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Implementation of « metropolitan » government and cooperation infra- territorial

The English combined authorities: A new model of metropolitan government?

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- Accroître leurs compétences en matière de pratique professionnelle par la mobilisation de connaissances et de techniques, dont les fondements et contenus ont été explorés le plus finement possible afin d'en assurer une bonne maîtrise intellectuelle et pratique,
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La formation par la recherche inclut un exercice individuel de recherche, le projet de fin d'études (P.F.E.), situé en dernière année de formation des élèves ingénieurs. Cet exercice correspond à un stage d'une durée minimum de trois mois, en laboratoire de recherche, principalement au sein de l'équipe Ingénierie du Projet d'Aménagement, Paysage et Environnement de l'UMR 6173 CITERES à laquelle appartiennent les enseignants-chercheurs du département aménagement.

Le travail de recherche, dont l'objectif de base est d'acquérir une compétence méthodologique en matière de recherche, doit répondre à l'un des deux grands objectifs :

- Développer toute ou partie d'une méthode ou d'un outil nouveau permettant le traitement innovant d'un problème d'aménagement
- Approfondir les connaissances de base pour mieux affronter une question complexe en matière d'aménagement.

Afin de valoriser ce travail de recherche nous avons décidé de mettre en ligne sur la base du Système Universitaire de Documentation (SUDOC), les mémoires à partir de la mention bien.

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Introduction

England regional planning has suffered in the last 40 years. In the 80's, During Thatcher's government the politics was driven by the market economy, there was no regional planning made at that time, as it does not work well with speculation.

If we take a look more recently, in 2010, central government abolished Regional Agencies, the only public bodies that had a relevant size for regional planning. Government defend its choice with the argument that only local authorities had the relevant size for planning. However, local authorities disagreed, and they immediately started to produce Joint Local Plan on their functional area.

In 2009, the central government created a new concept: the combined authorities. They will be the target for the decentralisation of the UK, one of the most centralised country in the world. Their role is to fill the gap from the regional agencies and take charge of the Joint Local Plan and Local Enterprise Partnerships. We could argue that they are the proof that the government recognise the need for regional planning.

Combined authorities have a legal statute, are run by elected member and have a lot of powers devolved from the central government. In fact, the combined authorities are nearly governments by themselves, like 'métropoles' in France. Combined authorities still are very far away from London, which is nearly a state on his own, with its own bureaucracy and a 16 billion-a-year budget. (Emmerich, 2017). That is why we will not study London along with the combined authority.

However, to become a combined authority, local authorities need to volunteer and to be acknowledged by the government. It is not a bottom-up initiative. Not all local authorities became combined authority. They might have done so for political reason, by fear of the uncertainty brought by the Brexit, or because combined authorities are not as great as the government say they are. We will try to analyse the combined authorities to see if they are related to the definitions of a metropolitan government by Lefevre 1998 or Tomas 2017.

In this report, we will deal with the relationship of combined authority with the government, and their relationships with each other and with local authorities. We won't have the time and resource to research the relationships each combined authority have with their surrounding communities. Especially since it would require analysing a lot of raw data that are not always publicly available. Instead we will look into how the West of England manage the one local authority that refuse to join, North Somerset, and in general its relationship with the other combined authorities and its surrounding communities.

We will first explain the context of urban planning in England in the past years and present the different combined authorities. Then, we will define concepts related to combined authorities as found in the literature. The core of this research dissertation will be the comparison of the devolution deals of each combined authority – the contract that explain how much devolution the government does toward them. They possess a lot of information, so we constructed a grid of comparison with specific criteria, adapted from the work of Anderson. Anderson did a lot of research on green cities. His grid of comparison let him determine which cities were the greenest, understood as the one with the means and the determination to undertake green actions. We use some of the criteria of his original grid because it will give us information about the strength, or ability to run itself of the combined authorities. (Anderson, 2016)

1. Combined authority, a new model of governance similar to the French “metropole”

Before dealing with the research, the reader needs to understand the background in which combined authorities are evolving. In this part, we will do a brief explanation of England's institution, that we will compare to the French's “millefeuille administratif”. We will then cover the history of strategic planning in the last 35 years. We will explain the abolition of Regional Agencies and the appearance of combined authorities.

The United Kingdom is composed of 4 countries: England, Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland. The 3 later have great autonomy from the central government, consequently they differ greatly in their institutions. In this report, we will be focusing on England.

1.1 England compared to French Institutional layers

The history of the region of French and England are very similar. After WWII, both country had to rebuild itself. To do so, England created the distribution act of industry 1945 (Wannop 1993) while in France there was a national planning framework. Both were strongly in favour of the development of industries. The point was that once back on track, industries could work with the government to rebuild the country.

France had planning permission in 1943, a few years before England. The government saw regional planning as a devolution tool. Therefore, in 1963, France created the DATAR (Délégation à l'aménagement du territoire et à l'action régional), with the mission to conceive and apply regional planning (Coppin, 2001).

England's first law about planning was the Town and Country Planning act in 1947, that stipulated that planning permission had to be signed before a development could happen (Wannop 1993). It gave local authorities the power to decide if areas were to be built or not. However, the government in the 1950s was antipathetic to regional planning. Therefore, up until the 1970s, regional planning was only composed of a few advisory documents, mostly studies instead of actual planning.

For both England and in France, the 1970's represented the high tide of regional planning, before its decline in the 80's because of the economic crisis. Their response to the crisis, however, was different.

French government oscillated between centralisation and devolution, but it decentralised a lot more than England. France believed in regional planning, so it devolved powers toward the regions (Coppin, 2001). Notably, it had a politic of pole of cluster ('pole de compétitivité'), in order to enhance competitiveness of industries between the different regions. Instead England preferred strategic planning over regional planning (Wannop 1993), it may be linked to the fact that they had a Keynesianism government with a free market economy.

Where France has region with financial tools and power in skills, transport, business, energy, ect. English region only had Regional Agencies with power over planning. What's more, those were abolished in 2010 (Boddy & Hickman, 2013), which left a gap in the administrative layers of England.

After 2010, Districts and counties were the only two subnational government of England. Both have a rather local scale, they could be associated to the French Commune and Department.

Even if there are no administrative layers similar to French's region: standing between local and central government, the cities are much bigger than theirs French's relatives. They have an average population of 139,480 on 562 km², against 1,720 inhabitants on 13 km² for French's cities (Demazière, 2017), so the cities are more able to have strategic planning.

Figure 1: Table of comparison of english and french institutional levels

England institutional layers	French institutional layers
Parishes/district	Commune
	Municipal grouping
Combined Authorities	Métropole
County	Département
	Région
UK	France

Adapted from Geppert, 2017

Geppert explain in her paper "Spatial Planning in the Rescaled Metropolitan" that French institutional design could be compared to a millefeuille: "the more layers of puff pastry, the more cream, the better the cake, until it gets indigestible". Relations between levels are complex, with overlapping competencies and competing policies (Geppert, 2017).

France has three levels of subnational government: municipalities, counties and regions. In addition, France have municipal groupings, which have become quasi-subnational governments. They are able to collect taxes and have financial levels and decisional integration, like combined authorities, but they are a lot smaller and have less power devolved. Even though, the trend is to devolve more and more power toward the municipal groupings and the region.

English institutional layers are less complex. The Parishes are negligible, so it only has two layers: the district and the counties. However, the governance is chaotic, some counties share powers with their districts and some don't. The institutional layer is managed with a case by case approach.

1.1.1 Parish, the exception

Parishes are only important in the rural areas. They could be considered as the smallest institutional layer, but do not cover the whole of England: only about a third of England's population live in a parish. A Parish's size range from a small village of a few hundred inhabitants to a medium-sized city. The range of their powers is rather short. It includes community transport, the ability to give grants to the local associations and the maintenance of local roads and public buildings (Department for Communities and Local Government, 2010).

1.1.2 Counties, a chaotic geography

Counties are used for administrative, geographical, cultural or political demarcation. They have a chaotic geography: they can be divided into 83 metropolitan and non-metropolitan counties, or 48 ceremonial counties. They either possess a single tier government: unitary authorities, or two-tiers government: divided between districts and counties, with sharing of governance. A combined authority is allowed to include districts from different counties, but it cannot cut apart a district.

There were 6 major counties between 1972 and 1986. They had a two-tier structure, with powers divided between the metropolitan districts and the metropolitan county. They were abolished so their authorities disappeared, but the counties themselves remained. the 6 ex-metropolitan counties are now part of different combined authority. (Baker & Wong, 2013)

1.1.3 District, smallest subdivision of England

Districts cover the whole of England, they are the smallest layer of institutions. There are currently 2 different types of districts, with 2 special cases: London boroughs and metropolitan district (Department for Communities and Local Government , no date a).

- Non-metropolitan districts, also called shire district, are the most common type of district. They usually have a population from 20,000 to 200,000. Local government is divided between the county council and the council of the different districts of the county. The county council has power over education, social service, libraries, main roads, public transportation, policing and fire service, trading standards, waste and strategic planning.
District work as a complementary institutional layer. They have very local powers: local planning, local road, council housing, local markets and fairs, leisure services and parks... but also more global responsibility such as environmental health, recycling, and tourism (Department for Communities and Local Government , no date a).
- Unitary authorities are a fusion of district and counties. They were created out of non-metropolitan's districts with the goal of gaining efficiency. They are usually located in medium or large cities, or in counties that have only one district. Unitary authorities do not divide powers between council and districts: they have one council who is responsible for competences from both counties and districts.
Since the abolition of both the metropolitan county councils and the Greater London Council, Metropolitan districts and London borough are effectively unitary authorities as well. (Department for Communities and Local Government , no date a).

In our research dissertation, we will study the unitary authority of Cornwall because it has a devolution deal, and we will compare it to the combined authority.

