to those of the United Kingdom. In the United States local governments raise their finances directly from the local tax base and are, therefore, prone to want businesses to thrive, as an increase in business revenues and property values directly benefits the purse of the locale. In the UK, the local authority is primarily funded by central government and has no such local tax base benefit upon which to draw. However, Davies does note that this is not the sole fiscal motivation for collaboration between the public and private sectors (2003, p. 263). Interdependence and the embedded features of the socio-economic system go far deeper than that. Dowding (2001), for example, reminds us that within a Capitalist construct the economic wellbeing of the local population and the buoyancy of the local economy are generally pursued through economic growth, explaining, at least in part, the domination of business

interests. Pierre and Stoker, on the other hand, look at this from a political perspective noting that the role of government in the process of governance is far more contingent now as political elites, be they national, regional or local, must try to forge ties with business interests (as well as other actors) in order to mobilise resources and help achieve politically defined goals (2002, p. 29). Dowding et al argue that, in Britain, by setting tight fiscal constraints upon local government the state drives the local authority towards attracting 'positive sum' investment either directly from business or from higher levels of government to "promote economic growth or help to manage decline" (1999, p. 516).

Although this helps the researcher to appreciate where some of the motivation comes from in a UK context, Stone (2004) enjoins us to recognise that the two elements of interdependence, i.e. congruent goals and complementary resources, are not in themselves sufficient to stimulate co-operation. Networks of agencies that reinforce the notion of interdependence and the engagement of actors within those agencies are key to building relationships of trust and the longevity of the arrangements through which the coalition operates. As Stone puts it, "Interactions and positions shape awareness in such a way that they help mould understanding of purposes. Purpose and network, purpose and coalition, coalition and mode of co-operation—all affect one another" (2004, p. 13). It is therefore not sufficient to look at regeneration partnerships as single collaborations that may or may not resemble urban regimes.

Harding et al (2000) criticise the debate in the UK for focusing upon the prescribed local partnerships enforced by central government rather than examining the less visible influence that business has over local governing arrangements. This is not to say that a regime *cannot* be involved in such partnerships. Indeed, in the case study that this paper presents the coalition of actors uncovered and the longevity of the arrangements through which they operate almost necessitate their involvement, in one form or another, in policies *requiring* the formation of *urban partnerships* such as the Single Regeneration

Budget. These, however, are *in addition to* or *supportive of* the regime's broader purpose not their *raison d'être*.

Looking back through Stone's work it is easy to see why it has stimulated such a widespread interrogation of the applicability of regime analysis in a European context. His 1989 study of Atlanta underlined the importance of the nature of 'power to' in its ability to outdo the conventional power struggles of control and resistance by "gaining and fusing a capacity to act" (1989, p. 229). For Robin Hambleton this idea of obtaining results through gaining cooperation rather than exerting power is reflective of the changing approach to local leadership and delivery from one of top-down command and control to the more enabling role of local governance (2005, p. 196). It is this shift from government to governance, and how this intertwines with regime analysis, that is examined in the next section.

The context of local governance

The issue of governance has featured heavily in the debates regarding the application of urban regime analysis in the UK. Essentially this is because the term governance is seen as intrinsically different from that of government underscoring that the move towards a more complex, informal and less institutionalised form of politics and policy delivery resonates more profoundly with regime analysis. For example, according to John (2001) the United Kingdom has shown a *high degree of change* in all six dimensions of governance which he categorises as: Regimes, Europeanization, New Public Management, Regional formation, Executive reform and Democratic renewal. Here, regimes are the logical extension of the networks which form built on trust and the joint problem solving efforts of their actors putting them "at the pinnacle of the process of governance" (2001, p. 52). Although the results summarised come with a 'strong health warning' the categories chosen for measurement underpin his interpretation of governance and give context to the character of governing arrangements at the local level. At the heart of his argument John puts the shift

from government to governance as a reaction to the deepening influence of an “internationalized economy and Europeanised polity” (2001, p. 2).

Harding links this shift to a “renewed emphasis on national competitiveness and a growing recognition of the role that sub-national production complexes play within it” (2005, p. 69). In this arena, institutional fragmentation intensifies the links that local public agencies must make both vertically to regional, national and supra-national levels of public office, (as the issues of production and collective consumption are reconsidered) and horizontally to actors from the private sector (as local responses and initiatives are sought). These horizontal ties point to the potential building blocks of urban regimes. Haus and Heinelt suggest that, within this competitive environment, the co-ordination of policies and the unleashing of the “endogenous” potential of the locale can only be achieved “by building *urban regimes, policy networks* and/or *public-private partnerships*” (2006, p. 28, emphasis in the original). This more emphatic statement of what Pierre and Stoker (2002) refer to as the contingent aspects of governance exposes implications for interdependence that should not be minimised. Underpinning this renewed entrepreneurial ethos is the necessity to act collectively in one form or another. Interdependence can therefore be re-examined without weakening its significance.

