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**THE PUBLIC VALUE OF URBAN LOCAL AUTHORITY
COLLABORATION AS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT POLICY:
THE ROLE OF INSTITUTIONS**

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**Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the
Degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

**Adam Smith Business School
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December 2017

DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

I declare that, except where explicit reference is made to the contribution of others, this dissertation is the result of my own work and has not been submitted for any other degree at the University of Glasgow or any other institution

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ABSTRACT

The thesis aims to understand: *what constitutes urban collaboration and its relationship with policy outcomes?* The research develops a conceptual understanding of the public value (PV)¹ (Bardach, 1998; Moore, 1995, Smith, 2004)² of Urban Local Authority Collaboration (ULAC)³ as economic development policy, relative to three theoretical domains in the literature: *economic collaboration* (i.e. new/old institutional economics: Ostrom 1990, 2016; Williamson, 2000); *spatial collaboration* (i.e. institutional economic geography: Ostrom, 2010; Gerber, 2015; Tarko and Aligica, 2012), and *governance collaboration* (i.e. collective action theory: Hulst and van Monfort, 2012; Feiock, 2008, 2013). Theoretically, the ‘institution’ (Amin, 2001; Jessop, 2001; Williamson, 2000; Aligica and Boettke, 2009; Gertler, 2010) is a distinct conceptual dimension connecting the theoretical literature, bridging scholarly boundaries across compatible ontological insights (Bathelt and Gluckler, 2003; and Hay, 2011).

A conceptual framework is developed to help understand: a) **what** ULAC looks like; b) **how** ULAC creates PV and, c) **why** institutions explain the PV of ULAC. A purposeful single case study of ULAC (i.e. the Scottish Cities Alliance (SCA): a formalised institutional policy network involving seven Urban Local Authorities (ULAs) and the Scottish Government) involved collecting data using semi-structured interviews, secondary data, policy documentation and non-participant observation. The emergence of the SCA as economic development policy in Scotland – conducive to an institutionally sensitive theoretical approach – presents a valuable opportunity to contribute towards an empirical and theoretical understanding of ULAC. Using template analysis, findings emerged through process-tracing, sense-making and thick narrative descriptions to reveal aggregate dimensions and second-order themes and first-order concepts.

The thesis responds to calls for in-depth case study research of the way local government collaboration operates and performs (Hulst and Montfort, 2012), engaging with the ‘fuzzy’(Markhusen, 2003) concepts and processes of ‘urban collaboration’, ‘policy outcomes’ and ‘institutions’ to reveal a lack of empirical and conceptual understanding of how ULAC operates: particularly the role of ‘urban’ institutional context as a ‘key actor attribute’ (Hulst and van Monfort, 2012: 139). Using a critical realist ontology (Jessop, 2005), the research is best suited to Stake’s (2005) interpretive methodological approach to contextualised theorising, using the SCA in Scotland to investigate the ‘contextualised’ Institutional context, to help inductively conceptualise the PV of ULAC as economic development policy.

Whilst conscious of the risks of methodological and conceptual ‘stretching’ (Stubbs, 2005: 71)⁴, the research uses Scotland as a case study to conceptualise the more generic, abstract features of ULAC as a ‘theoretically vague’ term that may ‘travel’ (Stubbs, 2005: 71). The results validate a realist perspective of the theoretical role of formal and informal institutions shaping the contextual path dependant nature of the PV of ULAC. The methodological contribution of the thesis highlights how a new evolving model of economic and spatial governance in Scotland, presents potential challenges for the future delivery of urban policy and practice in Scotland, before closing with a discussion of research limitations and recommendations for areas of future academic research.

¹ PV is the acronym used throughout the rest if the thesis to refer to Public Value.

² The Public Value (PV) in the context of this thesis is defined as: an assessment of normative consensus concerning an increase (or decrease) in the value to the public from initiating and reshaping public sector enterprise in both the short and long run.

³ Urban Local Authority collaboration (ULAC) in the context of this thesis relates to: inter-urban governmental networks representing multiple linkages of dynamic interaction between individuals, organisations, places and nodes, in pursuit of economic development outcomes for their territory. ULAC is the acronym used throughout the rest if the thesis.

⁴ See Stubbs (2005) for a useful discussion of the risks of methodological and epistemological overstretching within governance related research.

Dedication

Mum...

I know you would be proud.

I love and miss you, always and forever.

I am happy, and this is part of my story...

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There are so many people to thank...where to begin! My first supervisors, Professor Iain Docherty and Professor Donald Houston– your patience, wisdom and support (especially in those early days) goes without saying, so thank you for this invaluable opportunity. Professor Ken Gibb – you have been a wonderful mentor, consistent wisdom, and a *breath of fresh air* - you believed in me when I didn't, and for that, I can't thank you enough!

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And finally, the dugs...always by my side, forever my friends...woof x

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Acronyms

FUA: Functional Urban Area (FUA)

GECI: Glasgow-Edinburgh Collaboration Initiative (GECI)

ICA: Institutional Collective Action (ICA)

IMC: Inter-Municipal Collaboration (IMC)

NEG: New Economic Geography (NEG)

NIE: New Institutional Economics (NIE)

NPM: New Public Management (NPM)

NPM: New Public Management (NPM)

OECD: Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development

PUR: Polycentric Urban Region (PUR)

PV: Public Value (PV)

SCA: Scottish Cities Alliance (SCA)

SCDI: The Scottish Council for Development and Industry (SCDI)

TTWA: Travel-To-Work-Area (TTWA)

ULAC: Urban Local Authority Collaboration (ULAC)

ULAs: Urban Local Authorities (ULAC)

Author's Declaration

I declare that, except where explicit reference is made to the contribution of others, that this dissertation is the result of my own work and has not been submitted for any other degree at the University of Glasgow or any other institution.

Signature Linda Christie

Printed name Linda Christie

Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 Focus of the research

‘We cannot adopt the smug presumption of earlier group theorists who thought groups would always form whenever a joint benefit would be obtained...we need to recognize that political systems are complexly organized and that we will rarely be able to state that one variable is always positively or negatively related to a dependent variable.’

Ostrom (1998: 16)

The research philosophy of the thesis strongly resonates with Ostrom’s view of joint working. Having worked in the public sector in Scotland over many years, I found that collaborative working was commonplace, failure frequently observed and measures of success largely anecdotal. Recent policy shifts in Scotland have shown a renewed focus on collaboration in the area of economic development (a responsibility of local government in Scotland), through the ‘Agenda for Cities’ (Scottish Government, 2011), introducing a formal urban collaboration partnership of governmental working between the seven urban local authorities (ULAs) of Scotland and the Scottish Government (i.e. the Scottish Cities Alliance – SCA).

Given the renewed policy emphasis on urban collaboration between Scotland’s cities as economic development policy, the implied assumption is that collaborative relationships in a networked policy environment is advantageous for achieving policy outcomes. A question as to whether discernible positive policy outcomes can be identified, and the causal mechanisms thereof, raises an important research question:

What constitutes urban collaboration and its relationship with policy outcomes?

If ‘one purpose of research on collaboration is to inform practice, then measurement becomes important because policy makers rely on research findings to make substantive changes in policy’ (Thomson et al. 2009: 24).

This introductory chapter situates the research within the broad complex field of collaboration as economic development policy, first outlining the theoretical background and second, outlining the research rationale and proposed approach, highlighting the research questions, aims, and objectives, before finally, providing an outline of the structure of the thesis. The conclusions and empirical findings are discussed in later empirical chapters (i.e. Chapters 6, 7 and 8).

1.1.1 The theoretical rationale of public sector collaboration for economic development

Prior to the industrial revolution, economic growth theory largely recognised cities as monocentric

clusters of people and business. In recent years, networks among cities have been increasingly recognised as an alternative, or compliment to traditional models of urban competitiveness (see for example, Stoker and Young, 1993; Malecki, 2002; Turok, 2004; Meijers, 2005) - a complex and often controversial term in itself (see Boddy, 1999). The concept of ‘collaboration’ in its various forms, has underpinned the development of new urban policies emphasising ‘joined-up’ policy-making (Docherty et al. 2004: 449) and a growing reflection of intergovernmental working (see for example, Davies, 2002).

‘Collaboration’ as a generic theoretical and policy term is controversial, often ill-defined within a dense multi-disciplinary literature, lacking clarity from a variety of meanings and terms, including: ‘networks’; ‘cooperation’; ‘joint-working’; ‘coordination’; ‘collective action’, ‘partnerships’. Of particular interest to this research is the growing interest in collaboration and its relationship with the competitive position of cities (see for example, Stewart, 1996; Oinas, 2002; Graham, 1995; Crosby and Bryson, 2006). As a result, there exists a wide range of literatures and research interests relating to collaboration as policy from varying theoretical foundations and relationships (e.g. between individuals, firms or geographies), across varying structures and forms (e.g. between or within public/private agencies).

There are a variety of concepts, typologies and models aimed at capturing the structures, interactions, and outcomes of collaboration, where the meaning and outcome changes according to the perspective from which it is being assessed. The overall result is conceptual ambiguity relating to collaboration theory and policy (see for example, Gray 1989, 1996, 2000; Huxham 1996; Huxham and Vangen 2005). To emphasize the point, ‘some 101 definitions of collaboration are thought to exist’ (O’Leary and Vij, 2012: 508), leading to misconceptions of the term.

Such theoretical diversity highlights the underlying complexity and ‘fuzzy’ (Markusen, 2003: 702) nature of research relating to collaboration policy, highlighting the need for more ‘systematic approaches’ to understanding collaboration by taking into account multiple ‘theoretical perspectives’ in a ‘consistent non-subjective way’ (Thomson et al. 2009: 52).

The focus of this thesis relates to the different and sometimes overlapping theories, that seek to explain the nature and rationale of collaboration policies, bridging insights from across three main groups of literature: economic, spatial and public management fields. The aim is to use theoretical insights to help understand the public value (PV) of urban local authority collaboration (ULAC) for economic development. Building on Moore (1995) – who originally coined the phrase –the Public Value (PV) of joint public sector activity involving collaboration can be defined as:

‘normative assessment concerning an increase (or decrease) in the value to the public from initiating and reshaping public sector enterprise in both the short and long run’

Economic development can be broadly understood as policy aimed at developing the capacity of economic agents (i.e. individuals, firms, industry, public agencies) (Feldman et al. 2016). The unit of analysis of the research is ULAC as an economic development policy network, defined broadly as a collaborative arrangement between Urban Local Authorities (ULAs) working across spatial and institutional boundaries.

Recognising that networks are the primary organizational setting for designing and executing much of policy, geography and economics research recognises the role of social and institutional structures for understanding networks of different size and scale, across different nodes and reach – although often criticized as vague conceptualization (Williamson, 1994). The public management literature recognizes the number and type of networks that exist ‘within the policy-making realm of a single city’ and their empirical importance for contemporary public management (Agranoff and McGuire, 1998: 68), although similarly lacking conceptual clarity.

Through the coordination of institutional perspectives of urban collaboration (as broadly defined and understood) across three theoretical literature domains, the research provides a multi-disciplinary approach to conceptualising the PV of ULAC (as a form of urban collaboration) as economic development policy. The methodological challenge therefore, is to conceptualise ULAC through the coordination of different theoretical perspectives of institutions as networked social behavior, regardless of differing methodological positions.

The economic rationale of urban local authority collaboration (ULAC)

The ‘new urbanism’ in urban and regional growth literature, recognises urban areas as critical forces for economic and national growth (Stanley, 2005). Recognizing the economic role of cities within their wider context of interconnectedness across different scales (i.e. between cities; within cities; between organisations within cities; between organisations across cities), an economic perspective of ULAC policy relates to an understanding of network activity shaped and transferred within and between cities.

Whilst cities at the global scale generally seek to compete for economic growth (i.e. for investment, population, tourism, labour, for example), small cities are thought to be more successful if they compete and collaborate with nearby cities to achieve complementarity⁵ (Gordon 2011, Feiock and Turnbull, 2012). The economic role of networks and networked cities is premised on the view that ‘effective urban systems ought to have benefits for the economy as a whole...and improve overall

⁵ Complementarity is when two collaborating cities have similar economic structures, but possibly specialise and compete in the production of different sectors.

economic performance' (Begg, 1999: 807).

The (new and old) institutional turn in economics' for understanding ULAC, relates to the social, unbounded nature of urban networks. Indeed, cities can be viewed as fragmented economically, socially and institutionally and no longer bounded, and 'metropolitanisation' and city networks thought to have made traditional urban territorial boundaries obsolete (Parkinson, et al. 2004). Therefore, the institutional economic perspective of ULAC recognizes the broader nature and 'levels of the institutional environment and the institutions of governance' (Williamson, 2000: 608), separating the institutions and the environment to highlight how different institutional arrangements facilitate economic development.

New Institutional Economics (NIE) considers the importance of informal and formal rules and how they interact to affect economic stability (Furbotn and Richter, 2000), as well as how structures affect economic networks and the importance of interaction between individuals and institutions (Lowndes, 2001). Urban policy is thought intensely local, political and territorial, requiring recognition of wider governance frameworks and policy networks (McCann and Ward, 2011). The NIE perspective (Williamson, 2000) highlights the conditions that facilitate or impede collaboration for economic efficiency, using social analysis to understand the role and development of institutions, representing a conceptual shift from earlier, more rational explanations of networked economic activity.