1.2 Combined authorities are part of the history of strategic planning

1.2.1 History of regional devolution

Strategic planning has long been at the heart of the post-war statutory planning framework across the United Kingdom. From 1968, this took the form of 'structure plans' prepared by county councils or lower tier local authorities working together to produce joint spatial plans.

The 80's was Thatcher's era, it was strongly market-oriented, where there was no regional planning at all. There was a change of course in the 1990s: regions were widely seen as an appropriate scale for policy intervention and regulation in Britain. Regional government offices and regional policy frameworks were established to pursue regional planning and development agendas. (Baker & Wong, 2013).

A report from Parkinson in 2004 stated that as far as European cities were concerned, England cities underperform (Parkinson, 2004). Therefore, metropolisation was seen both as an alternative to the Regional Assemblies and as a way to devolve powers to cities, so they could have more international value. Consequently, central government did a shift of control: they empowered local communities and local government (Conservatives, 2009). It led to the apparition of city-region.

The New Local Government Network - a think tank that seeks to transform public services, revitalise local political leadership, and empower local communities - proposed the creation of four large city-regions for Birmingham, Leeds, Liverpool and Greater Manchester (New Local Government Network, 2005). Other city regions followed. The government started to devolve power to them until 2010, when the central government removed regional government and with it, all specifically larger-than-local strategic component within the English planning system.

Boddy and Hickman explain in their article 'The demise of strategic planning?', they explain that the loss of region was seen as dramatic and the removal of the regional tier, so the abolition of regional planning was even more so. The gap between national and local levels was then huge. With on one side the local planning authorities on the other the Secretary of State. The most short-term impact was that it stops schemes coming forward. It meant less housing, less growth, and subsequently fewer investments for major development. (Boddy and Hickman, 2013).

The government later created some type of documents for sub-regional scales, like business-led Local Enterprise Partnership, that could be seen as a sort of replacement of Regional Development Agencies (Boddy and Hickman, 2013). And a few years after, it created a new governmental mode called combined authority, with the first one being Greater Manchester. Devolution began toward combined authorities through devolution deals.

The Government's approach is set out in the National Planning Policy Framework of 2012. Strategic issues are to be set out in local plans, and local authorities have a 'duty to cooperate', in order to meet development needs that cannot be done within local administrative boundaries. (Community and local government, 2012). However, the duty to cooperate can be legally overpass: it asked for the local authorities to meet regularly to speak about their project, however, they are not required to sort out any type of agreement (Department for Communities and Local Government, no date b).

Local authorities felt confident in their abilities to work together. They produced joint local plans that cover large areas. The 4 districts that composed the functional area with Bristol as the city region joined up to produce a joint spatial plan and a transport plan for a 15 years period. The first deal with areas where dwelling will be constructed and tools to help with the development, the second deal with the strategy for transport, investments on transport infrastructure, and implementation proposals. Joint local plan filled the void created by the disappearance of regional planning (Boddy and Hickman, 2013). In their papers 'The Delusion of Strategic Spatial Planning', by Baker and Wong, they explain that the government approach was seen as a major shift from the previous "top-down, target-driven approach" of spatial planning to a more "local oriented style" (Baker & Wong, 2013).

1.2.2 Apparition of Combined Authorities

Combined authority is a devolution tool

England is one of the most centralized countries in the world, especially since the abolition of Regional Agencies. Decisions are taken in Westminster that affects areas far away from London. Therefore, combined authority is a way to devolve powers to these areas, so they can govern themselves.

The UK government first tried to give more power to regional government: Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland now have a legislative assembly or parliament. After the English Regional Government refusal, United Kingdom decided to empower the great cities or city region.

It is easier to empower combined authorities, because they hypothetically cover a functional area and by definition, have more means than cities (Townsend's, nd). Consequently, Combined authorities were introduced in England outside Greater London by the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 (Department for Communities and Local Government, 2009).

The devolution to the combined authorities is detailed in devolution deal. They are supposed to evolve over time. They all share some characteristics: skills, economic growth, transport... (devolution deal of Bristol, 2016)

Map of the combined authorities



Carte 1 [2017]

Structure of a combined authority

Combined authorities are a legal structure made up of local authorities. They can take functions transferred to them by an Order, or any functions that its constituent authorities agree to give away. Their boundaries can cover part of counties, but never part of districts. The combined authorities are always created with the agreement of the Secretary of State (Sandford, 2017).

The executive of a combined authority consists of one representative of each constituent authorities, there can be representative of the Local Enterprise Partnership, and a directly-elected mayor if there is one (Sandford, 2017).

Number of combined authorities created up to date

Nine combined authorities have been established so far, of which six have in place directly elected mayors. These combined authorities are, from the oldest to the newest: Greater Manchester, Liverpool City Region, Tees Valley, West Midlands, West of England and Cambridgeshire / Peterborough.

Two combined authorities don't have any devolution deals.

- West Yorkshire combined authority have decided to work on a devolution deal with the government in august 2017. It is still in a work stage. (BBC, 2017)
- North-east had disagreements over the devolution deal it was supposed to sign in 2016, the problem was funding and uncertainty caused by the Brexit. The deal was voted down by local authorities in Gateshead, Sunderland, Durham and South Tyneside. However, another devolution deal is in work stage.

Greater Lincolnshire combined authority and Norfolk and Suffolk combined authority had their devolution deal refused by the secretary of State and consequently the creation of their combined authorities was rejected as well by the Secretary of State (BBC, 2016a) (BBC, 2016b).

Metro-mayor

During 2014-16, the Government negotiated devolution deals via the creation of mayoral combined authorities. It was done via Orders under the 2009 and 2016 Acts, specifying the functions, powers and constitutional structures of individual combined authorities (Sandford, 2017). Combined authority who wanted a metro-mayor could also elect one.

The metro-mayor is to provide leadership. He/she has ultimate responsibility for the power that was devolved. Its usual range of powers are mainly over transport and planning. He/she exercise his/her functions autonomously, though he/she and the cabinet are scrutinised by a Scrutiny Pool.

The mayor has to consult the combined authority on his/her strategy, which may be rejected if two-thirds of the members agree to do so. However, he/she has a veto vote on any decision of the combined authority.

As the combined authority is informally supposed to replace Regional Agencies, for which the local authorities had created Local Enterprise Partnership, the mayor can be asked to be a member of it. (devolution deal of Bristol, 2016)

The first combined authority was Greater Manchester Combined Authorities, in 2011. It was a few years earlier than the others thanks to its very close relationship with the government. In fact, the 10 local authorities of the combined authorities had already join local plan together and had been devolved power from the government.

1.3 Description of the combined authorities and Cornwall

We studied Cornwall has part of the combined authority even though it is not one because Cornwall also signed a devolution deal with the government. Has our main source of date are those devolution deals, Cornwall will be used to compare devolution deal with combined authorities and devolution deal with others type of government.

Since the reader may not have deep knowledge of England, here are some relevant information about the different combined authorities.

The first 6 lines are the combined authorities that possess a metro-mayor, Sheffield should be the seventh one. The 6 are: Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, Greater Manchester, Liverpool, Sheffield, Tees Valley, West of England and West Midlands (Hambleton, 2016).

We also studied the devolution deal of Cornwall, a unitary authority that might have been a combined authority if its legal statutory was different. If Cornwall was a two-tier authority, where counties and district share the local government, then the district could have combined. As they were already fused in a unitary authority, there was nothing to combined.

This comparison will not include the devolution deals of North East and West Yorkshire combined authority, for the sole reason that they are none available. However, they are both working on one.

Figure 2: Key facts about combined authorities

Combined Authority	Population (2016)	Area (km ²)	Number of local authorities	Metro-Mayor	Chief executive	staff
Cambridgeshire & Peterborough	841,300	3400	7 (and 1 LEP)	James Palmer (con)	Martin Whiteley	17
Greater Manchester	2,765,100	1,280	10	Andy Burnham (lab)	Earmonn Boylan	2,074
Liverpool city region	1,524,500	720	6	Steve Rotheram (lab)	Not yet appointed	850
Tees Valley	667,500	880	5	Ben Houchen (con)	Andrew Lewis	54
West of England	909,000	900	3	Tom Bowles (con)	Not yet appointed	37
West Midland	2,833,600	900	18 (7 with voting right)	Andy Street (con)	Deborah Cadman	372
Unitary authority of Cornwall	549,500 (2015)	3500	1	Chairman = Mari May	Kate Kennally	12,429 (2014)
Sheffield	1,358,200 (2015)	1500	9 (4 with voting right)	No	No	No information
North East	1,945,400 (2015)	8500	7	No	No	No information
West Yorkshire	2,252,300 (2015)	2000	6	No	No	No information

(Calkin, 2017) (Bunn, 2017a)

The population of combined authorities are high, with an average population of 1.25 million. The smallest combined authorities are Tees Valley, Cambridge and Peterborough and the West of England, with a population close to the one of Cornwall. The area of combined authorities varies greatly, from 720 km² in Liverpool city region combined authority to 8500 km² in the North-East combined authority. The number of local authorities is also very different from one to the other, ranging from 3 for the West of England to 18 for the West-Midland. Are those scales relevant for a 'local' institutional layer?

The workforce of the combined authorities with a metro-mayor range from 17 permanent staff in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough to more than 2,000 in Greater Manchester (but it includes 1422 firefighters). Cornwall has a high number of staff because it is a unitary council. It needs salaried workers to provide services that are not in a combined authority area of competences, such as schools, social services, rubbish collection or roads

management. The average number of staff (without Greater Manchester and Cornwall), is 266. (Calkin, 2017)(Bunn, 2017a).