Stone accents the importance of interdependence as “the foundation for coalition building that brings together congruent purposes and sought-after resources” but goes still further in his emphasis by underscoring that co-operation must be present in order to “make interdependence an operational reality” (2004, p. 12). Interdependence is therefore an impetus or incentive that, through co-operation brings actors (and their relevant skills, connexions and finances) to the table with a view to pursuing goals, which often carry costs. Harding et al re-assert the notion that this impetus or incentive comes from the rising importance of sub-national growth politics and the restructuring of sub-national institutions such that

a higher proportion of their “functional responsibilities” both recognise and involve market activities (2000, p. 12).

Interdependence, however, is not just a one sided coin. In this case, the private sector must be incentivised to occupy the other side. It is clear that the governing decisions taken by a local authority will have a direct influence over the economic performance of business within their spatial sphere. This is more so the case now, following the shift to governance outlined above. But local enterprise has the same dependence now upon the features of their locality as they did before i.e. levels of education, access to appropriate workforce, marketability of location, city infrastructure, crime, resident income levels etc. What has changed for business is the proximity of policy influence that they can, now (potentially) access. As the local economy becomes more susceptible to competition and the local authority is tasked with the promotion of market activity, the door to local businesses enhancing their interests in local policies, arguably, opens wider. As John puts it “as businesses become more interested in the whole range of policies produced by local public agencies, they realize they need to affect the political as well as their economic environment. At the same time, local bureaucrats and politicians realize the importance of co-operation of business to the health of their local economies” (2001, p. 45). The two sides of interdependence are thereby satisfied by a socio-economic system that demands tighter links between local public and private actors.

As outlined above, the move to governance contextualises the local governing conditions that may give rise to regimes. However, as intimated earlier, just because opportunities and necessary conditions exist does not mean that an urban regime will have the capacity to form. Interdependence is a key, driving factor that requires co-operation in order to get actors, with their complementary resources, to the table. Co-operation is based on relationships of trust that must build up over time. Congruent goals, i.e. purposes that carry costs, are pursued through both the informal and formal arrangements of the network resulting in

governing outcomes for the community. Only when these arrangements have proved that an enhanced capacity to act can be sustained over time might the core actors “have a strong loyalty to the arrangements that put them and their allies in the position of making key decisions” (Stone, 2006, p. 4). The case study presented below demonstrates how a 13 year, informal partnership in Portsmouth, England well illustrates the above factors in operation. The methodology section details the approach taken.

Methodology

What lies at the heart of the research that this paper presents is urban regime analysis as articulated by Clarence Stone. Its presence is two fold. Firstly, as a paradigm for examination, it offers a focus on the less visible aspects of governing arrangements at the local level reflecting intently upon “the enhanced capacity to act” engendered by “power to”. Secondly, as a contested application, it provides a framework for its own adjudication in relation to the case study undertaken. From the analysis presented in the first two sections of this paper, the following characteristics help describe regimes, and will be used as a framework for examination:

- A long-term set of arrangements or relationships by which an informal network of local actors from both the public and private sectors and possibly voluntary and/or other organizations make some governing decisions for their community.
- There is an agenda, purpose or vision that is strongly defined.
- Dynamic actors are able to recognize and act upon the unique attributes of their locale (John, 2001, p. 52).
- Mobile capital and external resources are sought in order to achieve a positive sum outcome for the city.
- Collaboration produces outcomes that would not be attainable by remaining independent.
- Co-operation within the network is built on relationships of trust (often pre-existing the regime) and is a negotiation of individual preferences. It is what

brings actors to the table.

- Complementary resources i.e. relevant skills, experience and adequate finances along with congruent goals help to shape and strengthen the nature of the arrangements.
- The arrangements are reinforced by complementary networks of agencies and participation of coalition actors within those agencies such that business interests are relatively integrated.
- The coalition is not formally within the institutionalized structure of local government, although some of its members will be and it will often act on behalf of or in co-ordination with those institutions.
- Selective incentives may enter into negotiations.

The case study itself is a complex one and as such required a multi faceted research approach in order to evaluate the above framework. The investigation initially began as an inquiry into a perceived growth coalition surrounding the Gunwharf Quays development in Portsmouth. Here Social Network Analysis was utilised to uncover the network ties of 44 organisations¹ that were highly involved in the development process. From this initial investigation, (taking place over a three year period from 1996) it became evident that the arrangements/ relationships between key actors had both a history and a future based on a shared vision and agenda, indicating that, potentially, we might be looking at a regime rather than a one-off growth coalition. Overall, a series of eighteen semi-structured interviews were carried out with actors from the local authority planning and marketing departments, a prominent local architect, members of the local university, members of Portsmouth & Southeast Hampshire Partnership, and local political activists. Some of these actors had been involved with the coalition from its inception whilst others were new to the local arrangements. In order to further trace the history and function of the regime, a thorough documentary analysis was carried out, utilising local historic archives and web-site material. This information was especially useful for examining shifts in

¹ The 44 organisations were identified during a first round of data collection.

political and economic context, and the early thinking around partnership formation. Minutes of City Council meetings and local Economic Development Sub-Committee reports were analysed alongside newspaper articles from the relevant periods lending considerable weight to the investigation. Due to the extent of this inquiry and the limitations of space, it is not necessary or possible to present the SNA data.