Different institutional arrangements will be used for different means in the context of networked policy, for example: taking a broad strategic view across areas of economic significance or of functional coherence (i.e. spatial planning, service delivery or infrastructure improvement) (Turok, 2009); providing a 'potential mechanism through which cities can share resources, physical assets and policy skills' (Docherty et al. 2004, p448); help achieve information exchange and mutual commitment to shared goals across spatial boundaries (Dawson, 1992); maximizing collaborative advantage (Huxman, 1996).

However, although NIE may help explain the economic role of ULAC from a broad institutional perspective, it is largely understood as a 'cauldron of ideas' (Williamson, 2000: 610) that on its own lacks clarity and in need of further research to help establish a 'fully formal theory' (p610).

The spatial rationale of urban local authority collaboration (ULAC)

From a spatial perspective, ULAC can be seen as both a structural (i.e. a nodal, city level connection) and social relationship, in terms of: the city network; the nodal (city) level connection; and secondary nodal connections (i.e. various organizations within cities), resulting mainly from collaborative urban relationships (i.e. that can be both competitive and collaborative in nature) (Taylor, 2004).

The New Economic Geography (NEG) in the early 1990s introduced the importance of the spatial economy for understanding economic activity in terms of ‘a variety of economic agglomerations’ (Fujita, 2007:484). Collaboration across administrative boundaries is thought to enhance economic activity through a critical mass of networked advantages (Meijers 2008) within and between places, to facilitate urban success (Amin and Thrift, 1992; Bennett and McCoshan, 1993; Kanter, 1995; Ohmae, 1995; Simmie, 1997). The economies of scale and spatial concentration of people and firms, clustering and urbanization are recognised as key spatial contexts to understanding networked activity (see Fujita et al. 1999; Fujita and Thisse, 2002).

Harrison and Growe (2012) suggest increasing urbanization means ‘functional economies of most large cities extend far beyond their traditional boundaries to capture physically separate, yet functionally networked cities and towns in the surrounding hinterland’ (p25). Indeed, spatial change within the urban system means connections between cities can be both horizontal and vertical (Camagni and Salone, 1993), resulting in the ‘city network paradigm’ that recognises cities are not merely static, ‘centrally-place’ based territorial systems (Camagni, 1992). Brenner (2001) provides a relevant discussion of scale as it relates to a relational view of the social construction of places, based on scale as a ‘tangled hierarchy’ of networks across various scales (Brenner 2001, 605). Thus, the city, traditionally conceived, is an increasingly out-dated and redundant concept, no longer adequately reflecting the underlying structure of how socio-economic activity is organized at the urban scale.

Economic geography also highlights the importance of the relationship between structure and agency (Giddens, 1984), and the path dependant, contextual nature of ULAC networks. The institutional turn in economic geography highlights the important role of agents and organizations, networked relationships and resultant social dynamics across spatial and non-spatial scales, by ‘conceive[ing] institutions as stabilizations of mutual expectations and correlated interaction’ (Bathelt and Gluckler, 2013: 341), where ‘rules and regulations are required only for socio-economic institutions in a spatial perspective’ (p357). Hence, the institutional-logic of the networked city-system from a relational spatial perspective, views ULAC as a process encompassing a range of network synergies of both functional and complimentary nature, regardless of city size and distance (Camagni and Salone, 1993).

An understanding of ULAC in institutional economic geography is thought ambiguous and methodologically challenging, including ‘institutions’ being ‘hidden behind spatial patterns or assumed spatial laws’ (Bathelt and Gluckler, 2013: 341), resulting in a ‘duality of structure and agency’ that implies ‘institutions cannot be measured by obvious or easily identifiable indicators’, and empirical research thought ‘still in its infancy’ (Bathelt and Gluckler, 2013: 357).

The governance rationale of urban local government collaboration (ULAC)

The governance perspective of ULAC largely within the public management literature is recognised through ‘policy network’ research (Marsh and Rhodes, 1992), based on early theories of organisational sociology, inter-organisational relations (Provan and Millward, 1995) and political science (Klinj, 1996). Policy networks are theorized at different geographical scales (i.e. global; national; local) (Arku and Oosterbaan, 2014; O’Toole, 1997; Healey, 2004; Meijers, 2005), and rarely questioned in practice (Sullivan et al. 2013).

Policy networks involving government collaboration have proliferated in recent years, in line with the shifting focus of the new urban governance literature towards partnerships, particularly in Britain, where partnerships developed rapidly in the 1990s (Davies, 2002). The collaborative working focus on ‘partnerships’ in public policy increased at a time when hierarchical policy-making was being questioned (see Sørensen and Torfing, 2007), with a general shift in emphasis from ‘government’ to ‘governance’ (Weiss and Wilkinson, 2014). The result has been a growth in policy networks as a form of ‘collaborative governance’ (see, for example, Klijn and Koppenjan 2000; Rhodes 1998; Kickert et al. 1997; and Scharpf 1978).

The ‘associational model’ (developed by Cooke and Morgan in 1998) describes policy network governance as a ‘third way’ between state-led and market-led development, involving a more social/collaborative mode of achieving economic success. Social and economic success is based largely on regional capability in trust-based relationships, learning and network competence and the ability to create the right conditions for competitiveness, including: administrative organisations, strategic public–private networks, leadership, vision and strategy, political support, societal support and a set of spatial economic conditions that induces and supports collaboration (i.e. the social capital of cities) (van den Berg and Braun, 1999).

The governance perspective provides insights on the institutional and social contexts of policy networks and their specific contents (Smith-Doerr and Powell, 2003), in terms of an apparent ‘gap between the actual needs of spatial and economic transformation, and newly introduced mechanisms, units and scales of governmental activity’ (Eraydin et al. 2008: 2316). Indeed, the governance perspective considers the ‘politics of scale...seen not as fixed but, rather, as contingent, complex, and socially constructed’ from increased recognition of complex and overlapping networks, as opposed to being discrete at the territorial level (Stubbs, 2005, p67).

However, regardless of the governance literature for understanding ULAC, the policy network approach is vulnerable to criticism due to a lack of general theory and conceptual ambiguity (see Dowding 1995), with calls for a conceptually and theoretically more rigorous approach to policy networks (Bressers, O’Toole, and Richardson, 1994; Dowding, 1995; Peters, 1998).

Having considered the main theoretical dimensions to understanding ULAC and its diversity, it is

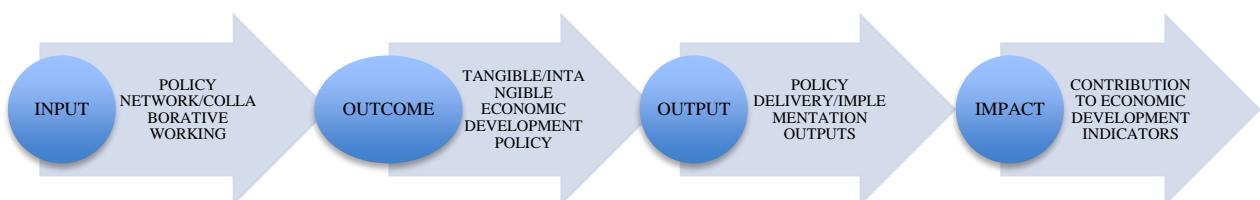
important to consider why the renewed focus on ULAC and its importance, relative to the difference it can make to society and the economy if it is successful.

The success of ULAC: public value (PV)

An important theoretical strand connecting the diverse literature and rationale underpinning urban collaboration is that both internal and external network properties across different scales are thought important for economic competitiveness (see Figure 2 in section 2.3). As a result, there has been increasing policy recognition of networks and collaboration as economic development policy in recent years. However, measuring the ‘outcome’ from collaboration policy in practice, is not well understood (O’Leary and Vij, 2012), largely a result of varying theoretical dimensions and the conceptual challenges in assessing policy outcomes (Thomson and Perry, 2006).

There are different ontological views of how to assess and understand ‘outcomes’ and often entangled in ‘vague definitions and conceptualizations’ (Crosby et al. 2014: 453). Policy outcomes can be understood within a linear policy development process: the intermediate stage in the policy development process can be understood once a policy is developed and implemented, the delivery of policy outcomes, outputs and gains/impacts can be assessed (e.g. strategic policy [intangible] or physical project [tangible]). Policy outcomes at a wider, macro economy level would relate to strategic policy changes that result from any given policy programme (see Figure 1 for an illustration of the linear policy process), and not wider medium-longer term policy outputs and economic impacts (e.g. *intermediate* (shorter term) outcomes produced by the policy process in terms of new/improved physical transport infrastructure; reduced traffic congestion outcomes).

Figure 1: Policy Development Process



Given the different ontological perspectives of outcomes, the attribution of policy networks towards achieving policy outcomes is thought methodologically challenging and difficult to fully evidence how benefits actually happen (Loftman and Nevin, 1996), resulting in a general lack of data (Provan and Milward 1995) to help ‘capture the adaptive behaviours of organizations’ (Thomson et al. 2009: 49). Policy outcomes do not occur automatically and causality within networks are thought related to differences in history, local institutions, and differently structured environments where people live, work and invest. Thus, measuring outcomes of collaboration

policy is far from straight forward, due largely to a multiplicity of structures and dynamic complexity of the network process having a non-linear effect, such that the combination of factors may not result in the same situation or outcome a second time (Theitart and Forgues, 1995).

Much of the policy network literature on collaboration distinguishes between ‘process’, ‘management’ and ‘policy outcomes’ (Ansell and Gash, 2007: 549), highlighting ‘the analytical difficulty prevalent in the literature’ (Thomson et al. 2009: 49). Organizing and realizing the benefits and costs of collaboration are rarely identified and understood, except anecdotally (Malecki 2002), with ‘a lack of empirically validated tools’ (Marek et al. 2014: 68). There are various studies that attempts to identify the large number of variables for assessing collaboration (see O’Toole 1997; Axelrod, 1984, Huxham 1996, for example) ‘but these variables either go unanalyzed or are not systematically modelled’ and thought too often represent ‘process dimensions as opposed to actual outcomes’ (Miller et al. 2008: 97). For example, a recent attempt to develop a multi-dimensional model of the collaboration policy-process-outcome relationship by Miller at al (2008), uses structural equation modelling in their conceptualisation, identifying five main dimensions of collaboration involving numerous process-related activities that are tested via seventeen indicators (and primary data generated from a questionnaire), used to empirically test their model. Although the empirical testing of the model is thought to demonstrate support for the conceptualisation of collaboration, it is however, thought limited in its ability to make ‘generalisations’ without being tested in various settings. Indeed, such models are dependant on which theoretical perspective is taken to the conceptualisation and thought best to avoid labelling collaboration outcomes in terms of ‘success or failure’, unless it is possible to demonstrate consistency in outcomes over time, and across different settings and contexts (Miller et al. 2008: 103).

Therefore, given the diversity of perspectives for assessing and understanding the outcomes of the policy process, in order to understand whether ULAC is effective as urban policy there is the need to clarify the ontological position of what is meant by ‘policy outcomes’ in the context of this thesis. Bardach (1998) and Smith (2004) ontological view is that that policy success should be best thought of in terms of the ‘public value (PV)’ created from the policy process in a non-linear way, to produce sustainable collaboration as a key indicator of its value. An original line of inquiry into the relationship between urban collaboration policy and outcomes is apparent: it is not only any set of contributing ‘factors’ that enable policy outcomes, nor how they flow (or ‘sort’) into a location, but how the factors interact within the policy process in a transformational way (Pawson, 2006). These ways differ across polices and across space and time due to complexity: human interactions and institutional settings vary within a policy network and the territory with which it is placed. Thus, institutional context matters for conceptualisation.

For the focus of this thesis, there is an opportunity to contribute towards the understanding of urban collaboration from a diverse theoretical coherent perspective, by bringing together both existing and new empirical and theoretical insights to help conceptualise the PV of ULAC within a distinct institutional context. Bringing together the fuzzy (Markusen, 2003) concepts of ‘urban collaboration’, ‘policy network’ and ‘institutions, the unique contribution of this research is to conceptualise the PV of ULAC within a particular institutional setting.

Consistent with the PV perspective of policy outcomes, collaboration should be assessed for its ability to create ‘social value... based on the principle of comparative advantage’ (Bardach, 1998:9) to distinguish it from its counterparts (i.e. to specialize or diversify, as opposed to collaborate). In other words, the PV of collaboration relates to the benefits derived from changing work practices, until the most effective combination of activities are produced.

Assessing PV criteria of collaboration policy thus requires:

‘telling a story...to bring together debates about **values, institutions**, systems, processes, and people....Public value is defined and redefined through **social and political interaction**’
(emphasis added)

Smith, (2004: 68 -69)

Consistent with Moore (1995: 71), producing PV from policy requires that the policy must be:

‘substantively valuable, that is, they must produce things of **value to overseers and beneficiaries; be legitimate and politically sustainable; be operationally and administratively feasible**’ (emphasis added)

Smith, (2004: 79)

In line with the above theoretical understanding of PV criteria, a normative assessment of the PV of ULAC in the context of this thesis is conceptualized through the establishment of the combined understanding of:

- a) the network process (*what does ULAC look like*) - an interpretation of network members’ (i.e. as the overseer and beneficiary) perception of the purpose and value of ULAC;
- b) the network context (*how it takes place*) – an explanation of network members’ perceptions of the role of institutions on the operational and administrative feasibility of ULAC; and
- c) network value (*why it is perceived the way it is*) – a theoretical explanation of the impact of institutions on the legitimacy and political sustainability of ULAC.