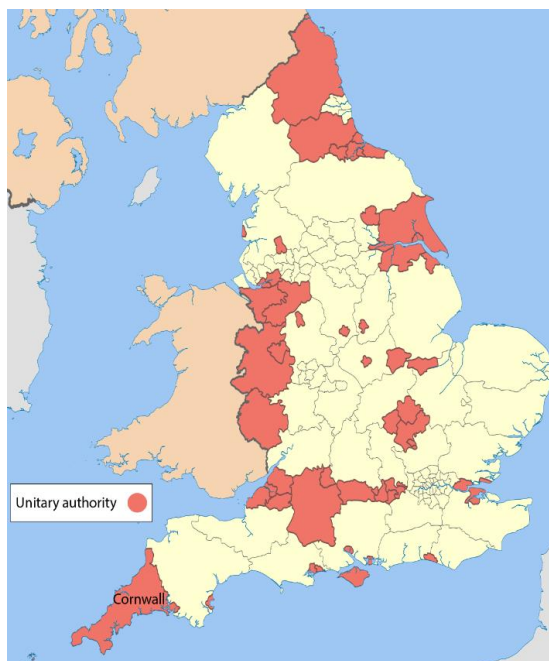
For the other combined authorities, there is no information on their staff. Overall, there is less transparency about their strategies and their inner organization, two characteristics that shows that they are less able to govern themselves than combined authority with a metro-mayor. The causality between stronger combined authority and the presence of a metro mayor could be that a mayor means more devolution from the central government, or it is because the mayor brings a huge value to the combined authority, or it could be that stronger combined authorities were more temps to accept to have a metro mayor.

Cornwall, the unitary authority

We will start by describing the unitary council of Cornwall. The local authorities of Cornwall fused in a unitary authority in 2009, even though it brought many oppositions, for administrative purposes. For Cornwall, the devolution deal was signed in 2015 by the Unitary council, the Cornwall isles of Scilly Local Enterprise Partnership and the Kernow Clinical Commission group. Cornwall is the first rural authority in the country to be offered a devolution deal (Department for Communities and Local Government, 2017).

It is strange that Cornwall signed a devolution deal, because those are made for combined authorities, big urban cities, very dense and competitive. Before the deal, every binding decisions went through Whitehall, London. One reason advanced by Cornwall is that the particular characteristics of Cornwall made it difficult for London to act in the best interest of Cornwall, since it is a very different territory than the rest of England. Thanks to the devolution deal, they will work directly with the government on a number of policies, like transport, economy, or skills. Another reason Cornwall advance in favour of the devolution deal is that now the European investment that are meant for Cornwall (438 million pounds) do go directly to the Cornwall council, without passing through Whitehall. They believe the money will be spent more locally this way.

(Carte 2)



Its administrative centre is Truro. The area's Gross Domestic Product is less than 75% of the national average, with employment being mostly low paid and seasonal. In addition, Cornwall's economy is held back by underemployment and higher than average economic inactivity. It is the only Less Developed Region in England.

Cornwall is currently facing demographic challenges. The population of Cornwall contains more residents over the age of 75 than the average for England, and it is supposed to continue to grow significantly.

In his devolution deal, the Homes and Communities Agency commits to provide a comprehensive listing of all land and property assets held within Cornwall. However, the Agency's local partners will have the possibility of

withdrawing from a transfer of responsibility if they judge the cost to be prohibitive (devolution deal Cornwall, 2015).

North-East combined authority and West Yorkshire Combined Authority, the two CA without a devolution deal

The West Yorkshire Combined Authority is composed of the councils of Bradford, Calderdale, Kirklees, Leeds, Wakefield and York councils and the Leeds City Region Enterprise Partnership (LEP). Its main goal is 'inclusive growth' to ensure the population an economic prosperity.

Both combined authorities had a devolution deal in process, but the local authorities refused to sign after the news of the Brexit. They were afraid the investments promised by the central government would be affect by the change of political landscape. They didn't give up on the idea of being a combined authority anyway. They are both negotiating a devolution deal with the government today.

North-East combined authority is composed of the councils of County Durham, Gateshead, Newcastle, North Tyneside, Northumberland, South Tyneside and Sunderland. It is the largest combined authority. Its goal is to make the North-East a location for business activity and enhance the skills of the population.

Both North-East and West-Yorkshire combined authority have not an elected mayor nor do they have a devolution deal yet, even though it is in a negotiation process for both. As the devolution deal is the main document we will use to compare the different combined authorities, we will not study these two-combined authorities further on.

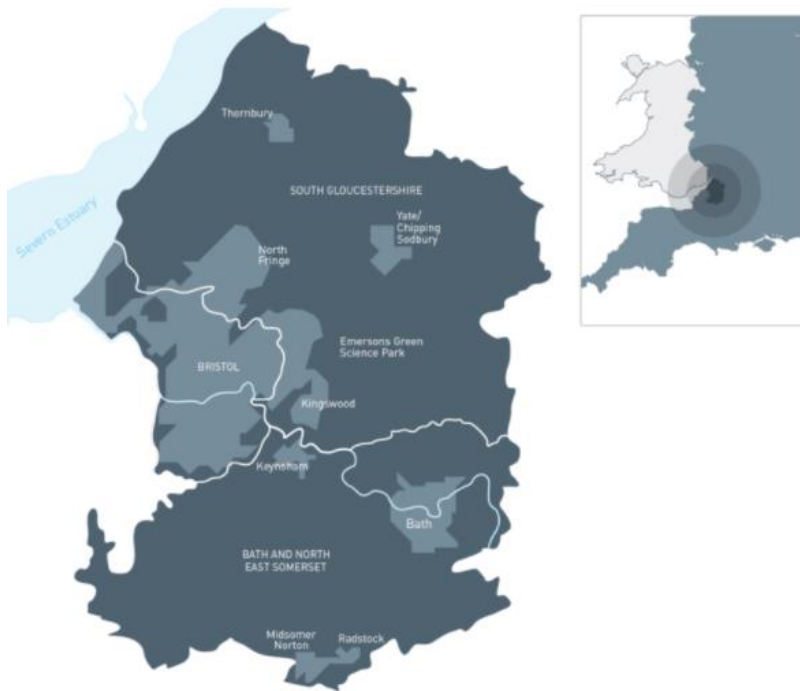
West of England combined authority

The West of England combined authority says on its website that it has an "economy worth over £31 billion a year". Its population is "over 1 million people" and it possess "over 43,000 businesses".

Bristol council is part of the West of England along with the Bath & North East Somerset Council, the North Somerset Council and the South Gloucestershire. It is one of the two combined authorities that we will focus on in this research dissertation. The West of England geography closely matches the functional economy of the city region (85 per cent of people that work here also live here).

We will focus our study on the West of England combined authority because one of the four districts of the functional area of the West of England refused to join the combined authority. It should be interesting to study its relationship with its surrounding communities.

Carte 3



This map shows the built-up area on the territory of the combined authority, in lighter grey. Bristol is the largest city by far. To the east, there is the Emerson Green Science Park, which the government commit to develop in the devolution deal of the West of England combined authority (West of England combined authority, 2016).

Bristol is the 10th largest city in Great Britain and one of the ten 'Core Cities' in the South-East of England, with a surface area of 110 km² (City of Bristol a, 2015) and an estimated population of 454,000 inhabitants. Bristol has

a rapidly growing and changing population, the population is estimated to have risen by 46,700 people (11.8%) between 2004 and 2015 (City of Bristol a, 2015). It was awarded the European Green Capital of 2015 and was named the best place to live in the UK by the Sunday Time. Bristol has an industrial and merchant history. Nowadays, it is one of the wealthiest city in England.

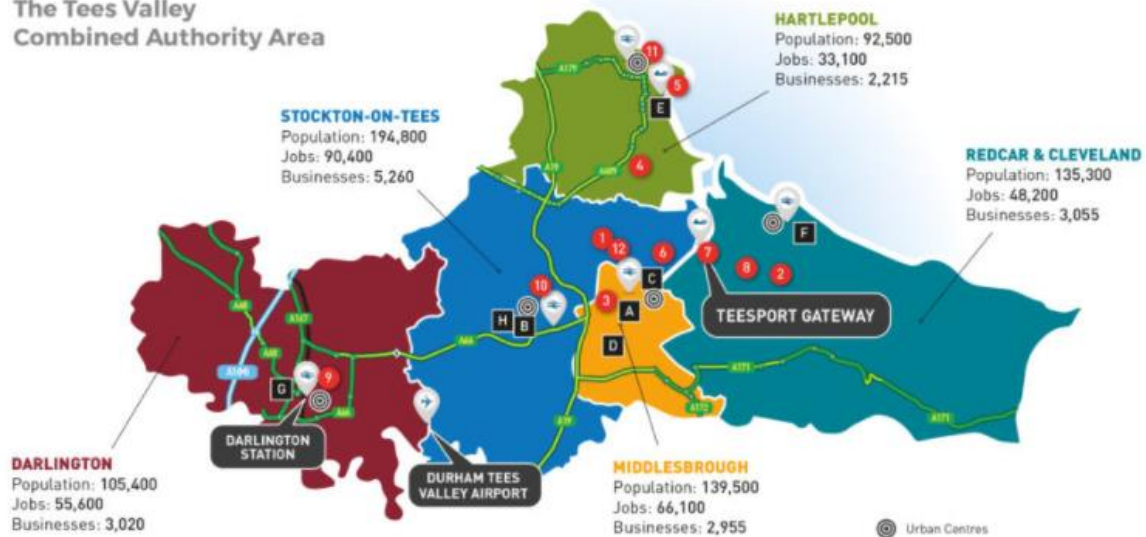
Bristol is governed by a council of 70 elected citizens and by a mayor with a four-year rotation. (City of Bristol, 2011). The mayor of Bristol is part of the committee of the combined authority, along with the mayor of the other 2 local authorities, and a member of the Local Enterprise Partnership. The metro-mayor of the combined authority is elected directly by the population.