The genesis of Portsmouth's arrangements: A reaction to socio-economic change

At first glance, Portsmouth's governing arrangements look like those of many other cities around the south of England. A Unitary Local Authority since 1997, its officers work alongside a City Council dominated by Liberal Democrats (who take up all eight positions in the Cabinet), a Liberal Democrat MP representing Portsmouth South and a Labour MP for Portsmouth North. Whilst the Local Strategic Partnership² (LSP) has been working on a Community Strategy since it first met in September 2002, the city's refuse is collected and its streets are cleaned under 25 year Private Finance Initiative contracts by international companies, its acute hospitals are run by an NHS Trust and its schools are a mix of local authority and privately funded institutions. But take a closer look at how the city has been changing its image over the past sixteen years and how the local authority has been coping with the changing nature of its own function, and a very different set of arrangements becomes apparent.

INSERT LOCATION MAP ABOUT HERE

In February 1990, following the Conservative Government's introduction of a *"new regime for local government capital expenditure"*, Richard Trist, then Chief Executive of Portsmouth City Council (PCC), delivered a report to Portsmouth's

² An LSP is a non-statutory, multi-agency partnership (stemming from a central government initiative) that seeks to encourage public participation in local governance. In the case of Portsmouth, the LSP is not seen to play any direct role in the regime arrangements. *The Partnership* in the case study is not the LSP.

Policy and Resources Committee entitled “Portsmouth Renaissance” (PCC, 1990). The importance of this document is twofold. Firstly, Trist explicitly refers to “a world in which the amount of direct cash available for expenditure by any local authority is likely to be severely limited compared to the situation in the past”, indicating a distinct change in local funding procedure as part of a central government drive to set tight fiscal constraints upon local authorities. Secondly, in reaction to this change, Trist presents his findings from two American cities where “particularly the business sector [had] been deeply involved in working with the local authority to achieve results”. Here, he recommends the forging of partnerships to utilise the “expertise and manpower” of major local businesses to overcome the material problems faced by the city (ibid). It was from this standpoint that Trist (described as ‘extraordinarily dynamic’) drove forward an initiative to create a partnership between local businesses, public and voluntary bodies, thereby opening the door to cross-sector collaboration.

At the same time, Portsmouth’s business community was feeling further economic pressure from the 1989–1993 recession. Portsmouth had a hard edged image being variously described as the “shit-hole of the south”, a “grubby city” (Cook, 2004) and a 1960s “concrete Jerusalem” (Binney, 2005) whose economic prospects had taken a severe nose dive throughout the 1980s following the contraction of its naval bases, civil service and productive industries as part of the Conservative Government’s wider economic restructuring programme. Unemployment was high, averaging 10%, with pockets as high as 86% on the Landport Estate, a part of the Charles Dickens electoral ward that remains in the UK’s worst off 10% on the Government’s Deprivation Index. As a city Portsmouth was the fourth most deprived area in the South East and the second most densely populated city outside of inner London (see above map for location). It was in recognising these difficult conditions and yet “another poor set of declining advertising figures” that in 1992, Ben Stoneham, MD of media group PPP and the local paper *the News*, threw his commercial (and personal) weight

behind the partnership concept “to kick start the local economy” which as he pointed out “in the end drove our business” (PSEHP, 2003).

Echoing the findings of Dowding et al (1999) and John (2001), these shifts in political and economic context were key to a tangible interdependence that had the potential of bringing interested parties to the table. It was through the co-operation of local dynamic actors that the Portsmouth and South East Hampshire Partnership (*The Partnership*) was formed in 1993, and, as a company limited by guarantee, they could borrow money and operate with commercial independence. The initial group of “forward-thinking local people” included Richard Trist (PCC), Ben Stoneham (*the News*), Nicola Mardell from Hampshire Social Services, Hedley Greentree of HGP Architects and Colin Monk, Pro-Vice-Chancellor of the University of Portsmouth³ (PSEHP, 2003). What became apparent from interview and archival data (and of great import regarding regime formation) was that this core of individuals had pre-existing, longstanding relationships, either professionally or personally, where mutual trust was an established factor.

From the outset, coalition actors faced a number of challenges regarding how to secure finances for the city to push its ailing economy forward. Evident throughout council minutes from 1991-1994 is that the local authority, under the leadership of Richard Trist, had no intention of allowing the city to sink along with its dockyard industries, naval bases and central government funding. The Economic Development Strategy for that period called for increased partnership arrangements between local businesses, the Chamber of Commerce, various business development agencies and the University of Portsmouth and a “review of mechanisms by which the city council, other local authorities, central government agencies and the private sector co-ordinate and agree their respective roles” (PCC, 1991). Highlighting the decline in Portsmouth’s traditional industries and regional status a report to the Economic Development

³ Then, Portsmouth Polytechnic.