1.1.2 Urban collaboration and intergovernmental working

Aside from the diverse theoretical nature underpinning the fuzziness of urban collaboration, there exists a range of policy areas and collaborative arrangements from which an empirical assessment would permit. The focus on local government as the ‘collaborator’ within a ULAC setting is of particular importance and relevance for several reasons.

First, the rationale and emphasis on urban collaboration largely inspired by the growth in ‘neo-liberal’ approaches to public policy, represents a key shift in UK policy delivery from the 1990s onwards, stressing ‘the need to move away from understanding cities as discrete, self-enclosed, analytically separate objects’ (Ward, 2008: 407). The result is a renewed interest in functional collaboration at both an intra-urban scale and inter-urban scale (i.e. SCA) between public agencies focused on policy delivery outcomes. Policy networks characteristically refer to multi-actor arrangements, where public sector networks are typically led or managed by government representatives (Agranoff and McGuire, 2001). Research focused on understanding the factors affecting intergovernmental collaboration is thought ‘fairly rudimentary’, with ‘limited models taking account of political, economic, and demographic factors’ (Carr et al. 2007: 2). Research on urban collaboration policy involving government institutions in the UK is thus timely.

Second, cities are thought to play a crucial role in shaping and delivering economic development across various scales (local, urban, regional, national), with the role of local government taking a key role within that (see for example: Feiock, 2002 and Konvitz, 2016). Cities often use collaboration as a resolution approach for dealing with similar or interconnected challenges (i.e. transport issues), or simply, to strengthen collaborative relationships between different agencies, or to support ‘mandated’ joined-up service delivery. UK government policy focus in recent years has seen a gradual restructuring of urban local government, underpinned by an unfolding debate concerning different models of territorial governance, power constellations and balance of urban policy responsibility between central and local government. For example, traditionally, economic development services have been ‘commonly associated with vertical forms of collaboration’ (Kaye-Essien, 2016: vi), whereas recent, more horizontal models for delivering economic development across urban local government in the UK are evolving, including: the creation of the ‘English Core Cities Group’ and ‘region deals’ for England’s largest local authorities, and similarly, the Scottish Cities Alliance (SCA) and ‘City Deals’ in Scotland. Therefore, a fuller understanding of the changing role and structure of ULG for new models of urban collaboration is required.

Case study selection: The Scottish Cities Alliance (SCA)

Growing pressure for greater autonomy and control of urban policy across local government in Scotland has coincided with government policy encouraging Scotland’s largest city local

authorities to work together in a formalised partnership for the first time. The Scottish Cities Alliance (SCA), characterised by governmental working, represents a collective identity of the Scottish Government and seven ULAs: Glasgow, Edinburgh, Inverness, Dundee, Aberdeen, Stirling, and Perth, linked within a wider economic system. The SCA was originally established by the Scottish Government in 2011, to encourage urban collaboration that supports national economic growth. Scotland's establishment of the SCA as a nationally instituted policy, provides a unique empirical opportunity for greater insight into the functioning of urban collaboration within a distinct country setting. The research reveals the evolving nature of SCA policy over the study period (2010 – 2016), and the SCAs important role in supporting cities pursuit for radical changes to urban policy in Scotland, mainly: the development of new infrastructure delivery models in Scotland, and calls for a new relationship between central and local government in Scotland.

The SCA was selected as a case study for three main reasons. First, from a governance perspective, it is the first time all of Scotland's ULAs have come together in a formalised ULAC network, providing a unique opportunity to examine economic development policy of particular relevance to urban local government. Second, from a spatial economic perspective, Scotland's ULA areas all vary in size and economic diversity (see Table 9 in section 4.3.1) – indeed, some would question whether some of 'Scotland's cities are small towns' (MacLennan, Waite and Muscatelli (2017: 100) - resulting in institutional diversity. Scotland's cities do however boast relatively skilled and well-educated populations common to all cities.

Edinburgh and Glasgow are the two largest ULA areas and the only two cities having previously worked in formalised ULAC policy setting (i.e. The Glasgow-Edinburgh Initiative). Glasgow is the most populated Scottish city and after almost four decades of profound and protracted decline, Glasgow has re-emerged as a locus of strong growth in jobs and incomes, underpinned by an expanding service sector. Edinburgh, Scotland's capital city is the second largest of Scotland's cities, covering a broad base of economic activities. Aberdeen has a long reputation as a high quality place for services and environmental opportunities, with a prominent oil and gas service sector, although a less diversified economic base. Dundee has a relatively large public sector base, although some commercial successes in life sciences and digital technologies. Stirling enjoys a relatively healthy economic environment and high quality life factors, holding a middle league position among the Scottish cities in terms of employment and salaries. Inverness as one of the smallest Scottish cities has robust tourism, renewable energy, life sciences and food and drink sectors, and a key gateway to the northern reaches of Scotland. Perth is the newest city having regained its ancient city status in March 2012 and an important strategic location between the urban lowlands and rural highlands, and the fastest growing area in Scotland with significant business services, retail, tourism and culture sectors (see MacLennan et al. 2017, for a comprehensive discussion on the role of Scotland's cities in the Scottish Economy).

The economic diversity across Scotland's cities, and variation of competitive sectors, implies that resource allocation, investment decisions and motivations for collaboration will differ across the cities. Until recently, the varying size, structure and economic performance of Scotland's urban areas has to a large extent, reduced the incentive for city local authorities to work together in a formalised ULAC setting. The SCA, with small catalytic funding, is focused on improving the connections and commonalities between the major urban areas in Scotland, as well as supporting the effective practices for shaping and delivering city infrastructure development strategies. The SCA has also notably supported the development of metropolitan, city-region level infrastructure 'City Deals', representing major infrastructure strategies comprised of substantial innovative funding mechanisms. As a result, the SCA involves inter-urban collaboration, but also, through 'City Deals', involves the development of policy between urban areas and their wider metropolitan economic systems. The notion of the 'city' and 'city-region' spatial focus of policy in the UK has been largely missing (see for example, Deas and Hinks, 2017 and Hambleton, 2017), although being increasingly reformed in recent years. For example, Scotland's third National Planning Framework: 'Ambition, Opportunity and Place' (Scottish Government, 2014), emphasizes a renewed focus on the spatial scale of city regions, and similarly, the 'Agenda for Cities' (Scottish Government, 2011) highlighting the importance of both cities and their regions in Scotland.

A distinct feature of the SCA case study therefore, is the potential insight into the spatial and economic rationale for ULAC as being representative of a policy mechanism for cities to work as a regional/national system, in line with suggestions that 'the emergence of a distinctly new 'regional world' is evolving 'underpinned by a relational ontology of flow, network and connectivity' (Harrison and Growe, 2012: 37).

Finally, whilst seeking to conceptualise the relationship between ULAC and policy outcomes, the SCA case study was deemed unsuitable for assessing or evaluating policy outputs/impacts at this stage. Most of the SCA's policies and projects identified over the study period (2010 – 2016) were not significantly advanced to facilitate an assessment of 'policy outputs' (i.e. where long lead-times are required between project planning, development and delivery). Therefore, the thesis focus on policy outcomes from a PV perspective (Bardach, 1998), uses the SCA as a valuable contextualised collaboration policy opportunity for in-depth investigation of ULAC in practice, taking into account:

‘The assessment of program interventions on the basis of policy makers’ goals to an engagement with and among all stakeholders about the value and meaning of their practice’

Abma (2006: 31)

1.2 Research Aims and Objectives

The previous sections outlined how an understanding of urban collaboration requires insight from a number of theoretical perspectives, with a lack of conceptual clarity and multi-dimensional perspectives for understanding urban collaboration between urban local government and its relationship with policy outcomes. The thesis research incorporates theories relating to *economic collaboration* (i.e. new/old institutional economics; Ostrom 1990, 2016; Williamson, 2000); *spatial collaboration* (i.e. institutional economic geography: Ostrom, 2010; Gerber, 2015; Tarko and Aligica, 2012), and *governing collaboration* (i.e. collective action theory: Hulst and van Monfort, 2012; Feiock, 2008, 2013), through an interpretive approach (Stake's, 2005) to understanding the relationship between ULAC and policy outcomes, acknowledging the importance of context using Scotland as a single case study. A conceptual framework was developed (Figure 1) from the literature review to guide the in-depth case study of the policy-outcome relationship with insights from a particular Scottish context.

The thesis' research question, identified from the synthesis of knowledge gaps, was described as:

What is the Public Value (PV) of urban local authority collaboration (ULAC) as economic development policy, relative to institutions?

In order to fully investigate the research question and knowledge gaps on ULAC, the following research objectives were identified:

- An understanding of the mutli-dimensional nature of urban local authority collaboration (ULAC) across three functional domains: *purpose, configuration and management*;
- An explanation of perceived public value (PV) of ULAC relative to functional and institutional context;
- A multi-disciplinary interpretive conceptualisation of the PV of ULAC as economic development policy relative to the role of institutions.

1.3 Research Approach

The methodology uses qualitative case-study research (Stake, 2005) to undertake an interpretive (Stake, 2005; Yanow, 2007; Dyer and Wilkins, 1991) critical realist approach (Sayer, 2004, Hood, 2012; Pawson, 2006), deemed most appropriate for investigating the apparent lack of understanding of PV of ULAC and the importance of institutional context. The conceptualisation of the PV of ULAC uses process-tracing (see George and Bennett, 2005; Checkel, 2008; Hay, 2016;) as a the most appropriate qualitative research tool for understanding causal mechanisms that take particular account of the role of both structure (how) and agency (what) within the networked policy process.

The role of the different network members and the process of collaboration between them, are analysed to reveal the aggregate policy network process. Institutional distance is characterised by differences between member's own individual institutional contexts within the policy network. Scotland was selected as the appropriate network context for the research, based on the uniqueness of the case study as the first time ULAC has been implemented as policy involving all of Scotland's cities.

An inductive approach to establishing a conceptualisation of the ULAC and PV relationship is used to reveal the network development process between the members embedded within the policy network. An in-depth single case study was used in order to reveal the contextual importance of the urban context and novel conceptualization of ULAC, including policy lessons outwith Scotland, notwithstanding the particular geographical and political characteristics of the context under consideration here. The within-case analysis was undertaken by comparing the findings with documentary and academic evidence, to reveal an interpretive causal explanation of:

The Public Value (PV) of urban local authority collaboration (ULAC) as economic development policy: the role of institutions

1.4 Thesis structure

The thesis is concerned with conceptualising the PV of ULAC bringing together key concepts of 'urban collaboration'; 'policy outcomes' and 'institutions' across a diverse multi-disciplinary literature (i.e. economic, spatial and governance rationales), using an interpretive inductive-theory building in-depth case study (Stake, 2005).

Chapter 1 introduces the research philosophy and methodology and background context to researching the PV of ULAC, highlighting three theoretical themes underpinning the relevant literature, leading to a more detailed literature review in Chapters 2, 3 and 4.

The literature review chapters build on the preliminary introduction of ULAC, by providing a comprehensive statement of the theoretical background and academic premise underpinning the subsequent case study analysis for conceptualising ULAC, through an in-depth examination of the Scottish Cities Alliance (SCA) in Scotland as the main study area. Chapter 2 is directly concerned with urban collaboration and economic development as concepts per se, leading to the focus on the role of networks and collaboration across ULG in terms of ULAC. Chapter 3 provides an explanation of the conceptual dimensions of ULAC according to three main theoretical domains in the literature: economic, spatial and governance networks, and how they can be defined and understood relative to networks involving government institutions. Chapter 3 concludes that knowledge of ULAC as an economic development policy is limited, particularly an understanding

of the role of the urban context in the network development process.

The final Chapter of the literature review Chapter 4, highlights the complex nature of measuring and understanding policy outcomes from a PV perspective, and the role of institutional theory for bridging scholarly insights. Chapter 4 also provides background context to the ULAC case study in Scotland, highlighting the nature of institutions situating Scotland's local government sector, towards the development of the SCA between 2011 and 2016. The literature review chapters are concluded with an outline of the integrative conceptual framework for achieving the research aim:

To conceptualise the Public Value (PV) of urban local authority collaboration (ULAC) as economic development policy, relative to the role of institutions

Chapter 5 outlines the research approach and methodology, including the justification for the single case study selection in Scotland, highlighting the epistemological issues in relation to the critical realist ontological position of the research and the need to be clear about the contribution the conceptual framework aims to provide. In particular, substantial focus is given to interpretive sense making (Stake 2005) methodology, thought suitable for unpacking complex policy systems in particular institutional contexts. Clarity is also given to the interpretations adopted in the research through extensive qualitative coding and template analysis, predicting patterns in the data and establishing conceptual categories for analytical consideration, as well as outlining the validity and reliability of the research approach.