Tees Valley

The Tees Valley combined authority is located in the North-East of England, between North Yorkshire and the County of Durham. It covers an area of 304 square miles and had a population of 667,500 people in 2016. It is strongly industrial oriented, poorer than the South of England, and less resilient against economic crisis. It will be interesting to see how it deals with its surrounding communities.

The Tees Valley combined authority is made of 5 councils: Darlington Borough Council, Hartlepool Borough Council, Middlesbrough Borough Council, Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council and Stockton-Tees Borough Council.

The Tees Valley Combined Authority Area



Carte 4

Tees valley doesn't possess one big city-region like Bristol. But it is a world-renowned industrial centre with a history of business and industry, the core of its economy. The central government is trying to support the area by creating a North Powerhouse.

The area is described as beautiful and diverse, with stunning countryside and coastline. In addition, the housing pressure is less here than in the richer part of England. Average house prices in the North East are the lowest in the UK and nearly half the national average. The Lonely Planet labelled them the "most exciting, beautiful and friendly region in England" and Stockton-On-Tees was ranked 5th in the best place to live in the UK in 2015. (tees valley combined authority website, 2017)

Key facts about the Tees Valley economy

- Total of £1.346 billion capital expenditure in Tees Valley since 2011 (£6.5 million a week)
- £174 million of investment secured through schemes like the Local Growth Fund, Investment of £764 million in Enterprise Zone projects since 2011
- Over 8,000 jobs secured since 2011
- Durham Tees Valley Airport offers flights to Aberdeen and Amsterdam, as well as specialist freight and training facilities
- Teesport handles around 500,000 TEU of container traffic a year and has unique deep sea and short sea capabilities

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough

The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority is made up of 8 organizations: Cambridge City Council, Cambridgeshire County Council, East Cambridgeshire District Council, Fenland District Council, Huntingdonshire District Council, Peterborough City Council, South Cambridgeshire District Council and the Greater Cambridge, Greater Peterborough Local Enterprise Partnership.

Most combined authorities lack in partnership with their surrounding areas. They use their resources to develop their territory. They do strategic planning. On the opposite Cambridge and Peterborough combined authority will work with the Norfolk and Suffolk area on a range of strategic issues that deliver economic growth to East-Anglia and that will include transport and skills policies. They propose to deliver 29.000 homes in the period 2016-2021. There will be a Cambridgeshire, Norfolk, Peterborough and Suffolk Joint Committee to officialise the partnership. They do regional planning, and thus fill the gap left by the regional agencies.

Cambridge is internationally renowned for its world-leading university and its global strengths in technology and life sciences. Peterborough is one of the fastest growing cities in the country, with strengths in environmental goods and services, financial services, digital, food and drink.

The population of the area contains more residents over the age of 75 than the average for England, like Cornwall, and it is expected to increase.

Sheffield City Region

The Sheffield City Region Combined Authority is made of the councils of Sheffield, Rotherham, Barnsley and Doncaster whilst also including the councils of Bassetlaw, Chesterfield, North East Derbyshire, Derbyshire Dales and Bolsover as “non-constituent” members. It means that they are govern by the combined authority but cannot vote on binding decisions.

Its Local Enterprise Partnership was part of the first wave of LEPs established in 2010 and has been one of the strongest performers since then (Sheffield city region combined authority devolution deal, 2014).

Sheffield was within the first to submit plans for its Combined Authority, which was established in April 2014. Sheffield have since made a second devolution deal, that established five Executive Boards that have delegated decision making powers from the Combined Authority.

Greater Manchester

It is the first combined authority to be formed in 2011, its devolution deal was negotiated in 2014. The city of Greater Manchester is one of the country's most successful city-regions. Home to more than 2.7 million people and with an economy bigger than that of Wales or Northern Ireland.

It is composed of ten councils : Bolton, Bury, Manchester, Oldham, Rochdale, Salford, Stockport, Tameside, Trafford and Wigan. They have worked together voluntarily for many years on issues that affect everyone in the region, like transport, regeneration, and attracting investment, before becoming a combined authority.

Greater Manchester combined authority got 4 devolution deals in all. The firsts one were mainly about devolving health and care to the combined authority, which was before dealt by the Greater Manchester city region. Greater Manchester has a very close relationship

with the government, its directly elected mayor is the only one to have received devolution over the police and the justice. The combined authority hold power over planning, business, transport, justice, health and care and education.

Its governance is close to what we might expect from a 'metropole'.

Liverpool city region combined authority

Its cabinet include the Metro Mayor, the five local authority leaders of Halton, Knowsley, Sefton, St Helens and Wirral Councils, the Liverpool City Council and the Chair of the Local Enterprise Partnership.

Liverpool, the heart of the combined authority, has been awarded the European Capital of Culture in 2008. It's devolution deal include to give a culture function to the combined authority.

The objective of its devolution deal is to ensure that it stay competitive in the Northern Powerhouse. Consequently, the deal established the Festival for Business as a vital feature for the city.

It will lead a joint asset board that was previously held by the regional agencies (abolished in 2010). It empowers urban council at the city core, rather than having a regional organization separate from councils.

West-Midland

The combined authority is formed by Birmingham City Council, City of Wolverhampton Council, Coventry City Council, Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council, Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council, Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council and Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council.

The mayor has specific areas of responsibility, including local transport and the region's 'more and better homes' agenda.

Apart from the combined authority, it plans to propose a single Strategic Economic Plan, that will replace the 4 Local Enterprise Partnerships that are on the area, but on the whole area.

2. Literature review

2.1 Definition of a Metropole

A consensus for 'larger-than-local' governance first appeared in the 1969 'Maud Report' and has gradually taken importance over time.

Lefevre defined the metropolitan government in 1998, with 3 main characteristics.

2.1.1 Three mains characteristics

A metropolitan government has 3 main characteristics: it must have a legitimacy, it must be autonomous and it must cover a relevant area (Lefèvre, 1998).

The strongest legitimacy is obtained democratically, with a direct and universal election of the leaders. Having legitimacy will let the metropolitan government's decisions be listened to, and acted upon.

A metropolis must be autonomous. The autonomy means that the metropole has the resources to govern itself. It must have financial means, but also the skills and workforce needed (Lefèvre, 1998).

The primary goal of a metropole is to have a local and adaptable power, more efficient and cost-effective than the central government (Sandford, 2016). In order to do that the metropole must cover a relevant area. The question of the ideal size of metropolises has not been answered yet. In France, metropolises are smaller than in England, with populations ranging from 200,000 to 1.8 million (except the Grand Paris) (Demazière, 2017). In UK metropole will usually have a population of around 1 to 2 million inhabitants.

In this report, we will define that a relevant area for a metropole is one that cover the economic functional area. In other word, the relevant area is the one people work and travel on a day to day basis.

2.1.2 Two theoretical models of metropolis

The different metropolises can be categorised in two theoretical models: supra and intra-communal. The main difference is in the legitimacy. The first model has a direct election, which mean a strong legitimacy, whereas in the second the leaders are elected from a pool of local mayors. Consequently, the inhabitants are not choosing the mayor, so they will not feel obliged to follow his leadership, the legitimacy is poor.

In addition, intra-communal metropole often lack in financial autonomy. Their resources usually come from the different districts under it, and from grants from central government. In both case, the metropole is an additional administrative layer, because the districts beneath still exists (Lefèvre, 1998). Lefèvre adds that in practice metropolis will be somewhere between this two models, as intra-communal will try to become more like supra-communal.

2.1.3 Are combined authority a form of metropolitan government?

Tomas work on metropolitan government in 2017 reveals that a big obstacle to the creation of metropolis is the resistance from other levels of government (in our case, districts). Metropolis tend not to cover all the necessary policies to be independent: they tend to work with 'hard' policies, such as urban planning, public transport and infrastructure, and to leave 'soft' policies like education, health and social services to other jurisdictional boundaries. They rarely have direct election. The metropolis are usually run by a group of municipal's official, and public participation is very low. Since they have poor legitimacy, they have difficulties making binding decision, which makes it even more difficult to find solutions on a metropolis scales. Metropolis are also very dependent of the national government for the revenue. Tomas explains that even Greater London is largely dependent on subsidies. (Tomas, 2017)

To go back to our topic, a combined authority is a joint effort of local authorities and central government to have a more efficient administration. It has similarities with the definition of metropole: a strong legitimacy that comes from two directions: the top thanks to contracts with the central government and the population thanks to the direct election of the combined authority mayor. It fit the supra-communal model. However, in practice the mayors are unknown by the population. The elections had participation rates of about 20%, and if asked the question, the standard Bristol citizen will answer that they don't know who the mayor of the West of England Combined Authority is (the current mayor is Tim Bowles from the conservative party).

The autonomy, needed to be a metropolis government, is granted by the devolution deal, which provide, among others things, an investment fund ranging of around 30 million per year for 30 year, and promises from the central government to work with the combined authorities on specific task like enhancing the Bristol and Bath Science park (Devolution deal of Bristol, 2016), or producing a science and innovation audit in Tees Valley (Tees Valley devolution deal, 2015). This fit the intra-communal model. In addition, the central government still has a strong presence. In fact, combined authority has numerous obligation toward the central government. They have to produce an implementation plan, their results and spending plans are scrutinised, they have to process financial risk assessment ...

Lastly, combined authorities include local authorities that were already collaborating, usually through Local Enterprise Partnership or older organizations like metropolitan county council, sub-regional plans, etc.. If the combined authority covers a relevant area, it is by luck, because its constituent local authorities were already working together on a relevant area. However, some local authorities did not agree to the devolution deal, and did not take part in the combined authority. It is the case of the West of England combined Authority, but through my interviews I heard that it wasn't an unique case.

2.2 Strategic Planning and Regional Planning

In the context, we spoke about regional and strategic planning. Here we will oppose the two terms from a literature point of view.