Sub-Committee (EDSC) identified three potential sources of external funding, all of which were vigorously sought with each ending in failure: The Derelict Land Reclamation Programme, Assisted Area Status (AAS) and the European Union (PCC, 1992). Local media group PPP publicised the process throughout.

“Hopes dashed!” reported *the News* when Fareham and Gosport MPs refused to support the AAS bid due to a perceived stigmatisation of the area (12/8/93, p. 5 and 23/7/93, p. 15), then, “EU rules change... Portsmouth bid fails again!” as the city pursued Objective 2 EU funding (11/94, p. 1).

Considering these, potentially catastrophic, failures it was foundational that the coalition arrangements, themselves, were becoming firmly established. For example, the following excerpts from EDSC reports illustrate *The Partnership’s* early involvement in the future economic development of the city:

- EDSC report “Portsmouth Opportunity” states that 7 members of PCC, 11 local authority officers and 13 people from *The Partnership* helped to market Portsmouth as a business destination to a conference in London with Ben Stoneham (*the News*) speaking for the city (PCC, 1993a);
- EDSC minute 3.1, 1993 notes that “15 of the largest companies and institutions in the Portsmouth area now regularly attend *The Partnership* meetings” (PCC, 1993b); and
- EDSC report from Head of Marketing, Strategy and Economic Development, Paul Spooner, details that he is to work with *The Partnership* to prepare an outline strategy for the SE Hants region for discussion with the new SE Regional Office (PCC, 1994).

In this early period of regime formation, dynamic and charismatic actors from the public, private and voluntary sectors came together around a centralising theme of partnership working and the ‘Renaissance of Portsmouth’. Whilst there were early failures in securing external funding, success came through co-operation: combining the complementary skills and resources of key organisations and businesses to market the city and establish a long-term vision. In so doing, an

informal networks of actors further established relationships with one another thereby laying the foundations for the fledgling regime. It is important to note, here, that *The Partnership* is not 'the regime'. Rather, it is a central mechanism in, and through which informal networks of public and private actors come together to make some governing decisions for the local community. The next section explores how this operates.

The Partnership: Providing a framework for co-operation

Although *The Partnership* lies at the heart of this research, the breadth of Portsmouth's governing arrangements is really quite complex and we need to examine the ways that the various interests and resources of the regime come together in order to influence and effect some policy initiatives.

The Partnership is a discreet unit that is autonomous from all levels of government other than when it is acting on behalf of the local authority (e.g. bidding for and handling Single Regeneration Budget (SRB) funding, etc). Under these circumstances, where there is a contractual agreement with Central Government, *The Partnership* views any constraints as 'responding to the customer' as with any other business transaction. Furthermore, it is left to the Chief Executives of PCC and Havant Town Council who sit on the board of *The Partnership* to decide for themselves if there is a personal conflict of interest on single projects. *The Partnership* is not *under the control* of the local authority, rather, it is an informal coalition that gains legitimacy through the inclusion of local authority leadership as one of its "building blocks" (Stone, 2004), and is therefore able to effect some governing decisions for the city. However, its members also work as individuals on schemes that involve *The Partnership*; work outside of *The Partnership* on economically related projects; and work with each other, but beyond *The Partnership*, through the normal channels of every-day business life. *The Partnership* is best seen, then, as a core structure in, and through which, the regime both operates and has the "ability to set the terms of civic co-operation" (see Stone, 1989, p. 220). The following schematic illustrates

how the key organisations and actors of the regime come together through the core structure of *The Partnership* in order to pursue the regimes broader purpose.

INSERT SCHEMATIC ABOUT HERE

The Partnership has been central to a number of high profile initiatives that have achieved “publicly significant results” (see Stone, 1989, p.227), including winning and handling six rounds of SRB funding covering 20 programmes over 11 years. The significance of these, especially in terms of effecting governing decisions and pursuing a broader purpose, cannot be underestimated. The award-winning Landport Employment Regeneration scheme, for example, combined housing renewal, community development and improved retail facilities to Portsmouth’s most deprived estate. However, a defining contribution *The Partnership* has made in pursuing the vision of economic growth through re-imagining the city is its central involvement in the ‘Renaissance of Portsmouth Harbour’ and the development of Gunwharf Quays. This combined project well illustrates the complexities of the regime arrangements and demonstrates how the “mutual dependence” in “power to” encouraged cross-sector collaboration which, as Stone notes, gives the political community “an enhanced capacity to pursue collective aims” (2006, p. 2).