Chapters 6, 7 and 8 provide detailed within-case study evidence of the Scottish Cities Alliance (SCA), analysing its perceived PV in terms of its purpose, configuration and management. Chapter 6 compares the published strategic policy position of the SCA with network members' personal perceptions and understanding of the process. The context-rich data identifies three distinct stages in the network development process, summarised through 'process tracing' (George and Bennett, 2005: 147) to highlight 'what' the network looks like relative to its functional domains (i.e. *purpose, structure and management*). Chapter 6 therefore provides an indicative conceptual model of what ULAC looked like over the study period.

The second stage of the data analysis is presented in Chapter 7, identifying the relative strength of different institutions to help explain how ULAC and its functional domains create PV. The ULAC conceptualisation identified in Chapter 6 is enhanced, analysing network members' perceptions to understand the role of different institutional mechanisms. The man mechanisms through which value from the network is created, is revealed, providing a detailed 'sense making' model of the how institutions can explain the PV of the SCA. The extent to which formal and informal institutional mechanisms explain how network members interact within the SCA is revealed, highlighting important power constellations and institutional dynamics between Scotland's ULAs

and Scottish Government.

Chapter 8 discusses the research findings to explain ‘why’ the PV of ULAC can be perceived according to the findings in chapter six and seven, gaining insight from institutional theory (i.e. spatial, economic and governance networks) to understand the PV of the SCA for urban local government and evolving city-regional infrastructure models across Scotland. Institutional theory is used as a means for understanding the economic, spatial and governance rationales of ULAC, compared to the contextual findings relating to Scotland’s ULAC context, helping to finalise the conceptualization.

Finally, Chapter 9 concludes the thesis with an outline of the conceptual model of the role of institutions for understanding the PV of ULAC in Scotland, to reveal wider implications for Scotland’s local government. The important role of different institutional mechanisms across key phases of the network process over time, are shown to significantly influence the value of the policy-making process. The research reveals key implications for the conceptualisation of ULAC and assumptions of urban regime theory, particularly those relating to city-region models of urban local governance. The research limitations are also discussed, suggesting avenues for future research.

1.5 Contribution to knowledge:

The research makes a theoretical contribution from the coordination of a number of complex concepts across a diverse theoretical literature, previously not well integrated for understanding how city local authorities collaborate, and its PV as an economic development policy.

The research develops a multi-disciplinary conceptualisation of the dynamic networking processes between Scotland’s ULAs and national government, and its perceived value as public policy. The findings underline some of the complexities and contradictions within the literature, important for understanding the further development of urban regime policy in Scotland. The Scottish case study is also theoretically valuable and empirically relevant for many other UK cities, as new spatial systems of urban governance have evolved across the UK in recent years. The research provides an in-depth understanding of the importance of institutions and the roles played by public sector agencies representing the city system.

Importantly, the research identifies the importance of both formal and informal institutions across different stages of the network process, highlighting the cumulative effect of institutional mechanism, conditioned by institutions in earlier network stages, to reveal an on-going dynamic network policy process over time. The research findings are also empirically valuable as they relate to the Scottish case, helping to understand the role of collaboration policy in the development

of a new city and city-region spatial models of governance in Scotland. Finally, the research also has the potential to provide a unique contribution to the evolving work programme of the Scottish Cities Alliance (SCA) and inform the future development of urban policy in Scotland.

Having briefly introduced the purpose, methodology and contribution of the thesis, the following chapter (Chapter Two) will proceed with a review of the collaboration literature relevant to the urban context.

Chapter Two: Economic Development and Local Government: *it's all about cities*

2.1 Introduction

The aim of the thesis is to contribute towards knowledge on the PV (i.e. the social, non-scientific, non-economic goals...often the core public rationale for an endeavour: Bozeman and Sarewitz, 2011: 1) of ULAC as economic development policy, by identifying the main theoretical insights and existing understandings. Accordingly, a review of the academic literature concerning urban economic development was undertaken from a multidisciplinary perspective, identifying relevant knowledge about public sector collaboration as policy and the role of institutions of its public value. Key gaps in understanding were identified, resulting in the narrow focus on economic development collaboration as policy between urban local government institutions.

Accordingly, Chapter two in sections 2.2 and 2.3, discuss what is known about urban economic development policy in its broad context, framing the evolving economic policy debates relevant to Scotland. Chapter three of the Literature Review follows with a more focussed discussion of collaboration networks, and specifically, collaboration as economic development policy of urban local government.

2.2 Local Economic Development

The thesis is primarily focused on the economic development role of urban local government, which requires both an understanding and definition of ‘local economic development’ and ‘urban local government’. It is necessary to first discuss economic development in its broad public sector context and the role of local government within that, before discussing the economic development context of urban local government in section 2.3.

In its widest context, the term ‘local economic development’ is highly contested with limited consensus as to its meaning, ‘characterized as a hodgepodge of conflicting perspectives that do not speak to or with each other’ (Feiock, 2002: 123), although historically dominated by economic concerns relating to both the welfare of the individual and business growth. Indeed, economic development policies of local government are thought explained largely by ‘economic need’ (Feiock, 1990: 539); the pursuit of economic growth as an ‘ideological symbol’, or, the result of ‘institutional arrangements’ within cities (p54).

It is largely regarded as a ‘development’ process, where the inclusion of the ‘economic’ is thought to ‘consist of much else besides economic growth’ (Seers, 1969: 1) including: poverty,

unemployment, inequality, education and rights of citizenship. In this sense, the economic objective of economic development is regarded a means for which economic welfare can be achieved according to ‘the social, economic, cultural and political conditions of particular populations in specific places’ and thought ‘inescapably context-dependent’ (Pike et al. 2016: 4). The recognition of a broader range of non-economic factors affecting economic development in recent years is thought reflected by the inclusion of ‘softer, less tangible and immeasurable dimensions’ of economic development (Bentley and Pugalis, 2013: 258).

In relation to the ‘local’ context of economic development, it can be broadly understood as relating to ‘bottom-up, territorial, decentralized and participatory approaches to stimulate the local economy using locally available resources’ (Walo, 2016: 1). Accordingly therefore, ‘local’ economic development is understood as relating to the policy domain of local government.

Given the broad nature of local economic development, what follows is an overview of the relevant insights for understanding the theoretical basis of economic development policy in the context of local government, in order to make a clear distinction of the focus of interest from the outset. Economic development is a ‘dynamic field of activity with theories and methodologies often contested’ (Bentley and Pugalis, 2013: 258). Economic development priorities and policies are not static and regularly reevaluated and changed as a consequence of surrounding local economic and political contexts, influencing both institutional mechanisms and modes of practice (Bentley and Pugalis, 2013). Economic development is also thought embedded in particular social and institutional arrangements, and influenced by a wide range of forces (Turok and Bailey, 2004: 138). As such, local economic development theory is thought lacking a clearly defined model, as people and agencies have their own local understanding of the concept.

The key concepts that structure our understanding of local economic development have been examined by ‘different scientific and ideological prisms’ (Pike et al. 2016: 2), reflected by a multiplicity of forms and structures of government and governance shaping diverse policy interventions within different historical, economic and geographical contexts.

Clarifying the broad context of local economic development is necessary in setting boundaries for the scope of understanding the range of policy activity within which urban economic development (and collaboration as policy) has evolved as an important focus of urban local government policy.

2.2.1 Theories of Local Economic Development

Both the structures and regulatory frameworks of economic development have been a focus of much diverse academic interest in recent years, rooted mainly within economic and political geography traditions, as well as sociological and political science (see Jones, 2001, for a useful

summary). Economic development theories include ‘hard, bounded and soft, unbounded conceptualization and theorization, inductive and/or deductive reasoning...varied geographies and conceptions of the ‘local’ (Pike et al. 2016: 5), making it difficult to isolate singular theoretical domains. The theoretical literature relevant to local economic development in the context of this thesis is summarized below, followed with a more in-depth discussion of the collaboration and network relevant theories in section 3.

- *Economic theories:* Largely based on ideas of endogenous growth theory for economic development, assuming: economic rationality; perfect mobility of information; competition; diminishing returns; efficient markets/allocation of resources.
- *Spatial theories:* The New Economic Geography (NEG) emphasizes the role of increasing returns, agglomeration economies, multiplier effects and knowledge spillovers in shaping the distribution of economic development, focusing on the benefits of spatial organization and concentration of activities for economic activity.
- *Governance theories:* The theories of the New Public Management (NPM) relate mainly to the role of institutions (i.e. government and governance; informal institutions; public and private partnerships) and cultural frameworks (i.e. customs, norms, and social routines; formal/informal structures of regulations) across all spatial scales, shaping policy formulation and development.

The second half of the 20th century saw both the study of local economic development and the range and scale of government interventions expand significantly in the UK (Pike et al. 2016).

Economic development has traditionally been delivered through the activities of local government, through a ‘redistributive approach to economic development, historically relying on subsidies’, although increasingly replaced in recent years by ‘neoliberal investment approaches’ to incentivize growth development through increasing involvement of the private sector (Bentley and Pugalis, 2013: 258). The private sector has taken an increasing role in how economic development is delivered through increasing recognition of asset-based approaches to incentivizing growth in the UK (Brenner et al. 2010).

2.2.2 Dimensions of Economic Development

The World Bank⁶ view of local economic development is based on the idea that economic development relates mainly to strategies of individual communities and areas within a local

⁶ See: <http://go.worldbank.org/EA784ZB3F0>

government's influence. It typically involves a wide range of agencies and partnerships at the local level, aimed at 'continually improving the investment climate and business enabling environment to enhance their competitiveness, retain jobs and improve incomes'. As previously mentioned, economic development policies are often inherently area dependant involving a diverse range of activities. The World Bank provides a concise list helpfully suggesting a common range of local economic development activities, including:

- Local investment development for local businesses;
- Small and medium sized enterprise development;
- Investment in new industries;
- Attracting external investment (nationally and internationally);
- Investing in physical (hard) infrastructure;
- Investing in soft infrastructure (educational and workforce development, institutional support systems and regulatory issues);
- Supporting the growth of particular clusters of businesses;
- Targeting particular parts of the city for regeneration or growth (areas based initiatives);
- Supporting informal and newly emerging businesses;
- Targeting certain disadvantaged groups.

Local economic development strategies are thus designed to either attract new business or to maintain, expand, or generate business within the local community.

The key concepts that structure our understanding of local economic development are thought highly context dependant and local. Economic development 'does not take place in a political–institutional vacuum', shaped by the form, operation and spatial organization of the 'nation's core institutions, governance structures, political arrangements and policy-making machinery' (Ron Martin et al. 2015: 348). It is important to summarise relevant policy context shaping our understanding of economic development in the UK in recent years.

UK 'Local' economic development context:

Local economic development is not a statutory responsibility of local government in the UK and as such, requires a multi-sectoral approach to public intervention. The UK is a good atypical example of asymmetrical spatial configuration from an increasing 'localism' agenda in recent year, thought distinct from every other major European country (Bentley and Pugalis, 2013). As a result, the English regions have delegated authority without elected assemblies providing regional democratic control. The other countries of the UK - Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales - have all been provided varying devolved powers since the late 1990s. Thus, it is important to consider any

implications of the UK's changing constitutional arrangements for a new spatially devolved model of local economic development across the UK.

In more recent years, the UK Government can be seen to shift its focus towards a model of local government that promotes greater sub-regional autonomy, through Local Employment Partnerships and City Region Deals. In England, local authorities have been invited to 'come forward with joint proposals to form combined authorities...and bid to take over powers currently held by Whitehall' (Loudes and Garner, 2016: 2). Sub-regional devolution across England's core cities can be seen through the establishment of the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) in 2011, and thereafter, a further four combined authorities in Sheffield, West Yorkshire, Liverpool and the North East. However, increasing devolution of economic development functions to city-regions are thought to lack a supporting institutionalized governance framework to coordinate policy: 'power structures that drive and manage economic development in England are thought to remain largely centralised' at the UK Government level (Ron Martin et al. 2015: 348).

A single tier of local government in Scotland means local economic development policy is delivered via 32 unitary local authorities as a product of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1994. Historically, local government has been restricted in its powers largely functioning on behalf of central government, acting in accordance and 'within the powers' of the Local Government Act 2003, providing services largely in relation to: infrastructure; environmental and amenities; and social welfare, although being gradually reduced (Kelly, 2007: 198). Partnership working in Scotland is reflected largely by the Community Planning role of local government, to ensure the coordination of local policy in line with locally inflected national priorities. However, the 2014 Scottish referendum is thought to have provided a 'fresh momentum to a formerly moribund debate' (Loudes and Garner, 2016: 6), about the powers available to Scottish local authorities.

Within a historically centralized fiscal and governance structure in Scotland, constitutional change since the 2014 Scottish independence referendum has brought increasing devolution of fiscal and policy powers through the Smith Commission. New tax powers for Scotland are thought to have resulted in an increasing range of 'largely uncoordinated local and city-based economic development policies' (Martin et al. 2015: 348), for example: the Single Outcome Agreements (SOA); local infrastructure funds; City Region Deals (or City Deals in Scotland), contributing towards an increasing complexity of delivery mechanisms and structures for delivering economic development functions across Scotland. Scottish local government is thought to 'operate in a fragmented, complex and interconnected policy and service delivery environment characterised by associational and joint arrangements' (Pugh and Connolly, 2016: 321).