On one hand, regional planning is the "balancing of resources to modify standards of living, and reduce disparities in economic conditions in the different parts of the nation" (Wannop, 1993). It is essentially a devolution approach. On the other hand, strategic planning is about

resolving issues and local problems of growing metropolitan cities, enhancing their economy and social relationship, and solving political disputes (Wannop, 1993).

If both policies are implemented on a same area, a regional policy will try to equilibrate resources, whereas strategic planning will try to enhance the places that have the best potential, even though it might endanger other places. By definition, a regional policy will tend toward decentralisation and a strategic policy toward centralisation.

However strategic planning and regional planning are not exactly opposite: it is possible to have both working together at the same time, as long as they are on different scales. If regional planning is the national policy and strategic planning the local policy, then the country will try to devolve from its capital cities, and enhance local competition.

2.3 Officialization of a combined authority

2.3.1 Devolution deal

A devolution deal is a contract between local authorities and the central government with the key ambition of strengthening governance in local areas. They are negotiated in private between Government teams and local authority leaders. It is signed by the constituent local authorities. They give resources and policies to the combined authority. The resources can be either financial, like investment fund of management of taxes, or in expertise, for example the lending of resources to do a science and innovation audit - a survey of cutting-edge innovation taking place in industry and the public sector that are conducted to better inform central Government of regional strengths for potential future funding streams, and to assist with foreign direct investment (Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy, 2017).

The first devolution deal was announced by the Government and the Greater Manchester Combined Authority in November 2014 (Sandford, 2016). They are supposed to evolve over time, to receive more devolution.

The House of common explain in their briefing papers that the main impact of the devolution deals should be on EU funding, as it will pass from the local authorities to the combined authorities with the deals. The Government has stated that it will guarantee any spending of these funds that is agreed before the UK leaves the EU (Sandford, 2016).

The government recognises that strong governance is essential for the combined authorities to be able to use the devolution of powers it receive. That is why the devolution deals agreed to date have some flexibility in the power devolved. The content of the deals varies depending on the unique characteristics of the combined authority. A number of items have been made available to most areas, but each deal also contains a few unique elements (typically consisting of commitments to explore future policy options) (Sandford, 2016).

The items are as follow:

- Restructuring the further education system;
- Business support, The Work Programme;
- EU structural funds;
- Fiscal powers, Integrated transport systems;
- Planning and land use (Sandford, 2016).

Devolution only come from national level, the local authorities are not expected to give away their function without agreement. (Bristol Devolution deal, 2016)

As we will see further on, overall, all devolution deals look very similar. The structure of the devolution deal is made by the government itself, not by the combined authority, with very little room for innovation.

2.3.2 Order

The order is a legal act, under the Cities and Local Government Devolution Act 2016 (Department for Communities and Local Government, 2016). It is signed by both Houses of Parliament, in an “affirmative procedure”. They must then be approved by the Secretary of State. It is essential for the official recognition of a combined authority.

By way of example, the West of England Combined Authority Order 2016 has eight parts and six schedules. As for devolution, additional Orders for each combined authority should be drafted.

2.4 Relationship

In this research dissertation, we will focus on the relationship between the combined authority and its surrounding areas. The word relationship is a tricky, its common meaning and its general definition lack of precisions. What’s more, depending of the context, it can have different definitions.

In a mathematical point of view, it is a proposition that link some elements of an object to some elements of another object. Finally, the common sense of a relationship is the way in which two or more people or things are connected and influence each other.

Our research subject has relationships with the other combined authorities, with the government, with their surrounding areas, and with various organizations and actors.

In this research dissertation, we will analyse the connection the objects of study have. We will look at the quantity of alliances between the combined authority and its surrounding communities and we will look at the quality of their overall relationships, in regard to what is expected of a metropole.

3. Development of the Research topic

In this part, we will detail our thinking about the topic of the research dissertation.

It is commonly known that combined authorities are devolved great power and are metropolis alike. They are a joint effort from the central government and local authorities to give more power to the latest, a joint effort to have a more cost-effective administration. We will question the autonomy of the combined authority, as it is an essential characteristic of metropole.

Our angle of attack will be the devolution deals of each combined authority, as they give indications on their strength and unique characteristic. We will focus on the investment fund, the commitments they get from the central government, the selective policy, the share of power between the metro mayor and the combined authority, and the strategic planning devolved by the central government. We will also establish a scale to evaluate the strength of their network and alliances.

Another interesting question we will try to answer is the way combined authorities handle their relationships. Combined authorities are voluntary basis; any local authority who think it would benefit from being part of one can join it. Consequently, combined authorities are expected to cover the economic functional region as we defined it in the literature review. However, local authorities do not always agree to join in. The result is that combined authorities' boundary can differs from their economic functional area.

Our hypothesis for the reluctance to join a combined authority is that the relationships between combined authorities and local authorities are unequal. One local authority alone will seem weak in comparison to a group of local authorities working together. In addition, combined authorities have powers and financial help from the government. Consequently, the local authorities must fear to get crushed by the combined authorities. (Townsend, nd). As there is not a lot of available information, we will synthesize what we found in the literature and analyses by the light of the interviews we did.

4. Strengths and Weaknesses of the current combined authorities

In this part we will explain how we constructed our grid of analysis, and what data we could extract from the devolution deals.

4.1 Construction of a grid of analysis

In order to understand how the combined authorities worked, and what their differences and similarities were, we tried to compare their devolution deals. We compared Cambridge & Peterborough, Greater Manchester, Liverpool, Tees Valley, West of England, Sheffield and West Midlands, using a set of criteria from Anderson's work on green cities, that we adapted to the devolution deals.

The goal of his grid of comparison was to compare green cities. His criteria were those below:

- Historical events, because it induces policy, but it is unintentional
- Selective policy, because it establishes a standard and it is measurable
- Funding programmes and public investment, because it enables the implementation of policies
- Extra-local policy networks, because they represent opportunities to share knowledge
- Localized networking and alliances, because they mean durability
- Image and identities, because it highlights competitiveness and image and instils pride

Since we are not interested in comparing cities, we adapted his grid of comparison. We kept the criteria about selective policy, because it shows how much the devolution deal are identical to each other's and lack of flexibility.

We also kept the Funding programmes and public investment, because it shows, how much the government trusts the combined authority, and how much it is ready to devolve. It also gives relative information on the supposed strength of the combined authority. Tees Valley, who received an investment fund of 15 million per year for 30 years, is supposedly weaker than the West of England combined authority, who have double that amount.

We kept the localized networking and alliances, because it gives information about which policies the combined authorities are really interested about, and it gives relative information about their strength, depending on the coherence of their network.

We didn't keep the historical events criteria, because it gives information on if the policies were intentional or not, while we are more interested about if the policies are effective. We didn't keep extra-local policy networks criteria, because there are none. And we didn't keep the Image and identities criteria, because it isn't linked to our research topic.

The criteria I used to compare the devolutions are:

Figure 3: Table of criteria

Criteria	Definitions
Funding programmes and public investment	Financial grant for the next 30 years and promises to work for the development of the area
Selective policy	The different matters that are being devolved
Governance	Mayor election, presence of cabinet
Power of the metro-mayor	Competence the mayor has over the combined authority
Power of the combined authority	Competence the combined authority has
Spatial competence	Type of power that the combined authority and the mayor have over planning and housing
Commitment from the combined authority or local authorities	Obligations the combined authority have toward central government
Further devolution	Presence of more than one devolution deal
Localized networking and alliances	The different organisation the combined authority is working with

This set of criteria will give information on

- the extent of the collaboration between the combined authorities and the central government;
- the overall lack of flexibility of the devolution deals;
- the presence of a metro-mayor and the confusion associated with this role;
- the similarities of the combined authorities powers;
- the combined authorities that have a spatial competence
- the lack of autonomy the combined authorities have;
- the strength or ability to run itself autonomously each studied combined authority have.

4.2 Comparison of the different combined authorities

Out of the 7 combined authorities that have a devolution deal, only 2 have received further devolution. Greater Manchester was the first combined authority in 2011, and it has got 4 further devolutions. Liverpool have one further devolution, about transport, business rate, children's service, health, housing and justice. It makes it the second combined authority in the range of different policies. West Midland, West of England, Sheffield, North East and West Yorkshire are currently working with the government to have a devolution deal, be it the first, or a further one.

Governance

All combined authority with a metro mayor has a cabinet of a representative of councils and, for Cambridge & Peterborough and West Midlands, Local Enterprise Partnerships. In the other combined authorities, the LEP are non-voting members.

Sheffield and West-midland have constituent local authorities, that have a right to vote and have one representative in the cabinet, and non-constituent local authorities.

The mayor is directly elected, so he/she is not a member of any local council. In some case, he/she is requested to become a member of the Local Enterprise Partnership. He/she officially has a role of leadership and decision-taking and a veto vote on any decision. Mayor has a lot of freedom in their role. In fact, their opponents claim that the role of mayor is publicly unclear. Effectively, they made political promises that are outside their official role

Metro-mayor

The power of the combined authorities is shared between the mayor and the cabinet. There are actually 6 combined authorities with a metro-mayor, Sheffield should be the seventh one when its third devolution deal is signed.

In the devolution deals, the role of the mayor is to lead the combined authority. They have some powers over the combined authorities. The management of the transport budget, power over key roads network, the ability to franchise bus service, the spatial planning policy and housing policy - mayoral development corporations, an investment fund for housing, sometime joint asset boards... The major difference between the 6 mayors is that the one of Greater Manchester is also the police and crime commissioner.