Delivering the vision: A negotiation of preferences

In 1994 the full potential of Gunwharf Quays (a 12.2 hectare waterfront site formerly known as HMS Vernon) and a number of other, disused, Ministry of Defence locations was finally recognised at a meeting between Hedley Greentree (HGP Architects and a founding director of *The Partnership*), John Vail (a major local commercial property agent involved with *The Partnership*), and Paul Spooner (Head of Marketing Strategy and Economic Development for PCC). This ‘think tank’ had come together to discuss specifically the future of Gunwharf: a site made provision for in Portsmouth’s 1990 Local Plan as a mixed-use

development, but which PCC was unable to purchase independently. The idea was to form a network from the ex-naval bases due for release around Portsmouth Harbour, and proposals were submitted to the Millennium Commission which had invited bids for 'Landmark' projects to celebrate the year 2000. The vision was to create the "gateway to Britain" re-branding the city by constructing "a world-class attraction" in the form of a maritime shopping centre with luxury housing and leisure facilities, thus "transform[ing] Portsmouth Harbour into an international heritage arena" (PCC, 2006).

The project was divided into various elements for which HGP was the Master Planner. *The Partnership* played a pivotal role by developing and funding the overall Renaissance of Portsmouth Harbour bid to the Millennium Commission whose grant was used to lever in funds from the public and private sectors. However, the Millennium elements were each delivered by one of the partners of Portsmouth Harbour Renaissance Ltd (PHR Ltd) comprised of PCC, Gosport Borough Council and the Portsmouth Naval Base Property Trust each of whom was represented on its board of directors along with three non-executive directors including Ben Stoneham (first chair of *The Partnership*) and Hugh Seigle (MD, Whitbread Property, Whitbread Plc – a major force behind *The Partnership*). Initially, this decision was contested, particularly by Hedley Greentree who "pleaded with the local authority officers to appoint an independent project manager to pull together the original private/public sector teams" in order to avoid the influence of local politics (Interview, 2006). Here, a significant compromise was reached, as the coalition's broader purpose was more important than individual preferences. As Stone (2004) iterates, the pursuit of congruent goals often carries costs (including the wants and desires of individuals within the regime) and may test the strength of regime coherence. For Portsmouth, this was an opportunity to move towards a new future, embracing the concept of city competitiveness through a private sector development at Gunwharf (Principal Architect HGP) housing the Flagship Millennium Tower designed by HGP.

Coalition interests: Shaping trends and crowding out the opposition

Of course, the issue of coalitions that involve public officials often raises questions regarding appropriate use of power and position. For a local authority that seeks to progress the economic betterment of the city through cross-sector collaboration, the potential for accusation is high but not always well founded. Ultimately, local leadership might be judged on the measure of its response to opposition whilst pursuing a broader purpose. A major conflict over the Gunwharf development highlights how the interests of the regime were favoured over those of a conservation alliance led locally by the Portsmouth Society and backed by the Royal Fine Arts Commission (RFAC). In considering the application of regime analysis it is important to recognise, as John (2001) notes, the power of the private sector in 'shaping the trends' of coalition interests.

In 1993 PCC had, themselves, designated Gunwharf a Conservation Area in order to 'maintain a certain level of control' over any future development. However, the scheme was allowed to proceed through outline planning permission rather than following the more rigorous route of agreeing all detailed matters first⁴. This procedure required permission from English Heritage, the government's statutory adviser, and in terms of consultation, it meant that the public were presented with, fairly, firm plans regarding use, function and design. Here, the conservation alliance highlighted a concern that 'commercial criteria' and a desire to develop the site quickly were driving the development process forwards (RFAC letter, 1997, in PCC, 1997) and that the integrity of the Conservation Area was being compromised (RFAC letter, 1998, in PCC, 1998). However, the local authority and coalition partners were determined not to allow

⁴ In principal, Conservation Area status confers greater control to the council on matters of visual appearance and types of allowable development. Development should be seen to be in keeping with the historic fabric of the area and, typically, planning permission is not allowed to proceed through "outline permission" in the first instance. Rather the far more stringent route of agreeing detailed permission is followed so that matters of design are agreed alongside the general principal of the development.