Given the England and Scottish contexts to local government policy, recent changes are thought to be contributing towards a new spatially devolved model of political-economic governance, albeit

‘relatively ad hoc and piece-meal reform’ (Martin et al. 2015: 348). As such, new devolved powers for English cities and Scotland are thought to be ‘highly uneven, unequal and potentially destabilising for promoting further spatial imbalance’ across the UK (Martin et al. 2015: 348).

2.3 Urban Economic Development

‘Cities can be thought of as unitary actors seeking to maximize economic and status interests. Policymakers pursue the economic interests of a city through policies that alter the rate of economic growth in the community.’

Feiock (2002: 124)

Historically, cities were thought of as areas suffering from social disadvantage, congestion, pollution, and examined via traditional economic explanations, such as: technological change, industrial decline; and poor investment (see for example, Ihlanfeldt, 1995). Urban policy in recent years has shifted focus on the importance of urban competitiveness, through the increasing recognition of their role for wider regional economic growth and the importance of more productive, innovative, knowledge-driven cities. Glaeser (2011) and Storper (2013) highlight how cities contribution to overall regional economic performance relates mainly to their role in connecting small nations and large regions, when individual city performance varies with size, density, visibility and connectivity.

Urban Growth (economic considerations):

Urban areas are increasingly recognized as critical forces for economic growth (although questioned by some⁷), with evidence to suggest that cities are more adept at dealing with economic development than nation states (Konvitz, J 2016). The main premise of the importance of cities is based largely on the idea that ‘effective urban systems ought to have benefits for the economy as a whole...and improve overall economic performance’ (Begg, 1999: 807).

Albeit urban competitiveness a highly contested term (see for example, Porter, 1998; Krugman, 1996; Begg, 2002; Martin, 2006)⁸, Martin and Simme (2008) provide a working definition useful for emphasising the contribution of cities:

‘Urban competitiveness relates to the ability of cities to continually upgrade their business environment, skill base, and physical, social and cultural infrastructures, so as to attract and

⁷This is based mainly on the views that: cities are now fragmented economically, socially and institutionally and no longer united, metropolitanisation has made cities obsolete, city networks have made traditional urban territorial boundaries obsolete, global capitalism has made European cities insignificant, the increased mobility of labour, capital and ideas and the space of flows have made place and community less important in a globalised world (see Parkinson, M., Hutchins, M., Simmie, J., Clark, G., and Verdonk, H. (2004) *Competitive European Cities: Where do the Core Cities Stand*).

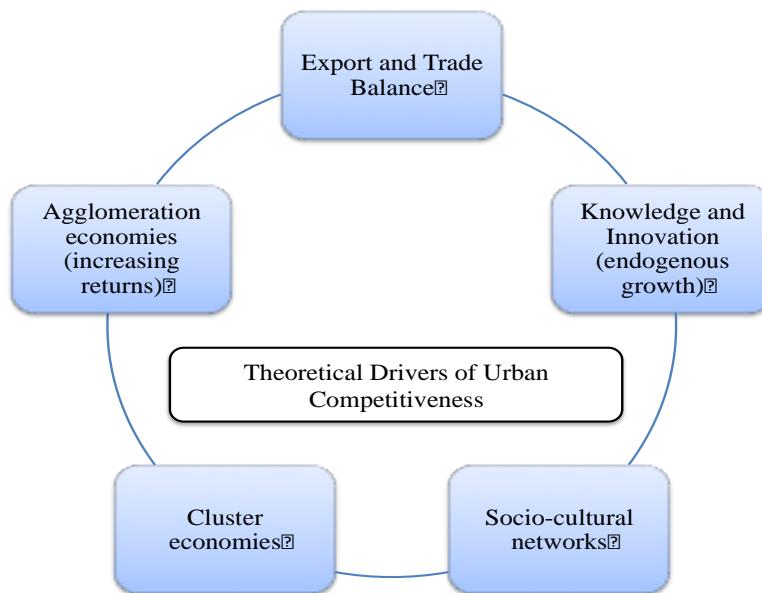
⁸ See for example, Michael Porter’s study *On Competition* (1998) finds ‘no one accepted definition’ of competitiveness (Porter, 1998: xii).

retain high-growth, innovative and profitable firms, and an educated, creative and entrepreneurial workforce, to thereby enable it to achieve a high rate of productivity, high employment rate, high wages, high GDP per capita, and low levels of income inequality and social exclusion⁹

Martin and Simme (2008: 4).

Martin and Simme (2008) explain the different networks within cities (both internal and external), in terms of five overlapping theoretical processes (see Figure 2).

Figure 2: Theoretical Drivers of Urban Competitiveness



Traditional views of urban competitiveness (albeit a contested term) are based largely on endogenous growth theory⁹, which focus on the competitive relationship between cities, although thought limited by an apparent ‘lack of attention for the importance of external relations of cities and city networks’, or recognition of ‘the importance of relational factors’ (in terms of external, exogenous factors) of inter-city relationships (Yuhong, and Lijing, 2012: 272).

There followed influential research based upon Porter’s (1990) ‘diamond’ model of competitiveness, which recognized the role of urban networks for economic competitiveness, and the importance of competition among places (Begg, 1999). More recent growth theory focuses on the dynamic (networked) view of cities, where the agglomeration and clustering of people, industry

⁹ See for example: Andersson and Karlsson, 2007; Capello and Nijkamp, 2009; Stimson et al. (2011).

and employment in close proximity allows for the easy flow of information, ideas and innovation (see for example: Jacobs, 1969; Bairoch, 1988). The new urbanism recognises the important role of city networks for urban competitiveness (Stanley, 2005), where city networks can be defined as: the city network; the nodal (city) level connection; and secondary nodal connections (i.e. various organizations within cities), resulting mainly from cooperative urban relationships, as opposed to purely competitive hierarchical urban relationships (Taylor, 2004). Urban policy from the 1990s thus shifted focus onto the spatial (networked) view of cities and economic growth more generally defined by scale and agglomeration economies.

The shifting focus towards alternative models of traditional urban policy in the UK (see for example, Amin and Thrift, 1994; Stoker and Young, 1993), is thought to underpin policies involving horizontal coordination and collaboration between different cities (Begg, 1999), resulting in networking or ‘joined up’ government policy for public service provision between central and local governments across the UK (Huxman and Vangen 2000).

‘local authorities previously antipathetic to market- and partnership-based activities adopted an approach of so-called ‘new realism’, within which concepts such as partnership with the private sector were embraced as the only realistic way of addressing how to meet their regeneration objectives within a climate of dwindling resources and capacity to effect change’

McCarthy (2007: 29)

British urban policy has been characterized by partnership working for: bidding, funding and delivery of regeneration policy in recent years (Bailey, 2003). For example, the 1990s saw a growth in the number of collaborative working initiatives and partnerships, often in very localized areas under a series of ‘piecemeal and unfocused policy initiatives’ (Bailey, 2003: 443). Government-appointed local governance agencies (e.g. Urban Development Corporations in England) and early public-private partnerships (e.g. The City Challenge programme) were created across England, where for the next decade, almost every local funding regime required the involvement of partnerships for the delivery of regeneration programmes, although largely replaced in recent years through a more strategic approaches to urban development (Bailey, 2003).

Urban local government and cities (spatial considerations):

Recognising the importance of urban competitiveness, understanding how cities are defined, managed, organised and structured, are key economic development policy considerations. Local government has a central role in policy and governance of cities. The size and geographical, spatial structure and governance modes of cities are key elements to understanding how urban growth benefits are maximised and managed. The ‘administrative urban boundary’ and Functional Urban

Area (FUA) managed by urban local government do not always coincide, resulting in complexities for understanding the delivery of urban economic policy.

Typically, cities represent built-up areas of historically well-established functions and are essentially the agglomeration of people, firms, and economic activity within defined political boundaries (Glaeser, 1998). The term ‘city’ can be understood at more than one spatial level (Cheshire, 1999). Up until the reorganisation of UK local government in the mid 1970s, the common statistical way of defining an urban area was in line with that defined by the ‘administrative urban boundary’ or population area (i.e. defined by the census), in terms of the area administered by local government authorities¹⁰. Often referred to as the ‘municipal’ area of the city defined by the area administered by the city local authority (e.g. Glasgow City Council). The ‘metropolitan area’ relates to the built-up area of neighbouring towns/suburbs and spread of development beyond the core.

Boddy and Parkinson (2004) suggest the process of metropolitanisation through city networks means that traditional urban territorial boundaries are obsolete, as city-regions describe the continuous networks of urban communities and economic activity (Jacobs, 1984), which ‘increasingly function as essential spatial nodes of the global economy and as distinctive political actors on the world stage’ Scott et al. (2001:11). The Functional Urban Area (FUA) is an urban definition proposed by OECD based on urban economic functions rather than administrative boundaries. The ‘city-region’ or ‘functional economic city’ relates to the economic footprint or travel to work area (TTWA) of a city in terms of the location of key economic markets, including: labour, retail and housing.¹¹ Tewdwr-Jones and McNeill (1999: 131) define city-regions as ‘a strategic level of administration and policymaking that extends beyond the administrative boundaries of single urban government authorities to include urban and/or semi-urban hinterlands’.

It is apparent therefore, that the structure and size of the defined geographical urban area administered by urban local government varies according to the above definitions. Local and central government policy traditionally view the city-region area as the most important for place-based policy, emphasising the potential contribution of wider city connections for regional growth. The gradual process of increasing territorial decentralisation across the UK is also thought to have contributed to the city-region scale emerging as a significant focus of sub-national economic analyses and development planning (Coombes and Champion 2011).

Indeed, the organisation and structure of urban local government in recent years has been subject of much debate, where research argues that increasing fragmentation of local government is counterproductive for economic development and ‘accountability’ (Lowry, 2010), thus requiring

¹⁰ See for example, GRO(s), 1991. Census Key Statistics for Localities in Scotland. HMSO, 1995.

¹¹See Box 2.1 ‘City Concepts’ of ODMP (2006) for a more in-depth discussion on the role and definition of cities.

‘good regional government and governance’ mechanisms to ‘eliminate development subsidy competition among jurisdictions’ (Feiock, 2005: 5).

However, the planning and implementation of economic interventions at the city-region scale is thought to require the co-ordination of a wide range of varied institutional actors (Brenner, 2004), and the alignment of local institutional arrangements within functional economic areas challenging (Crouch, 2011). The mismatch between administrative and functionally defined city boundaries may result in a failure on the behalf of administering local authorities, to implement economic development policies that deliver positive spillovers for the region in practice, as these may not always be fully internalized within the administered area (Cheshire and Gordon, 1996).

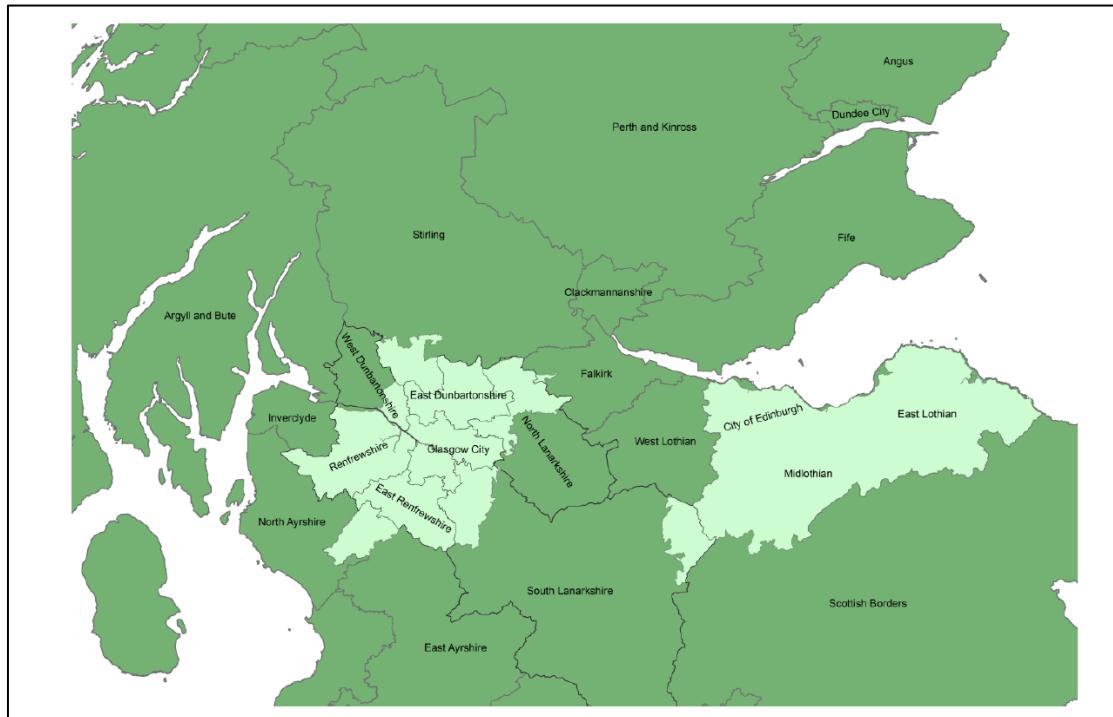
Academics and policy-makers have long been concerned that ‘metropolitan regions are chaotic and ungovernable places’ (Storper, 2013: 1). Regional urbanisation (Soja, 2000) recognises the apparent linkages between city-region governance systems and economic performance (Ahrend et al. 2014), shaped by the strong interdependencies across urban areas, comprised of fragmented geography and a variation of differing agencies that govern them (Storper 2013). Hence in a multi-level policy context, city-region governance arrangements are thought limited by their capacity to perform as legitimate, functional and enduring policy players (Nelles, 2013, p1350).