Despite the devolution they received, which are written in black on white on the devolution deals, the different mayors took actions out of their role, once elected (Calkin, 2017). For example, Greater Manchester, West Midlands and Liverpool mayor have taken actions to tackle homelessness, even though it is not a mayoral responsibility or one over which they have direct powers. Nevertheless, homeless is a problem in these territories, and these mayors have made political promises to tackle the issue once elected (Calkin, 2017). Their opponents are correct to said that the role of the metro-mayor is unclear.

Significant achievements of the metro mayors

The mayors have been building relationships and alliances since their election. The West of England mayor and the Tees Valleys mayor have met with 4 ministers in their first 100 days of being elected. Peterborough and Cambridge's mayors have meet 4 secretaries and 2 ministers in the same amount of time. The most popular mayor is the one of West-Midland. He has had twice as many official meeting with ministers as any others elected mayors in their first 100 days in office (Calkin, 2017).

Calkin state in his article about the metro-mayor that some had played more important role than other: "Greater Manchester and the west midland (mayor's) have demonstrated their potential is huge." (Calkin, 2017)

Another article of Calkin stated the "most significant achievement" of each mayor. It says that the West of England mayor has launched a regional strategy in business, transport, housing and universities. Liverpool actions have been weaker than the one of West of England, mostly because Liverpool city region doesn't have a spatial planning policy. Liverpool has been trying to tackle homelessness with a housing first approach. However, since it doesn't have a spatial planning policy, thus cannot plan the building of new houses,

its approach is to locate the homeless in community houses, and to use the Compulsory Purchase Order to increase the number of shelters (Blood & al, 2017). A rather expensive approach.

The Tees Valley mayor has created the only mayoral development corporation outside London to redevelop the SSI steelworks site in Redcar.

West Midland mayor has negotiated a second devolution deal with the central government. The article says that it is not surprising given the considerable amount of political capital the government invest in his mayoral campaign (Calkin, 2017). Cambridge and Peterborough mayors has delivered a plan for 253 homes, thanks to its spatial planning policy.

Selective policy

The government have fixed the different policies devolution deal can have (Sandford, 2016), with little allowance for innovation. In fact, there are a number of similarities in the policy of the devolution deals agreed to a date.

Common policies:

- **Economic growth:** Every combined authority worked closely with the United Kingdom Trade and Investment agency, which help the foreign enterprise to settle in the United Kingdom. For example, Tees Valley established an employment support system and works with the government to reduce the impact of the industrial closure.
- **Skills funding:** adult and child's skill funding
- **Transport budgets and buses:** franchise bus service, key road network
- **Health and care:** Work with the government to improve the integration of health and care. They produced a business plan with the Greater Manchester Clinical Group and worked with the government to establish a Life chance investment fund for the troubled families. On a lesser scale, West of England also tackles this issue by producing a National work and Health programme, to help the unemployed with disabilities. The Greater Manchester combined authority has received the control of the 6 billion budget for health and care, that had been devolved to Manchester city. (Greater Manchester, Cambridge & Peterborough, Cornwall, Liverpool)

These policies, except Health and care, are present in every devolution deals. It represents a broad range of policies overall but doesn't let much flexibility.

Some combined authorities also have a few policies that are not on the available policy item made by the government. They must have been from special agreements during the devolution deal negotiation. Ms Hickman said in our interviews that negotiations are made behind closed doors by the leader of local authorities and government representative. It would be very interesting to get information about what is said during these negotiations.

Here is an exhaustive list of the policies that were agreed in a devolution deal even though they weren't part of the authorised list made by the government.

Special policies:

- **Culture:** The Department of Culture and the Arts Council England will work with the combined to enhance the heritage of the combined authority (Tees Valley, Liverpool, Cornwall).
Liverpool combined authority have this policy because it was elected European Capital of Culture in 2008. Tees valley, on the other hand could have taken this policy to enhance its attractiveness. The North-East of England has the lowest population growth of UK, with + 6,000 people in 2015, it is so in part because it suffered from the economic crisis of 2007, but also because of its image. It is seen as an industrial place, and even though it as very cheap housing, people do not move there. (*Population Estimates, 2015*).
- **Energy and Environment:** Work with the government on a low-carbon strategy with the Department of Energy and Climate Change. (West of England, Tees Valley, Liverpool, Cornwall, Greater Manchester).
Sheffield, Cambridge and Peterborough and West-Midland don't have an energy policy, maybe because they are the biggest combined authorities in local authorities, respectively 9,7, and 18. Producing a plan for them is harder because of the sheer size of their territory.
Tees valley and West of England have respectively 5 and 3 local authorities, so a much smaller territory. The other 2 combined authorities with an energy policy are Liverpool, who is also a rather small combined authority, with 6 local authorities, and Greater Manchester, the exemption that confirm the rule.
- **Justice:** Work with the government to strengthen the joined up local criminal justice services. (Greater Manchester, Liverpool)
- **Public estate:** A government agency will help with the management of the public estate, which in Cornwall is part locally owned and part nationally owned. (Cornwall)
- **Community safety:** Work with Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub, Victims' Hub, Troubled Families programme and the government to reduce domestic violence, child sexual abuse and elderly violence in Cambridge & Peterborough. (Cambridge & Peterborough)
- **Public reform:** Work with the government on prisons, hospitals, drug treatment facilities, etc. with the government in West Midland. (West Midland)

Overall there are a lot of policies, covering a very large part of running a local government. However, the policies are all treated in the same way: a partnership with the government to look at the issue and draft a plan. It doesn't let much room for local initiative.

Spatial policy

The spatial policy is a very important one. It means the combined authorities can plan over the border of the local authorities. It let the combined authority a chance to do some strategic planning that can be relevant for the whole combined authority.

Spatial planning really is an important tool for the local authority, difficult to give away to the metro-mayor. That might explain why only 4 devolution deals have spatial policies : it must have brought too many oppositions. 2 of the 4 are the last combined authority to be formed (Calkin, 2017), so maybe we will see more spatial planning policies in the new combined authorities.

Even though the 6 combined authority that has a metro mayor have one or more Mayoral Development Corporation, agencies lead by the metro-mayor that seek to prioritise economic development and housing on the under-developed land. Some combined authorities have additional spatial tools, like regional framework, brownfield register, or compulsory purchase order, whereas Cornwall doesn't have any spatial competence.

The Greater Manchester combined authority has a Land Commission (as Liverpool and Cambridge & Peterborough) that oversee the utilisation of the public sector estate, and create a database of all public sector land to deliver more than 10,000 new homes per annum. The Land Commission is jointly chaired by the Mayor and Housing Minister, and will include Ministers from key land-owning Departments. For Greater Manchester and Cambridge & Peterborough combined authorities, which have investment fund for housing, this tool is efficient to provide housing, because it has both a fund and a partnership with the government.

Power of the combined authority

What doesn't fall in the hand of the metro-mayor is for the cabinet. They all manage their investment fund over 30 years and an adult education budget and all the policies that are not planning or transport.

Funding programmes and public investment

Every combined devolution deals involve an investment fund for 30 years from the central government. It varies between 15 million per year for the Tees Valley combined authority to 36.5 million per year for the West Midlands combined authority. This investment fund is supposed to help the combined authority to have the means to run themselves. Alongside the fund, they have the authorization to raise a levy, to retain business rate and to borrow money. If the combined authority has a metro-mayor, it will be able to raise a precept on constituent authorities' council tax bills (Sandford, 2017).

Apart from the investment fund, the devolution deals sometimes have other funding programmes and public investment from the central government.

In **West of England** combined authority, the government commits to 30 million investment fund per year for 30 years and to working with the West of England Combined Authority and local partners to realise the economic potential of the Bristol and Bath Science Park and the Junction 21 Enterprise Area Food Enterprise Zone.

In **Cambridgeshire and Peterborough** combined authority, it commits to an investment fund of 20 million per year for 30 years, for a £70 million investment over five years for housing for Cambridge and a £100 million investment on housing and infrastructure for greater Cambridge. The government will also collaborate with the combined authority to improve the Digital Infrastructure.

In **Cornwall**, there is no investment fund for 30 years, but there is still a commitment from the government. Cornwall will, with the devolution deal, got a 16 million investment to build a new road in Camborne. In addition, the Homes and Communities Agency will list all land and property assets held within Cornwall by the Agency, in order to help develop new dwellings.

All the combined authorities stated next will have one shared commitment: help to achieve a Science and Innovation Audit.

In **Liverpool city region** combined authority, the government commits to a 30 million investment fund per year for 30 years and to improve the culture, with a business model for the museums; the transport infrastructure, with a Special Rail Grant Settlement for the Mersey rail network.

In **Tees Valley** combined authority, it commits to a 15 million investment fund per year for 30 years and to supporting the economic growth with 'Her Majesty revenue.

In **West Midlands** combined authority, it commits to a 36.5 million investment fund per year for 30 years and to support the Growth Strategy and Midlands Engine for Growth, to fund Curzon Street Enterprise zone and the east side metro extension.

In **Greater Manchester** combined authority, it commits to funding a 300 million for a housing investment, an investment fund of 30 million per year for 30 years. The investment fund will enable the Trafford Metro link extension to be funded

In **Sheffield city region** combined authority, the government commit to an investment fund of 30 million over 30 years. It also commits on the creation of a Northern Powerhouse; the development of Phase Two of the HS2 network, a high-speed railway, and collaboration on a Trans North rail enhancement and Trans Pennine Road Tunnel and to give contact of embassy and consulate.

Cornwall, which is not a combined authority, have not received an investment fund over 30 years. Therefore, it is advantageous for the local authority to form one, at least in a financial point of view.

In every devolution deal, the government commit itself to invest in their industries, infrastructure, culture and their international recognition. The deal with the most devolution is the one of Greater Manchester Combined authority. It has the highest investment fund, with 300 million for housing. Next is Cambridge & Peterborough, with investment half as big for housing, Cambridge has a history of working with the government.