the development to fail and used their considerable power within the network⁵ to 'crowd out' the opposition. As "an integral part of the business elite" (see Stone, 1989, p.192) local media, in the form of *the News*, threw their full weight behind the regime reporting, for example, that the majority of Portsmouth residents supported the Gunwharf development recognising the economic benefits it would bring to the city (*the News*, 1998, p. 8). Nevertheless, in a final attempt to halt the development, the Portsmouth Society lobbied to have the scheme 'called-in' for determination by the Secretary of State⁶ (SoS). Here, the coalition was able to use their network power/proliferation to influence outlying, business oriented, interest groups, using what Stone refers to as 'selective incentives'. As ominous as this sounds, Stone (in recent work) has questioned the emphasis he put, in *Regime Politics*, on selective incentives (or side payments) as motivation for the bi-racial co-operation that took place in Atlanta, preferring, instead, to highlight "the *complexity* of motivation and underscore the *ability* to make side payments" or to make "small opportunities" happen (2005, p. 317, emphasis added). Here, Stone recognises that not everyone is out to feather his own nest but might be prepared to negotiate their position if something more altruistic were offered as an incentive by those who hold power. Most notably, the Central Southsea Retailers Association reported that key to their cooperation was the guarantee from the local authority that the area around Palmerston, Osborne and Marmion Road (perceived as being direct competition for Gunwharf) would be designated a 'distinct shopping area' with increased access, signage and publicity. As a result, they and other local traders wrote letters of support to the SoS recognising the wider economic benefits of Gunwharf Quays. Two factors stand out here as highly significant. Firstly, the ability of the regime to facilitate this measure relied heavily upon the commitment of city officials to the broader purpose of economic growth, as it was the local authority that financed and incorporated the scheme.

⁵ This was established using Social Network Analysis 'centrality' measures.

⁶ The outcome of this could have meant that Central rather than local government would have made the decision as to whether or not the development went ahead. Whilst there was potential that the Secretary of State may have sided with The Portsmouth Society and denied permission, the real danger was increasing delay and potentially losing external development partners and funding.

Secondly, the local traders were happy to take a risk and side with increased competition as long as they felt integrated into the overall vision thereby increasing their ability to access the market potential of the development. In “the challenge...to head off potential opposition” (Stone, 2005, p. 317) this wider understanding of selective incentive or *small opportunity* had the added benefit of promoting relative business integration and widening the network of civic co-operation (see Stone, 1989, p. 193).

As a single element of this case study, the development of Gunwharf Quays and the Renaissance of Portsmouth Harbour serves as an opportunity to scrutinize the machinations of the regime. But were the examination to end here or, indeed, had the coalition proceeded no further, regime analysis would prove to be an inappropriate paradigm. The following sections, therefore, examine how this informal network of local actors, expressed through *The Partnership*, has been able to progress a clearly defined vision and agenda throughout their thirteen-year history.

Credibility and co-operation: The mobilisation of capital and complementary resources

An essential building block for a successful regime is feasibility. The sustainability of the governing arrangements described by regime analysis cannot be satisfied by what Stone refers to as “the ad hoc mobilization of slack resources” typical of “the ‘retail politics’ of discrete and narrow-scope decisions” (2005, p. 312). For arrangements to overcome the, often unanticipated, costs of time and responsibilities associated with collaboration, the ability to achieve the broader purpose, defined by coalition actors, must be seen as feasible. For a regime concerned with economic growth financial resources and the capacity to mobilise and attract external capital over a sustained period helps bring credibility to the proposed purpose and a willingness to participate through the network.

In the 13 years since *The Partnership* was established the coalition has achieved “positive-sum results” (see Dowding et al, 1999, p. 516) worth over £1/2billion to Portsmouth. These external resources (some of which are detailed in Table 1 below) have come from both the public sector (from various levels of national and supra-national government) and the private sector (from international as well as national mobile capital). Most essentially, the regime has used their own financial resources to creatively lever in these external funds. For example, the ‘Renaissance of Portsmouth Harbour’ cost over £80m, of which, £38m was contributed by the Millennium Commission with the balance coming mostly from the developers (Berkeley Homes Plc and Lordland, a South African company), various national funds and PHR Ltd. However, the initial Lottery bid/feasibility study was co-ordinated by *The Partnership* and funded by coalition actors from the local business sector including *the News*, Pall Europe and Whitbread Plc. Additionally, PHR Ltd raised approximately £575,000 for insurance to cover each partner’s liability.

Continuing the vision of ‘architectural renaissance’, the Portsmouth Gateway Project (a range of environmental improvements and landmark features along the M275 entrance to the city, including the ‘Sails of the South’) was also creatively funded. *The Partnership*, then chaired by Ian Carruthers (MD, Brittany Ferries) set up the Gateway Group as an environmental body able to apply for a landfill tax grant from Onyx Environmental Trust worth £1.5m. This was ‘matched’ by PCC (a condition of the grant) for improvements *already* identified in the Local Plan adding a further £1m to the project. According to PCC, by linking it’s proposals to *The Partnership* bid, the project was able to “achieve more than would have been possible had the organisations acted separately” (PCC, 2004). Although the mobilisation of capital played an important role here, this ‘enhanced capacity to act’ came, far more, from the commitment of key coalition actors who gave their time, knowledge and specialised skills to complete, what was actually, a highly technical project that carried little financial reward.