The definitions of the geographical areas for delivering economic development at the sub-national level is therefore often implicit or contested, leading to confusion in terms of spatial analysis and policy prescription. The spatial definition and local authority understanding of the city is important for determining the city local authority boundary: where the legal boundary is thought closely equivalent with its physical size, and the city local authority boundary frequently failing to correspond to the initial built-up area of the city (Hall and Pain, 2006; Parr, 2007). Given this complexity there is an important difference between both the functional and geographical areas of Scotland’s main city local authorities.

The functional economic region/area is thought to be of more economic importance and focus for local government: the Travel-To-Work-Area (TTWA) of Scotland’s largest urban areas (i.e. Glasgow, Edinburgh, Dundee and Aberdeen) is thought to largely correspond to an area beyond their original/legal geographical boundary, due to a large degree of in-commuter workforce and corresponding to the area where the majority of resident population work. By implication, the view of larger local authorities is often that their effective economic and functional area under much of the control (i.e. funded) by adjacent/neighbouring local authorities: the functional and legal geographical boundaries of the remaining smaller cities of Scotland (i.e. Inverness, Stirling and Perth) are largely thought to be equivalent and including their TTWA. Figure 3 demonstrates how Glasgow and Edinburgh’s TTWA include a number of other Local Authorities. For example, Glasgow’s TTWA includes Glasgow City Council, but also: East Dunbartonshire Council,

Renfrewshire and East Renfrewshire Council, and parts of North and South Lanarkshire Councils, Falkirk, Stirling, West Dunbartonshire and East Ayrshire Council.

Figure 3: Glasgow and Edinburgh Travel to Work Areas (TTWA), and Local Authority Boundaries



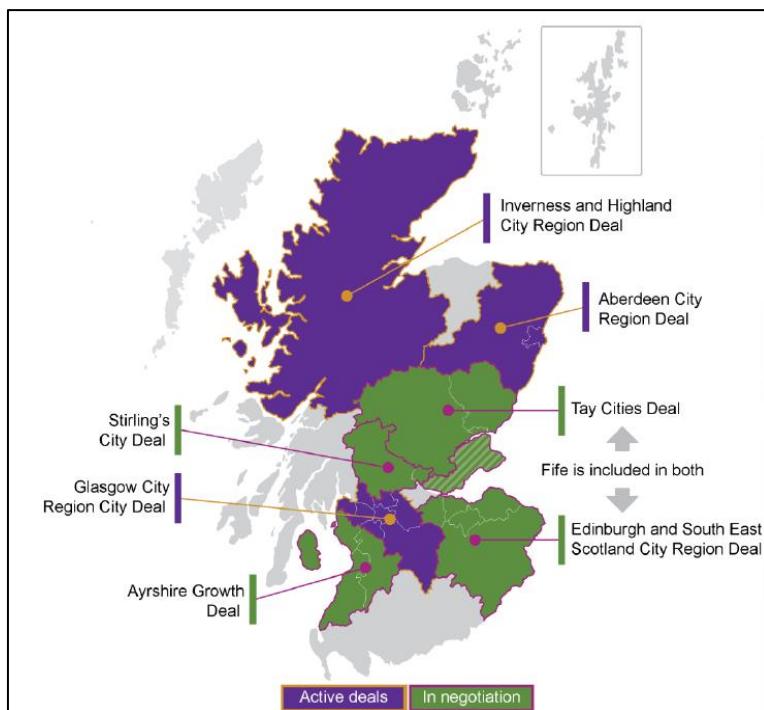
Source: Scotland's Economic Powerhouses (Fraser of Allander Institute, 28 October 2015)

The result of such boundary complexities and discrepancies across Scotland's cities have been a focus of much academic debate over the years, particularly given that local authority equalisation funding¹² is based largely on a city's population base and TTWA. Some key definitional anomalies exist regarding Scotland's cities, for example, Falkirk is regarded a large town, yet in population terms is only slightly smaller than Perth and Inverness as cities, highlighting the issue of key differences constituting small cities or large towns in Scotland.

There is therefore a tendency for city local authorities to compete for funding, rather than collaborate with neighbouring local authorities, due mainly to discrepancies in functional and legal boundary responsibilities and funding. Recent infrastructure funding models being pursued by Scotland's cities in recent years (i.e. City Deals – see Figure 4), are focussed on wider metropolitan areas of cities and reflective of wider TTWAs.

¹² See 'Scotland's Fiscal Framework: Assessing the Agreement Scotland' for a recent discussion of the equalisation formula in Scotland – the Barnett Formula: <https://www.ifs.org.uk/uploads/publications/wps/wp201605.pdf>

Figure 4: City Region Deals in Scotland



Source: City Region Deals in Scotland, (SPICe, March 2017)

Scotland’s City Region Deals largely reflect Scottish Government’s increasing recognition of the strategic and economic importance of wider city-regions, including a renewed heavy focus in the refreshed Third National Planning Framework (2014).

2.3.1 Economic Development Policies of Urban Local Government

There are a number of challenges facing urban local government in delivering economic development policy, including: lack of resources; falling urban population (Arku and Oosterbann, 2014); increasingly complex political systems of governance; contributing towards a growing recognition of the importance of being able to manage and maximise urban networks for delivering economic development. Cities are thought to be ‘increasingly dependent on the ability to cope with a complex web of both horizontal and vertical economic and social interactions, both within and between cities’ (Cheng et al. 2013) within an evolving globalised economy, putting cities under increasing pressure to become more economically competitive. For example, Crosby and Bryson (2006) suggest collaboration occurs ‘simply [in] that we live in a shared-power world in which many groups and organizations are involved in, affected by, or have some partial responsibility to act on public challenges (44).

The increasing interest in how local government is organised with a renewed interest on the role of institutions is largely associated with the ‘new regionalism’ (Wheeler, 2002), recognising urban economic development based on a network-like mode of operation, where collaboration policies

are thought to provide flexible ways for delivering urban policy that creates ‘real competitive advantage for the urban region’ (Sotarauta, 2010: 294).

Competition and collaboration are traditionally based on separate theoretical concepts: competition based on traditional growth theories explaining economic success, and urban collaboration promoting the idea of spatial integration. Urban collaboration policy has been presented as ‘an alternative approach to traditional models of urban competitiveness’ (see for example Amin and Thrift, 1993; Stoker and Young, 1993: 180), building on the early ideas of Michael Porter, who argued that cities (and regions) collaborate, as well as compete, due to benefits of the micro-economic factors and networks within cities. Porter (1990, 1995) debates competitiveness by assuming inter-firm competition as equivalent to inter-place competition (although challenged by Krugman). Whilst cities at the global scale generally seek to compete for economic growth (i.e. for investment, population, tourism, labour, for example), the rationale is that small cities may be more successful if they collaborate with nearby cities to achieve complimentary¹³ (Gordon, 2011).

In an economic development context, a city’s economic policy actions (i.e. through market interventions) (Bowman, 1988: 512) can be seen to shift focus from competition towards cooperation (Bowman, 1988; Bradshaw, 2000; Goetz and Kayser, 1993; Gordon, 2007, 2009; Grady, 1987; Wells, 1990; Wolfson and Frisken, 2000). Collaboration across administrative boundaries is a way to enhance competitiveness for those places that share networks, by potentially providing a critical mass for network members (Meijers 2008). Stoker (1995) suggests that cities can work together to generate a coalition of private and public interests in the form of an urban regime, where local decision makers are assembled to help govern policy to the benefit of the region as a whole. Successful cities are thus thought to maintain and promote connections with other places.

From a governance perspective, theories of Institutional Collective Action (ICA) argue that local government can work together to produce both benefits from competition and collaboration, by helping institutions to work together to achieve benefits that would not otherwise be gained if working alone (Olson, 1965). As highlighted previously, examples of institutional collaboration differ widely in both policy focus and organisation, with collaborative working between cities long recognized across Europe, including: Øresund (Copenhagen and Malmo); Lithuania (Vilnius and Kaunas); The Dutch Deltametropolis (formerly the Randstad) with a long-standing initiative aimed at strengthening global competitiveness and the profile of the cities of Amsterdam, Rotterdam, The Hague and Utrecht.

¹³ Complementarity is when two collaborating cities have similar economic structures, but possibly specialise in the production of different sectors.

Urban collaboration policies can be aimed at improving both physical and institutional capacity, by encouraging the development of working relationships between urban government, public agencies and societal actors. For example, cities often use collaboration as a resolution approach when cooperation of two or more local governments is required (e.g. to progress physical connectivity), or by collaborating on similar or interconnected challenges (i.e. strategic economic development issues), or simply, to strengthen collaborative relationships between different agencies (i.e. to support joined-up service delivery and avoid duplication). Cities can also collaborate to ‘pool resources’ beyond traditional city boundaries, to create a ‘critical mass of assets’ across city services, aimed at avoiding duplication and hamper any ‘potential negative effects from competition between local authorities’ (Eurocities, 2011: 2).

The general shifting focus on city-city (inter-urban) collaboration in the UK has been historically concerned with a range of strategic activity including: transportation, infrastructure development, planning, grant applications, and marketing strategies (Gordon, 2007). Indeed, government policy in the UK has promoted partnership working as key criterion for regeneration funding, for example: the English City Challenge and Single Regeneration Budget initiatives; and Social Inclusion Partnership (SIP) initiative in Scotland, and ‘continues to be important within regeneration funding’. Thus, collaboration and partnerships are thought a ‘principle underpinning all aspects of urban regeneration policy in the UK’ (McCarthy, 2007: 29).

However, recent evidence of more locally driven IMC in the UK is thought a reflection of a growing ‘rationale for political leaders to negotiate purposefully and pragmatically with surrounding local authorities’ (OECD, 2015: 31), reflective of changing constitutional arrangements across the UK. For example, recent policy shifts in England include the establishment of ‘English Core Cities’ - representing the eight largest cities in England outside London (i.e. Birmingham, Bristol, Leeds, Liverpool, Manchester, Newcastle, Nottingham and Sheffield) – thought having evolved to represent the shifting political focus on greater collaboration across England’s main local authority areas, with a remit to lobby for greater autonomy for local authorities and a redistribution of power within regions, initiating the first ‘City Deals’ in 2011 following the advent of the UK Coalition. Political collaboration of local government is thought historically atypical in the UK and often the result of mandate Government policy. Thus, recent evidence of IMC in the UK is thought to reflect local government’s changing constitutional position, given that council’s have been historically without powers of competence (Kelly, 2007).

Greater UK policy recognition of cities and their increasing role within economic development through policies of collaborative working, alongside shifts in urban regime theory and increasing local government policy fragmentation, provide the context for which collaboration has emerged as economic development policy across urban local government. The result has been an increase in the development of new urban-based policies, which emphasise the importance of collaborative

working through 'joined-up' policy making (Docherty et al. 2004: 449).

2.3.2 Recognition of Networks for Urban Economic Development

There is a vast academic interest and empirical evidence in economic development literature concerning the role of networks for the economic development of urban areas, viewed positively by many policy makers as important for economic competitiveness and rarely questioned in practice (Sullivan et al. 2013).