The devolution deals have a lot of agreement of partnership with different governmental agencies and departments to enhance the industries, the infrastructure, the culture and the international recognition. The commitment sometimes seems more like partnerships between government and combined authority than anything else. Having a working relationship with the government is an efficient way of adapting the devolution deal to the needs of the territory. It permits to have a focus on railway, powerhouse, or a science and innovation audit, etc.

Commitment

The devolution deal also asks for a commitment from the combined authority. Every step, every action they do as to be scrutinised and evaluate by the government. They have to produce an implementation framework for the investment fund, to do a financial risk assessment, and a Gateway assessment.

We really see the difference between the combined authorities and the others, Cornwall commitments don't imply to be scrutinised by the government. It has to meet the public target in housing, to implement a bus system ticket that covers the whole county, to deliver jobs and a low carbon enterprise zone and to do a full review of their land holding. The government ask Cornwall for the result, and he let them free in the way to get them.

Partnerships

In the devolution deal, the combined authorities state when they are collaborating with another organisation on an action. Some are collaborating a lot more than others, some don't have any partnership in functions they got devolution in. Studying the network of the combined authority gives information about the strength, and the extent of their network. Consequently, on their ability to have impactful actions. I tried to give a value to the different combined authorities based on the quantity and quality of their network.

West of England combined authority is soaring, with one of the fastest growing population of England.

In its economic growth policy, it is working with

- Department for Business, Innovation and Skills and Department for Work and Pension;
- United Kingdom of Trade and Investment, it helps the foreign enterprise to settle in UK;
- Careers and Enterprise Company, connects student and employers;
- National Careers Service, provides information, advice and guidance;
- Foreign Direct Investment survey, collects financial information relating to direct investment in the UK by enterprises located abroad;
- Local Enterprise Partnership of West of England; which manages the West of England Growth Hub;

In its transport policy, it is working with the Department for Transport and the Network Rail, the company managing the trains network, and with the Department of Energy and Climate on its energy policy. It also has partnerships with the regional public bodies of South Wales and Highways England, two of its neighbours.

To sum up, West of England has an intense focus on its economic growth, with 7 partnerships with various organizations, mostly governmental agencies. However, it does not have partnerships on any other of its policies, (Skills, Spatial Planning) it just states that the government will work with them. West of England is not isolated from its closest neighbours, which is a positive sign, but it has no link with the others combined authorities. In a meeting with the combined authority, I learned that their relationship with their surrounding communities was only informal. Overall it has a weak network.

Tees Valley combined authority is located in the North, it suffers from de-industrialisation and really needs a strong economic growth policy.

In its economic growth policy, it is working with.

- Department for Business Innovation and Skills and Department for Work and Pension;
- Local Enterprise Partnership of Tees valley;
- United Kingdom of Trade and Investment, it helps the foreign enterprise to settle in UK;
- SSI Task Force Jobs and Skills Fund, that collects and advertises job offers;

In its transport policy, it is working with the

- Department of Transport;
- Rail North, an organization that brings together local transport authorities across the North of England and that manages two rail franchises, TransPennine Express and Northern Rail.
- It is a new member of Transport for the North.

Tees Valley is also working with the Department for Education, to improve the skills of the population, and with the Arts Council England and Her Majesty Revenue and Custom to enhance the culture of the territory; with the Department of Climate and Energy on its energy policy.

Tees Valley is not working with any other local authorities, and have a lesser network in business. Nevertheless, it has a strong network, answering each of his policies.

Liverpool city region combined authority is located in the North-West of England

Warrington and West Lancashire Councils, two neighbours, are Associate Members of the Combined Authority.

In its economic growth, it is working with the

- Department for work and pension;
- Liverpool Local Enterprise Partnership, which manage the Liverpool city region's Growth Hub
- Careers and Enterprise Company, connect student and employers;
- National Careers Service, which provide information, advice and guidance;
- United Kingdom of Trade and Investment, it help the foreign enterprise to settle in UK;
- International Festival for Business;
- Local Enterprise Partnership

In its health and care policy it is working with the Clinical commissioning group and the NHS England, which oversees the budget, planning, delivery and day-to-day operations, to implement health and care service.

It also works with Her Majesty Revenue and Custom for its culture policy; with the Office of Gaz and the Department of Energy and Climate change for its energy policy; with the Local colleges and providers and the Regional School Commissioner on its skill policy; with Merseyside and Cheshire Police and Crime Commissioners on its justice policy.

To sum up, Liverpool has strong partnerships and alliances for its economic growth and also has a network in health service, culture and energy, but not with any transport organization. It has include two communities as associated member of the combined authority. Overall it has the tools to run itself in an efficient way.

West Midland is a very big combined authority, with 18 local authorities and 4 Local Enterprise Partnerships.

For its economic growth, it has partnerships with the

- Department for work and pension;
- United Kingdom of Trade and Investment, it help the foreign enterprise to settle in UK;
- Automotive Investment Organisation, it works with overseas investors to increase investment into UK Automotive;
- Local Enterprise Partnership

On its transport competence, it will work with the

- Department for Transport;
- High Speed 2 Ltd, the company responsible for developing the high speed rail network;

- Highways England, the company managing the motorway and major roads and Network Rail, the company managing the trains network.

On its health and care policy, it will work with the

- local Clinical Commissioning Groups
- NHS England
- the Work and Health Unit nationally to enable timely health-based support.

the West Midland combined authority is working with the Government Property Unit, to have more cost-effective service, for its public service reform policy; with the local college and providers and the Regional School Commissioner for its skill policy.

West Midland doesn't have a spatial planning competence, but it is working with the Homes and Communities Agency, a governmental agencies who fund affordable housing and help create communities.

Overall, West Midland combined authority has a strong network, with partnerships in every policy. It as a weaker network in the economy than average, with only 4 partnerships, but it has 3 partnership in transport, as Tees Valley combined authority, which is a lot. But if feel like Tees Valley have better partnerships, because it is a new member of Transport for the North, so it should be more able to take actions.

Again there is no relationship with the surrounding communities or with the other combined authority stated in the devolution deal.

Greater Manchester combined authority is the oldest one and the one with the most devolution deals. It is a bit of a special case, its first devolution deal was made before the government gave an official structure to the contract, so it focused on the health and care implementation but didn't have devolution in a lot of areas. The for others devolution deals it received gave it the usual policies: skills, economic growth, transport, ... But it also has Justice, health and care and Spatial planning policies.

In its economic growth policy, it is working with the

- Departments for Business, Innovation and Skills, Department for Work and Pensions;
- United Kingdom of Trade and Investment, it help the foreign enterprise to settle in UK;
- Greater Manchester Local Enterprise Partnership, Growth Hub

It is working on its housing plan with the Homes and Communities Agency for its spatial planning policy; with the Departments of Education and local schools on its skill policy; with the Department of Energy and Climate Change on its energy policy; with the Department for Transport and the Rail industry on its transport policy; with Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service and the Community Rehabilitation Company on its justice policy;

In its health and care policy, it is working with the

- Greater Manchester Clinical Commissioning Groups;
- Public Health, an international, multidisciplinary peer-reviewed journal;
- Local Authority social care, Greater Manchester combined authority has control of the budget of health and social care.

To sum up, the combined authority doesn't have a good economic network, but it have a few partnerships on each of his policies. It is a coherent and strong network. However, there are still no partnerships with its neighbours.

Peterborough and Cambridge have an joint collaboration with the Norfolk and Suffolk areas. It is only combined authority to have a partnership with another territory written down in its devolution deal.

In its economic growth policy, it is working with the

- Department for work and pensions;
- United Kingdom of Trade and Investment, it help the foreign enterprise to settle in UK;
- Greater Cambridge Greater Peterborough Local Enterprise Partnership.

It is working on its health and care policy with

- Clinical Commissioning Group;
- NHS, which oversees the budget, planning, delivery and day-to-day operations to implement health and care service;
- England and the Health and Work Unit;

It is working with the West Anglia Main Line Task Force, an organization that improve the West Anglia main line and the Department for Transport on its transport policy; with the Homes and Communities Agency and the Community Land Trusts on its spatial planning policy ; with Regional Schools Commissioner, local education stakeholders on its skill policy; with the Multi-agency Safeguarding Hub and the Victims' Hub on its community safety policy.

Overall, Peterborough and Cambridge combined authority have a coherent network, with partnerships for each of its policies. The area is which it stands out, compared to the others, is his health and care policy, with 3 partnerships. Even though it hasn't as much devolution as Greater Manchester (who has complete control on Health and Care), it as a strong network that will probably help it achieve a strong health and care policy.

Sheffield combined authority have two devolution deals, the third one was refused because of political reason.

In its economic growth policy, it is working with the

- Department for work and pension;
- United Kingdom of Trade and Investment, it help the foreign enterprise to settle in UK;
- Careers and Enterprise Company, connect student and employers;
- National Careers Service, provide information, advice and guidance;
- Foreign Direct Investment survey, collects financial information relating to direct investment in the UK by enterprises located abroad;
- HMRC, to assist with understanding the City Region's export market;
- Smart Specialisation Advisory Hub, which does national and local research and Innovation;
- Skills Bank, invests in skills and expertise to drive business growth;
- Bank for international settlement.

In its skill policy, it is working with the

- Regional Schools Commissioner;
- Local colleges and providers;
- Education Funding Agency;
- Skill funding agency.

To sum up, a very strong network of both skills and economic growth. It has the biggest network in the economy, with 9 different organisations. It doesn't have any partnership in transport, nor in spatial planning, however. It seems Sheffield is a very specialised combined authority, but how can it run itself properly without partnerships and alliance in every area? Overall it is a weak network.

As an element of comparison, I will also value the network of **Cornwall**, a unitary authority.