Other major initiatives that reinforce the regime's vision for Portsmouth include:

INSERT TABLE ONE ABOUT HERE

Surviving change: The importance of trust and effectiveness

Through their informal arrangements, *The Partnership* have mobilised the skills and capital resources sufficient to keep them at the centre of economic regeneration in Portsmouth since their inception. The current manifestation of the long-term vision is City Growth Portsmouth (CGP), a private sector led approach to economic development and inner-city regeneration based on a Porterian growth initiative that focuses on business clusters. *The Partnership* Development Director sees the initiative as “a link between economic growth and social inclusion” which has been an important focus for the coalition from the outset. The CGP strategy board, chaired by Chris Gordon (MD, First Choice Marine and current chair of *The Partnership*) includes prominent actors from coalition organisations such as the University of Portsmouth, PCC, HGP Architects, and *the News*. To date, over 1200 man-hours (that's an estimated £140k) have been donated by public, private and voluntary sector actors to its development. Although the initiative currently forms the basis of “a new 10 year city strategy” and will “inform policy decisions for years to come” (CGP, n.d.a), a director of *The Partnership* noted that it took some eighteen months for PCC to fully appreciate it's potential following a change in Chief Executive. Here, it was essential for coalition actors to re-build relationships of trust with the new local authority leader and demonstrate the strength and efficacy of the arrangements. Over a thirteen-year period, it is inevitable that core regime actors will come and go, and the longevity of the arrangements, the processes and interactions through which certain agendas are pursued, therefore depends on far more than the ability of one or two individuals to do something special. The realisation of “an enhanced capacity to pursue collective aims” has “power to” at the heart of negotiations, and it is this aspect of collaboration that, Dowding (2001) suggests, sets a regime apart from other forms of partnership working. The final section of this case study examines how *The Partnership* fits into a supportive network of

agencies that are central to its ability to attain 'buy-in', and the role it plays as "a conduit for vision and enterprise" (PSEHP, Executive Director, 2006).

Supporting the arrangements

For effective regime function, Stone highlights the importance of networks of agencies that strengthen the concept of interdependence (and the participation of actors within those agencies) as vital to building relationships of trust and to the longevity of the arrangements through which the coalition operates. In addition, the level and mode of interaction contribute significantly in terms of social capital and can assist relative integration i.e. bonding, bridging and bracing (Rydin and Holman, 2004).

In addition to 13 years of successful cross-sector collaboration that has generated enormous material investment in the city, *The Partnership* also sees *itself* as a 'facilitator for private and public sector actors to gain access to each other's skills and know-how', providing an essential framework for promoting co-operation. According to one director "relationships are fundamental" to the continued efficacy of the coalition. As such, they try to maintain a 'critical mass' of engagement from both the public and private sectors, including actors who are not necessarily at the forefront of decision-making but whose participation reinforces the operation of arrangements. Prestige events based around projects such as City Growth, that emphasise the success of the arrangements, are seen as 'a reward' for private sector involvement and an opportunity for the public sector to 'network informally without feeling so constrained'. As a mechanism for building social capital and promoting relative integration, such events are an effective investment. More central, however, to the notion of continual network interaction, *The Partnership* board meets every two months and has some twenty directors all of whom engage with other agencies through the progression of congruent goals. For example, The Innovations Group, chaired by Hedley Greentree, meets quarterly to discuss ideas for sustainable regeneration whilst *The Partnership* Business Initiative combines the forces of various agencies,

focussing on strategy and community programmes. According to one director, organisations like the Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CoCI) and the South East England Development Agency (SEEDA) are “key to keeping the local authority engaged informally”. This informality is intentional and conscious benefiting both public and private sector actors. With the rise in the UK of more formalised partnerships (e.g. Local Strategic Partnerships) designed to create collaborative governance, *The Partnership* has recognised the need to maintain their informal nature noting that “businesses are not altogether that interested in partnerships like LSPs as they cannot see the benefit from them... they place too many constraints on members and give local business very little reason to join-in other than social philanthropy and corporate responsibility... *The Partnership* can offer the local authority vision and opportunities, people and resources, that might not otherwise be available to the city” (PSEHP, Executive Director, 2006). It is through networking and interacting with other agencies as a unified body that these informal arrangements have achieved relative integration and a “high degree of respect and trust from the organisations with which [*The Partnership*] interfaces” (PSEHP, 2003). As Stone notes, this “network of civic co-operation is itself a resource for governing the community” (1989, p. 194).

Results and Conclusions

Before reflecting on why and how a regime formed in Portsmouth, perhaps it is best to briefly look at the case-study material as compared to the framework presented in the methodology section. Table 2 summarises the 10-point framework and counter poses it against four selected projects that collectively span *The Partnership*'s 13-year history.