Drawing from a review of the urban economic development literature, Table 1 summarises the key benefits of urban networks as enablers of economic development:

Table 1: Collaborative Advantage for Urban Economic Development:

	BENEFITS FOR URBAN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (non-exhaustive)	LITERATURE
ECONOMIC NETWORKS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge and innovation network externalities (endogenous growth); • Reduced Transaction Costs; • Diffusion of ideas, new collaborative solutions/ innovation; • Share educational/cultural backgrounds; • Knowledge accumulation and knowledge spillovers; • Increasing returns in ‘total factor productivity’. 	Martin and Simme (2008); Porter, M (1990) The Competitive Advantage Of Nations; Porter, M. (1998) On Competition; Begg, (1999) Cities And Competitiveness; Blakely And Leigh (2010) Planning Local Economic Development; Amin and Thrift (1995) Globalisation, Institutional Thickness and The Local Economy, in Healey et al. (Eds) Managing Cities: The New Urban Context, Chichester: John Wiley and Sons.
SPATIAL NETWORKS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agglomeration networks: external economies of scale/scope that flow from firms locating in the same area; • Localised knowledge spillovers; innovation in close geographical/spatial proximity; • Increasing returns from spatial concentration/external economies of localisation; • Spatial and functional development of cities and urban systems, via spatial integration, functional integration and economic complementarities; • Clusters: specialist industries and services. 	Meijers (2005) Polycentric Urban Regions and The Quest For Synergy; Marshall (1920) Principles Of Economics; Van Oort, F., Burger, M., and Raspe, O. (2010). On The Economic Foundation Of The Urban Network Paradigm; Camagni (2002) On The Concept Of Territorial Competitiveness; Gordon (2009). Perceptions Of Regional Economic Development; Gordon (2007) Partners Or Competitors; Blakely and Leigh (2010) Planning Local Economic Development.
GOVERNANCE NETWORKS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal and external soft networks; • Socio-cultural networks: (embeddedness'; values, institutional culture); • Governance networks; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - avoid bureaucratic processes; - problems/opportunities better conceptualized and tackled; - helpful in politically challenged and divided situations; - create connectedness; - social cohesion, network steering, public administrative reform; - resilience and adaptability to change. 	Scharpf (1978). Interorganizational Policy Studies; Kenis (1991) The Preconditions for Policy Networks; Kenis and Schneider (1991). Policy Networks and Policy Analysis; Dowding (1992): Model or Metaphor; Rhodes (1997) Understanding Governance; O'Toole (1997) Treating networks seriously; Porter (1998) On competition; Stoker (1998) Governance as theory; Jessop (1998) The rise of governance and the risks of failure; Klijn and Koppenjan, (2000). Public Management and Policy Networks; McGuire (2000). Collaborative policy making and administration; Wolfson and Friskin (2000) Local response to the global challenge; Healey (2004) Creativity and urban governance; Newman (2005) Remaking governance, peoples, politics and the public sphere; Gordon (2007) Partners or competitors

It is apparent from Table 1 that the benefits of collaboration for urban economic development, relates to a diverse range of literature. A key complexity across the literature relates to the fact that organizing and realizing the benefits from urban networks, and just how and where those connections are made, and by whom, are thought ‘rarely identified except anecdotally’ and ‘difficult to fully evidence’ (Malecki 2002: 934). Therefore, before discussing the complexities of networks and economic development of urban local authorities in more detail in Chapter Three, the following subsection (2.3.3) concludes Chapter Two by clarifying the urban local authority context of collaboration for economic development as understood in this thesis.

2.3.3 Summary: Urban Local Authority Collaboration (ULAC) for Economic Development

Chapter two demonstrates how economic development is a diverse concept, relating largely to the delivery domain of local government. In the context of this thesis, the terms ‘local government’ and ‘local authority’ will be used interchangeably, and the definition of the ‘urban’ and ‘city’ context will vary according to the size and spatial contexts of individual local authorities in line with that discussed at the start of section 2.3. The size and definition of the ‘urban local authority’ in the context of this thesis, will relate to the surrounding population base (i.e. the administrative urban boundary) for which the local authority is responsible, unless otherwise stated. The administrative urban boundary definition is thought most relevant to the consideration of collaboration processes between urban local authorities, given that the behaviour and intention to participate in collaboration with other local authorities often relates to city size.

The research’ focus on collaboration as economic development policy of urban local government will therefore draw upon three main bodies of literature: economic, spatial, and governance perspectives, acknowledging that no ‘universal model or framework’ of economic development will ‘guarantee success for economic development’ (Stimson and Stough, 2008: 188). An understanding of economic development according to this thesis recognizes the need to ‘move beyond narrow concerns of the economy’ (Bosworth, 2011:7), recognizing ‘a new set of arguments for local economic development policies and/or more strategic forms of territorial competition’ (Gordon, 2011: 34) in line with the below:

‘at the micro-level: effective mobilisation by potential beneficiaries with the capacity to organise themselves into a successful promotional coalition within a suitably defined territory; and at the macro-level: tolerance and/or active support by higher levels of government for local agencies to take on independent/competitive roles in pursuit of economic development for their territories’

(Gordon, 2011: 34)

The thesis research is in line with Gordon's (2011) above broad understanding of local economic development as a 'more strategic form of territorial competition' (p40), appropriate to the study of collaboration in the context of urban local government, in that it emphasizes: a) the territorial, spatially dependent nature of economic development activity; b) the broader scope of activity beyond only economic competitiveness, recognizing both 'coalition' and 'competition' for territorial competitiveness, and c) recognition of the role of higher tiers of government and 'territory' in shaping local government economic development policy responses via 'contextual influences' that 'shape (and bias) the choice of policies and the way they are implemented' (Gordon, 2011: 41).

There is some research to help explain the rationale and factors determining the success of inter-governmental collaboration (Carr et al. 2009), suggesting horizontal collaboration (i.e. between government agencies at the same level of government) is more likely between 'geographically proximate units collaborating around processes or service delivery (Gerber, 2015: 3), due to the strength of relationships, trust and formal and informal connections between individuals within these administrations. However, how such collaborative processes function in practice in the UK is still largely unknown.

Chapter three follows with a more detailed discussion of the role of collaboration as policy networks in urban local government economic development, drawing on three main bodies of network-related literature: economic networks; spatial networks; governance networks. More specifically, the effect of network dimensions on local government economic development collaboration is examined, including closer consideration of their nature and what is meant by 'network' in the context of collaboration as understood in this thesis.

Chapter Three: Economic Development and Urban Local Government:

It's all about networks

3.1 Introduction: Collaboration Policy Terminology

Section 2.3 in Chapter 2 on urban local government economic development, introduced the idea of ‘collaboration’ as economic development policy. Fuller understanding of what is meant by ‘collaboration’ across organizational, political and spatial boundaries for urban local government is discussed in the following sections.

Collaboration as local government policy is widely associated with economic development within a dense and complex multidisciplinary literature, where conceptual complexity means collaboration is understood in multiple ways, deriving from often, conflicting theoretical assumptions. For example: some studies look at collaboration as some form of social structure in a structured and quantitative way (Bergenholtz and Waldstrøm, 2011); and others, consider metaphorical descriptions of collaboration as some type of social interaction across organizational and spatial boundaries.

Section 3.1 provides a summary of the terminological challenges relating to collaboration as ‘networks’, before briefly synthesizing the main theoretical domains of the literature in section 3.2, highlighting underlying assumptions and implications of collaboration-related theories that apply to an understanding of urban local government economic development, mainly: policy network theory; economic network theory; and spatial network theory. The thesis focus on collaboration policy between urban local government for the purposes of economic development will then be explained and justified. Section 3.3 defines collaboration policy in the context of urban local government according to this thesis (i.e. Urban Local Authority Collaboration (ULAC)), bringing the relevant theoretical concepts together. Thereafter, section 3.4 argues that a multi-disciplinary understanding of ULAC is limited, requiring cognizance of three clusters of theoretical literature (i.e. termed ‘theoretical domains’). The section proposes a two-dimensional analytical framework for the study of ULAC, requiring an understanding of functional domains, relevant to the theoretical domains, in terms of network: purpose; structure; and management. Section 3.5 highlights the complex nature of collaboration policy through closer consideration of its functional dimensions, emphasizing the lack of understanding of their impact on policy outcomes for the economic development of urban local government, and identification of the key knowledge gaps in section 3.6.

Subsection 3.7 concludes the chapter by suggesting that an understanding of ULAC requires appreciation of a networks’ multi-level dimensions in terms of the structure of networks, their

purpose, and management/governance aspects, presenting a multi-dimensional conceptual framework to help conceptualise the PV of ULAC, discussed on more detail in Chapter four.

It is necessary to first briefly outline some of the terminological challenges underpinning collaboration research in the context of studying public policy.

3.1.1 Terminological and conceptual challenges:

The difficulty defining and conceptualizing collaboration for urban local government economic development relates mainly to the large number of varying terminology and range of meanings relating to collaboration and network research, spanning a diverse multi-disciplinary literature and wide number of research fields applying network research.

The multitude of network-related terms in a public policy context, include: ‘collaboration’; ‘network’; ‘coordination’, all in themselves controversial terms, often lacking individual clarity. To emphasise this point, some ‘101 definitions of collaboration’ (O’Leary and Vij, 2012: 508) are thought to exist, giving rise to potential misconceptions of the term. The existence of multiple terms brings with it conceptual challenges and an apparent confusion within the literature relating to the interchangeable nature of the commonly used terms ‘collaboration’ and ‘network’. O’Leary and Vij (2012: 508) suggest an ‘apparent lack of consensus and agreed-upon definition and commonly used term, with a need for more precise models of measuring the relevant factors which impact upon collaborative behaviour and policy in practice’ (O’Leary and Vij, 2012: 518). Indeed, within the public management literature, Provan and Lemaire (2012) suggests the confusion between ‘collaboration’ or ‘collaborative arrangements’ are often used when they really mean ‘networks’.

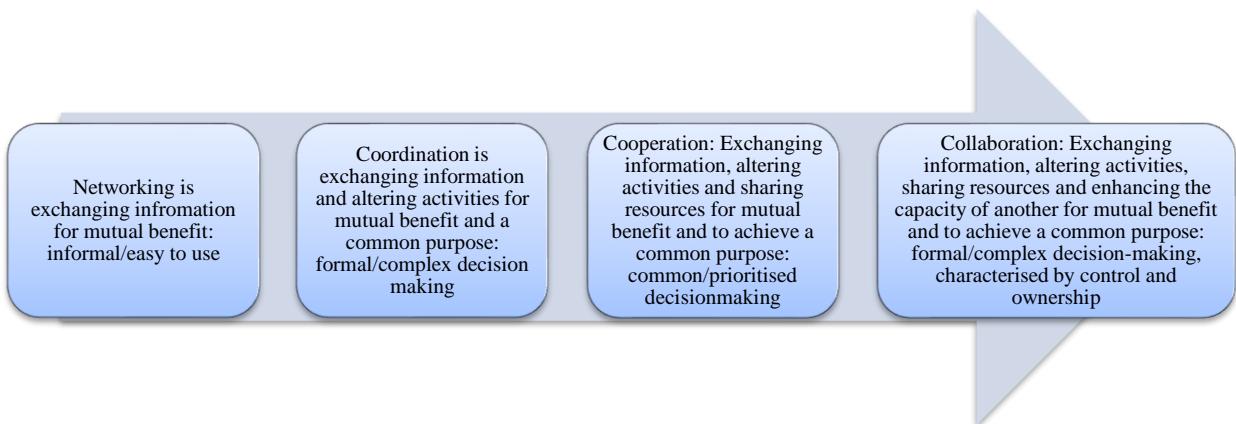
Isett et al. (2011: 160) suggest: ‘the word ‘network’ is used too loosely throughout the literature’ when it can refer to many different things: different types of collaboration; different scales of collaboration (i.e. individuals, organizations, etc.); different collaboration conceptualizations/functions (i.e. a metaphor for spatial organizing; a governance method; an economic policy); a static, dynamic or agency-based process. Networks tend to be thought more of as being ‘organically developed by organizations independently of, or within collaborative partnerships’ (Scott and Thomas, 2013: 1). However, there is thought general agreement that the term ‘network’ is typically used when referring to multi-actor collective action arrangements for solving joint problems (Agranoff and McGuire, 2001), specifically, in terms of public management networks that are led or managed by government representatives, albeit in varying forms/structures. Within the public sector management literature, a concept of ‘network’ found to have ‘the most support and agreement is policy network’ (Klinj, 1996), relating mainly to early theories of organisational sociology and inter-organisational relations in political science literature, and

discussed more fully in section 3.2.1.

Given that ‘collaboration’ and ‘network’ are often used interchangeably, the incorrect impression is that ‘all networks are collaborative and all collaborations happen in networks’ (O’Leary and Vij, 2012: 517). Therefore, when using the terms ‘collaboration’ or ‘network’, there is a need to be clear what is meant to make sure there is a shared definition (O’Leary and Vij, 2012).

The understanding of collaboration according to Himmelman’s ‘continuum of complexity and commitment’ (Himmelman, 1996), provides a typology of collaboration according to varying levels of complexity and integration, that build up along a continuum ‘depending on the degree to which three limitations to working together – time, trust and turf – are overcome’ (p7) (see Figure 5 below).

Figure 5: Himmelman’s Continuum of Complexity and Commitment (the three C’s)



Source: Himmelman (1996)

According to Himmelman (1996), collaboration is achieved at the end of the collaboration continuum. However, the continuum uses the terms ‘coordination, collaboration and cooperation’ interchangeably, when it is thought they are best thought of as ‘analytically distinct at different points on the continuum’ (Farnsworth, Irving and Fenger, 2014: 261). Therefore, the existence of various conceptualisations of collaboration and use of different terminology, underlines the difficulties of sourcing a coherent conceptualisation. The theoretical rationale for achieving successful collaboration is thus requires a multi-disciplinary approach, discussed more fully throughout the rest of the chapter.

3.2 Collaboration as economic development policy of urban local government

In order to better understand the role of collaboration in the economic development of urban local government, what is meant by ‘network’ in the context of this thesis must be clarified and defined,

reviewing the key theoretical perspectives underpinning the role of networks in extant economic development research.

ULAC for economic development can be conceptualized as ‘network’ policy reflecting the evolving inter-disciplinary insights from several theoretical perspectives over time, including: economic geography (i.e. spatial networks); economic competitiveness (i.e. institutional networks); and public management (i.e. policy and governance networks). The overlapping nature of the differing theoretical perspectives relates mainly to their conceptual relatedness for providing a theoretical perspective on the role of ‘networks’ (in the broadest sense), for economic development, which is thought ‘place dependent’ both ‘within and outwith a place’ and in terms of ‘larger social and geographical scales’ (Leitner et al. 2002: 278).