In its economic growth policy, it is working with the

- Department for Work and Pensions;
- Aerohub Enterprise Zone;
- Innovate UK, drive growth by working with companies to de-risk, enable and support innovation;
- Enterprise Europe Network
- Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Local Enterprise Partnership, Cornwall and Isles of Scilly's Growth Hub.

It is working with the Government Property Unit and the Homes and Communities Agency on its public estate policy; with Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs and Historic England on its culture policy; with NHS England and the Health Local Estates Forum on its health and care policy; with Skills Bank initiative and the STEM (science technology engineering and mathematics) ambassador school on its skills policy; with the Department of Energy and Climate on its energy policy. It has no partnership on its transport policy.

Cornwall has a strong network in the economy and has some partnerships on each of its policies. In a network point of view, Cornwall is as strong as some combined authorities. The difference is that it has less devolution about each of his policies, so it will not be able to do as much as the combined authority.

Still, it shows that the creation of a combined authority is not essential to receive devolution and to be able to run itself efficiently.

Conclusion

I will give a rank of 'strength' to each combined authority, based on their ability to be autonomous. the strongest is the Greater Manchester combined authority, because it received a lot of devolution and has both a coherent network and a lot of public investment from the government and run in a completely autonomous way its health and care policy.

The second one is the Cambridge & Peterborough combined authority, because it received more public investment than the others (except Greater Manchester) and have received great devolution in health and care.

The third one is the West of England, because it has a strong network in economy and in transport and because it is one of the richest area of England. However, it lacks partnerships in skills and in spatial planning.

The fourth one is Sheffield, because it has a strong network in skills and the biggest network in economy. However, it doesn't have any partnerships in transport nor in spatial planning. What's more, it doesn't have a metro mayor yet, which mean a reduce access to the ministers and Secretary of State.

The fact that those four combined authorities have a spatial planning policies make them very similar to what a metropolis should have in autonomy.

The fifth one is Liverpool, thanks to its second devolution deal, that increased his range of policies. It has a coherent network as well, with partnerships in each of his policies, however, it doesn't have a spatial planning policy which shows that it isn't ready to govern itself on the long run.

The sixth is West-Midland, the largest in local authorities. I give it this rank because even if it as really strong networks, with partnerships in every organisation, and devolution in health and care, it also has a policy to improve the efficiency of his public service, which means that it is so inefficient that the government will reorganise it. It will add stress on a combined authority already struggling with governing a very big territory. In addition, it doesn't have a spatial planning policy, which we believe is essential for the autonomy of the combined authority.

The last one is the Tees Valley, even if it has a coherent network. The investment fund it received from the government is very low, which mean that it might not have a lot of potential for growth, or it might be because the government don't trust it to be able to govern itself. In both case, it is a negative sign. What's more, it is one of the poorer area of England, where the government commit to improve the economy.

Cornwall is far behind the combined authority in autonomy. First because it is the poorer area of England, then because its devolution is unclear. Without any investment from the government, and only small promise of help (mostly in the housing policy). The positive sign is that it has a coherent network.

4.3 Reluctance from local authorities to form combined authorities

There is no devolution

The article of Hambleton on the super-centralisation of the English state explains that the UK is planning for the state when the globalising economy requires planning for the cities. The turning point may have been with the Rates Act of 1984 of the Conservative Prime Minister Thatcher, which let the government decide how much tax local authorities could apply on their territory. At least 60% of local authority revenue requirements come from locally decided taxes (Hambleton, 2016).

Even though the government is publicly saying it is devolving powers, Ministers are choosing which localities can benefit from the devolution deals, and what funding goes to which areas. Combined authorities were imposed a metro-mayor when they didn't want one (Hambleton, 2016).

Can combined authority be part of a devolution approach, when the directly elected mayors of combined authorities and the councillors who work with them will be, despite their local electoral legitimacy, expected to be directly answerable in their results, to Ministers in Whitehall ? In Hambleton point of view, elected local councillors should be free to design and develop alternative forms of governance for combined authorities (Hambleton, 2016).

Local authority's leaders fear to lose power locally if part of a combined authority

Local authorities seem to be reluctant to join combined authorities. In West of England combined authority, North Somerset was supposed to join but refused to sign the devolution deal. Different arguments can explain this choice.

Even though the combined authorities come with investment fund ranging from 15 to 40 million a year for the next 30 years, and that the central government promise to work with them, many local authorities think that devolution deals lack financial benefit from (Townsend, nd).

In his article about the super-centralisation of the English state, Robin Hambleton takes the Bristol as an example of the lack of financial means (Hambleton, 2016). On one hand, the West of England combined authority has an investment fund of 30 million pounds per year for 30 years. Bristol contains approximately half of the population of the combined authority, so it might receive something like half of the funding, so 15 million pounds per year. On the other hand, the central government is cutting financial support to Bristol and neighbouring authorities. The Bristol city council financial support will go from 201 million pounds in 2010 to 45 million pounds in 2019. A difference of 156 million pounds, or a 78% cut in financial support. Hambleton admits that as the combined authority as another tool to receive fund, like control of the business rate, the gap is less than that. But it is still a “gaping fiscal chasm”. (Hambleton, 2016)

Another argument for the reluctance of local authorities is the established rivalries and jealousy that every organisation possess. There always are problems of personal rivalries and interests of councillors. For Alan Townsend, the most widespread stated reason for the failure of proposals lay in councillors, arguing and voting against their ‘subordination’ to a mayor, even though agreements typically require the mayor to achieve a two-thirds majority of the leaders of the authorities in the combined authority, which otherwise continue as before. Specifically for combined authority, councillors are afraid to be at a disadvantage from the central city in term of decision-making and economic competition. (Townsend, nd).

The answer of the government to opposition doesn’t lead to more trust. In the case of the metro-mayor election, West-Midland’s population voted against it in a referendum in 2012 (58%), but were still imposed a metro-mayor. According to Bill Etheridge (UK Independence party), it is a betrayal of democracy to have impose a mayor to the combined authority.

Finally, local authorities are afraid of the possible change in the political background link to the Brexit. The devolution deals in the North East, in Norfolk and Suffolk, and in Greater Lincolnshire have collapsed because of uncertainty from the government to continue the devolution deal after the Brexit.

Good practice guide for better-combined authorities

In this part, we will summaries advises that can be found in the literature.

The first point is clarity. The rationales and principles of decentralisation are cloudy. The government should produce a 'decentralisation road map' to have a better strategy for decentralisation.

The second point is the network. It is necessary for the combined authority to share knowledge, experience and practice through a network, exactly like the network of the European green capital. It should be composed of the combined authorities, and others similar governmental structure abroad, like the French metropole or the Italian metropolis. It would permit combined authority to cooperate on planning issues that cross administrative boundaries and coordinate strategic priorities (Boddy & al, 2013)

The third point is freedom. Boddy and Hickman said in their article about The impact of the abolition of Regional Spatial Strategy in a growth region, that there should be more strict assessment of the result of the combined authority. But doing so would only keep them from trying new type of governance. **The combined authority should have the right to be wrong.** There should be more freedom about the assessment of delivery. If it is normal that there is an appraisal of the results of the combined authorities. It shouldn't be the government that assess them. An independent assessment would avoid political bias, as some metro-mayor are conservatives and others are liberal-democrats. That is why the government should establish a Decentralisation Commission, with independence and authority to assess combined authority and develop new models of intermediate governance arrangement with variable functions, geography, powers, resources and accountabilities.

With these 3 points taken into account in the next devolution deals, combined authorities would become much stronger.

Conclusion

This research dissertation was the occasion of discovering the institutional layers, the planning politic, and a new model of governance in England. Combined authorities are a very interesting model of governance, with similarities to the French 'métropole'.

We showed in this research dissertation that combined authorities were the officialization of local authorities working together. We had been expecting the combined authority to be larger than the already existent collaboration network, but instead in the case of the West of England, the combined authority is in fact smaller, because North-Somerset refused to join.

We extracted data from devolution deals, contract between combined authorities and the central government that define the devolution and range of action of each combined authority. We found information that led us to value the strengths of the combined authorities: They all have a strong legitimacy, that could be improve by clarifying the role of the metro-mayor, and they are more or less autonomous, depending of the combined authority. We used the information acquired to give a rank to each of them, from the most autonomous to the least. Without surprises, the combined authority closest to the ideal of a métropole is the Greater Manchester combined authority, for it was a combined authority before the concept existed. It already had devolution from the central government and overall very close links with it.

From my interviews (annexe 1), I learnt that the combined authorities do not have any formal network together. They speak together informally, and exchange information, but there are no official joint plan or collaboration between them, even though some are very close geographically.

We found that devolution deals are a rigid structure that force the combined authority to deal with many functions, even if the way they handle their network shows that some would have like to have less. The shape of their network shows which policies really interested each combined authority. Some only have partnerships in only 2 or 3 policies, whereas other have partnership in all of them. They all had 1 or 2 special policies, like Justice or Health and Care.

The comparison between Cornwall and the combined authorities shows that in fact combined authorities have further devolution, notably they had more financial help from the government.

The objective of this report is to serve as a base to other studies. I for one, will continue to work on the subject to show how the fact of being autonomous is essential for cities to be more resilient and sustainable.

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Implementation of « metropolitan » government and cooperation infra-territorial: The English combined authorities: A new model of metropolitan government?

Résumé : Combined authority is a new model of governance that can be linked to the notion of metropolitan government. They are a tool to devolve power from the central government and reduce the distance between urban planning and local territory. It is a top-down approach, with many incentives from the government, in the form of investment funds, and the promise to help the development of the districts that joins the movement.

This report is made to be read by English or French people, so it contain a very thorough context of the institutional system of England

We extracted data from devolution deals, contract between combined authorities and the central government that define the devolution and range of action of each combined authority. We used the information to give a rank to each of them, from the most autonomous to the least.

Mots Clés : Combined authority ; Metropolis ; Devolution deal