INSERT TABLE TWO ABOUT HERE

As an informal coalition that sits outside the institutionalized structure of local government, this organisation has provided a central mechanism, in and through which, Portsmouth's most talented political and business leaders have sought to

release the endogenous potential of the city over a considerable period of time. As table 2 indicates, the Portsmouth case study is able to satisfy all 10 points of the framework underscoring how sustained co-operation through the network has brought together the complementary resources of public and private sectors actors who, through collaboration, have achieved immense 'positive-sum results' for the city. But, beyond the parochial, what does this provide? Firstly, having focussed on the less visible, more long-term aspects of local governing arrangements the paper takes seriously the criticisms levied by authors such as Harding et al (2000) that UK studies have often, mistakenly, conflated one-off, prescribed regeneration initiatives with regime analysis. The Portsmouth case study presented above clearly seeks to address this issue and add to the findings of scholars such as Dowding et al (1999) and John (2001) who have undertaken more rigorous examinations of long-term cross-sector coalitions. Of utmost importance has been the mode of scrutiny. By utilising a framework for investigation that has not 'side-stepped' the key issues, the full analytical weight of regime analysis has been applied, allowing the case study, itself, to highlight the importance of political and economic context within the debate. This leads us to the second point: if we consider why and how a regime was able to form in this particular case, it gives us some potentially extendable conclusions regarding regime formation in the UK.

Certainly, the case study identified a tangible link between the changing role of the local authority, the socio-economic conditions of the city and interdependence as an impetus for co-operation that might be applied to other cities across the UK. Here, the "*new regime for local government capital expenditure*" (PCC, 1990), imposed by Central Government on all local authorities, drove Portsmouth's Chief Executive to consider the capacity of the local authority to independently resolve the material problems faced by the city. As a result, the door was most deliberately opened to engage local business in partnership arrangements. At the same time, the nation-wide programme of economic restructuring that under-pinned Portsmouth's decline, cut deeply enough into the

operational capacity of the local business community that some of its leaders sought to actively influence local policy initiatives through cross-sector collaboration. In the case of Portsmouth, there can be little doubt that the public and private sector actors involved felt compelled to join forces by the socio-economic circumstances in which they co-existed, but the underlying trends here are not unique. Moreover, in the context of a continued shift from government to governance, where institutional fragmentation has further demanded tighter links between public and private sector actors, this notion of interdependence has intensified, arguably, giving rise to a variety of collaborative forms involved in local urban governance (see, for example, Haus and Heinelt, 2006; Peters and Pierre, 2001; Pierre and Stoker, 2002, for a wide discussion on this issue that is, unfortunately, beyond the scope of this paper).

There are, however, a number of key factors as to why and how, specifically, a regime formed in Portsmouth. We must consider that a number of charismatic actors from a variety of sectors, who shared previous, long-standing relationships of trust (either on a personal or professional level) independently sought (i.e. outside the scriptures of central government) to influence the economic and social trajectory of the city through co-operation. In establishing a clearly defined vision that linked economic growth to social inclusion they gained, as Stoker might put it, “a shared sense of purpose” (1995, p. 61) where each sector saw the other as “vital allies” in their efforts to shape the arrangements through which “future events would unfold” (see Stone, 1989, p. 21). As such, the governing arrangements that took shape were pursued through an informal organisational structure, *The Partnership*, that has remained central to coalition activity ever since. Although the precise unfolding of events in Portsmouth is, probably, unique, it is hard to see why this pattern of coalition formation, built on pre-existing relationships of trust and cross-sector interaction, cannot be extended further. Indeed, in their study of Croydon’s governing arrangements Dowding et al (1999) specifically point to such factors as foundational to the regime.

However, as Stone (2004) points out, the sustained co-operation that enables a regime to achieve strength and direction is not easy to maintain. Interdependence, as demonstrated above, provides a key impetus that might bring actors, with their sought-after resources, to the table with a view to pursuing goals that often carry costs, for example, in individual preferences (and, here, I refer back to the negotiations that took place around the delivery of the Renaissance of Portsmouth Harbour), time (the 1200 man hours donated to City Growth), finances (the feasibility study to the Millennium Commission financed by the local business sector) and obligations (the participation of key actors in *The Partnership* board meetings, Innovations Group etc.). Following Stone's advice "to focus on the character of local governing arrangements, what enables them to pursue an agenda, and what shapes the strength and direction of a locality's problem-solving efforts" (2004, p. 9) the Portsmouth case study clearly illustrates how *The Partnership* provides a core structure that is central to a network of supporting agencies that re-enforce these notions of interdependence, co-operation, effectiveness and feasibility. It is this network of civic co-operation that has afforded the regime an enhanced capacity to act and the ability to pursue the broader purpose of economic and social regeneration over a sustained period.

As outlined in this paper, the debated application of regime analysis in a UK context is inextricably linked to the issue of a shift from government to governance, illustrating the evolutionary aspects of governing arrangements at the local level and accentuating that the processes of government are not fixed structures. Political changes (be they at a regional, national or supra-national level) will affect local responses and, within the context of governance, we should not expect these to all be the same. Much will depend on local circumstance, pre-existing relationships and the ability of local actors to be "politically innovative" in the face of these "emerging trends" (see Stone, 1989, p. 26). Given the innate challenges in maintaining sustained co-operation, regimes, as noted by John (2001) may well be 'the exception', but, as illustrated by this case study, they most certainly should not be discounted.

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