Therefore, there lacks one commonly accepted theory of ULAC due to theoretical plurality and that clearly articulates its relationship with policy outcomes. The following subsections discuss how ULAC can be defined and understood as an economic development policy of urban local government, as context to researching ULAC between Scottish local authorities. What follows is an overview of key insights of network processes from a multi-disciplinary perspective, drawing from three main bodies of literature relevant to understanding ULAC across urban boundaries.

3.2.1 Policy Network Theory:

A fundamental starting point for understanding the theoretical premise of network policies within economic development relates to the ‘policy network’, ‘network governance’ and collaborative governance’ concepts, which view networks and collaboration as ‘alternative modes of governance to markets and hierarchies’ (Morgan et al. 1999: 181). Albeit often disputed concepts within the public management literature, they are fundamental to understanding ‘collaboration policy’ activities (O’Leary and Vij, 2012: 516).

Isett et al. (2011) helpfully defines the range of network literature for public administration as falling into three main sub-themes: decision making policy networks concerned with decisions about public resource allocation; collaborative networks concerned with the provision and production of goods and services; governance networks concerned with public goods/service provision, policymaking and the coordination of interests toward a common goal.

From a public administration perspective, urban regime theory (see Mossberger and Stoker, 2001) is thought traditionally concerned with economic development (Davies, 2003: 257), through ‘policy networks’ in the UK context (Dowding, 1995: 140). ‘Policy networks’ are referred to as a form of ‘intermediation between state and society since the 1950s...as an analytical tool for examining the exchange relations between public and private actors and outcomes of the policy

processes' (Eraydin et al. 2008: 2292). Policy networks are used to emphasise the importance of structural relationships between political institutions (Marsh, 1998). Early conceptualisations of policy networks by Rhodes (1988) marked a key development in the field in the UK, by characterizing collaboration between public and private actors in terms of policy communities along a continuum from policy communities at the one end, through to professional networks, intergovernmental networks and producer networks to issue networks, at the other.

Policy networks in UK public policy proliferated in the 1990s and 2000s, through the promotion of the public-private, collaborative partnerships and the ways in which public/private actors are involved in policy. However, existing policy network research is characterised by varying ontological perspectives, posing significant problems for understanding the conceptual relationship between different policies and outcomes (discussed more fully in section 4). In this sense, Blom-Hansen (1997) suggests the need for explicit recognition of the policy network actor 'if the concept is to enable the analyst to move beyond mere description into... policy explanation' (p669).

The 'collaborative governance' increased at a time when hierarchical policy-making was being questioned (see Sørensen and Torfing, 2007), with a general shift from government to governance (Weiss and Wilkinson 2014), as society became more interdependent and public resources more limited, resulting in the growth of policy networks as a form of collaborative governance (see also, Klijn and Koppenjan 2000; Rhodes 1997; Kickert et al. 1997; and Scharpf, 1978). The governance focus in the literature is thought to reflect the move away from hierarchical systems of government to one of governance (Rhodes, 1997).

Keast, Madell, Agranoff, (2013) refer to 'network governance theory' of common structures of interdependence between all sectors of government, community and private sector, resulting in a wealth of government policy promoting the benefits of joint ventures, partnerships and collaborations, and an increase in local strategic partnerships (LSPs) in the 1990s and 2000s. 'Governance networks' are thought focussed on to providing a coordination function of network members towards a common goal, rather than being focused on the service or policy goals. (Isett et al. 2011). Inter-governmental and/or public-private sector working relates mainly to the new urban governance literature (Davies, 2002; Lowndes and Skelcher, 1998; Stewart, 2005) as an institutional and organizational concept.

Indeed, partnership working was promoted as a model for urban regeneration following the fragmentation of urban policy in the 1980s, as policy makers attempted to follow this by integrating public and private agencies to help better coordinate projects and programmes (Davies, 2002). In this context, policy networks evolved as a means for describing the governance of collective actions at a time of increasing government deregulation, with key themes in the literature relating to neo-liberalism (see Jessop, 2002 for example) and co-governance (Newman, 2005).

Regardless of a general consensus on the role of policy networks for understanding policy processes of joint action, many researchers argue (see for example Agranoff and McGuire, 2003; O'Toole, 1997) that the ability to harness the benefits of collaboration has been and continues to be limited due to the absence of a coherent theoretical framework informing their design, management, evaluation and governance (Keast, Madell, Agranoff, 2013: 18).

Collaboration policy is often unquestioned in practice, with a lack of recognition of the complexities associated with urban network governance. Although urban collaboration has become increasingly important in economic development policy terms, its full policy impact in terms of economic outcomes in practice is not fully understood, due mainly to limited empirical evidence. For example, Dowding (1995: 137) argues that the policy network perspective does help understand the policy process by categorizing different types of network. In this sense the role of collaboration in the public sector is thought largely inconclusive (O'Toole, 1997).

Policy networks relate to a diverse range of institutional forms ‘shaped and constrained by institutional rules as well as regulatory procedures and norms specific to the policy arena’ (Isett et al. 2011: 164). There are also limitations in the explanatory value of policy networks highlighted by Marsh and Rhodes (1992: 260), suggesting ‘policy networks will never provide an adequate account of policy change, because such networks are but one component of any such explanation’, given that the policy network concept is regarded as ‘a meso-level concept, it must be combined with macro-level and micro-level theories in order to produce explanations’. Therefore, ‘they [policy network explanations] fail to explain policy outcomes because the driving force of explanation, the independent variables, are not network characteristics per se but rather characteristics of components within the networks’ (Dowding 1995: 137).

3.2.2 Economic Network Literature

Whilst the existence of government is a key starting point for most policy related research, the economic gains from different institutional forms of government have historically received limited focus within economic research. Collaborative working between local government institutions as an institutional form of government is best recognised in relation to more recent institutional economic theories of urban growth, recognising the importance of external urban networks. Institutional economics recognises the economy as a collection of social and cultural relationships shaping individual action, rather than merely a collection of individual firms driven by rational self-interest (Amin, 1999).

Traditional urban growth theory paid little attention to the important role of networks for economic competitiveness, generally seeking to prove inter-city relations through certain attributes of cities

and lacking a relational perspective, making it difficult to reveal the nature of inter-city relations (Taylor, 2004). Early economic literature focuses on the competition between places with some welfare economists arguing that competition among local governments creates economic benefits (Kotler, Haider, and Rein, 1993). Critics reject such arguments criticising competition because of the costs imposed on communities and their residents (Turner, 1990), offering alternative conceptual frameworks.

Early conceptualisations of urban competitiveness are thought unconvincing and ignorant to the importance of external city relationships, followed by the ‘the new urbanism’, focussed on the nature and importance of inter-city relations. The 1990s marked a significant shift in focus on the important role of the city and the micro-economic, coordinated networked activities within and between cities for competitiveness (Healey and Dunham, 1994; Kresl, 1995; Begg, 1999; Maleki 2002; Gordon, 1999;). A shifting focus from the hierarchy perspective of traditional central place theory (i.e. where hierarchies within city networks are thought mainly the result of urban competition, and inter-city relations are vertical and one-way), the focus shifts towards the recognition of relational factors of city networks and inter-city relations (i.e. city to city), both internal and external relations of cities for urban competitiveness (Stanley, 2005).

A key influence in this research is the shifting recognition that cities can compete in the way that firms and nations compete, through the proactive implementation of strategies to improve networks (Porter, 1998). The growing interest in the role of urban networks within the new urbanism perspective of competitiveness recognises the role of ‘collaborative regional governance’ as an important compliment to competition, followed by a gradual decentralised approach to regionalism known as the ‘new localism’ (Feiock, 2012:1).

The purely competitive urban strategies characterising the 1980s ‘were being complemented by the emergence of collaborative interurban networks’ (Graham, 1995: 503) (see for example, Dawson, 1992; Parkinson, 1992; Robson, 1992), based on ‘alternative models of urban policy’ (Amin and Thrift, 1994; Stoker and Young, 1993:180). The shifting focus of the literature is thought to represent a ‘reorientation of urban politics towards a more balanced mixture of competition with collaboration’ (Graham, 1995: 503).

The economic rationale underpinning networks can be seen to shift was from traditional views of exogenous development (i.e. the Solow-Growth model: Solow, 1956), towards asset-based endogenous development, recognising the economy as an instituted process and socially embedded activity comprised of local skills, knowledge, natural resources, relationships, social capital, and governance (Amin, 1999). In this context, the new urbanism (and institutional) turn in economics, introduces the importance of scale through the advantages of spatial clustering (Porter, 1994), discussed more fully in the following section.

3.2.3 Spatial Network Literature

The shifting economic recognition of city networks for economic gain as highlighted above, recognizes the relative importance of spatial ‘networks, territory, place, scale’ (Jessop et al. 2008: 391) marking a key shift in the spatial network literature. A large theoretical literature on agglomeration economies/externalities exists, with useful reviews by Rosenthal and Strange, 2004; Duranton and Puga, 2004; and Puga, 2010, confirming that agglomeration benefits result from: learning, knowledge sharing, specialization, and labour markets.

The institutional turn in geography literature is thought to offer a ‘richer understanding of territorial proximity’ including, ‘the institutional and social sources of economic action...than that offered by endogenous growth theory, which continues to stress well-known but rather tired agglomeration factors’ (Amin, 1999: 370). The institutionalist perspective of spatial networks is based on an understanding that ‘successful’ regions flourish as a consequence of institutional embeddedness or thickness, creating powerful local nodes of economic activity within an increasingly competitive global economy (Amin and Thrift, 1992).

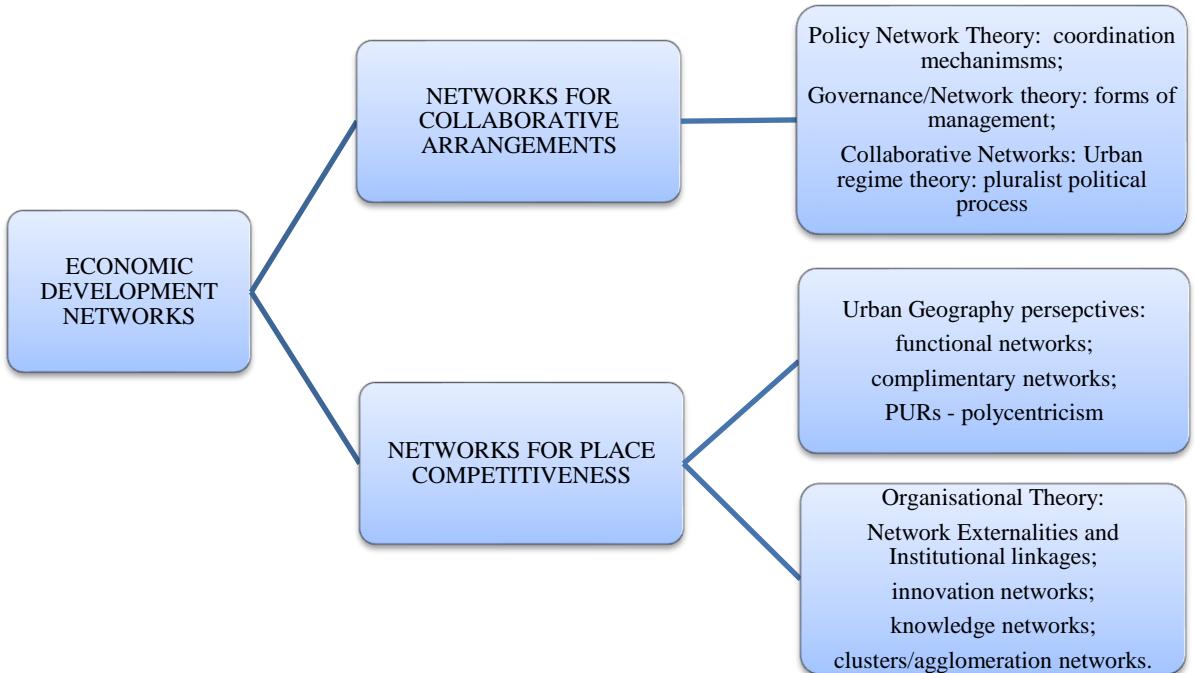
There is an expansive literature that considers how networks play an important synergetic role on the spatial configuration of cities, in terms of polycentric networks between cities (Meijers, 2005; Governa and Salone, 2005; Salet, 2006; Camagni and Salone, 1993; Malecki, 2002; Polenske, 2004). The synergy effects relate mainly to the benefits of ‘increasing returns linked to the cumulative development of agglomeration processes and activities’, thought to create positive advantages and externalities through the ‘artificial advantage of proactive collaboration and increased cooperation capability between public administrations’ (Camagni, 2002: 2405).

Given the above network methodologies relevant to the research of ULAC, section 3.2.4 highlights the importance of interaction between the theoretical positions underpinning the research.

3.2.4 Network Methodologies: Theoretical Interaction, Scale and Function

Researching economic development networks relating to ULAC requires further clarification of their theoretical basis, further discussed in the methodology chapter, and introduced here. It is evident from the evolving literature that ‘part of the intellectual challenge ... is blending multiple theoretical and research perspectives’ (Bryson et al. 2006: 52). The related literature is schematically summarized in Figure 6.

Figure 6: Collaboration Networks and Economic Development



The various theoretical perspectives relating to collaboration and networks reflect a shifting recognition of the role of institutions for shaping internal and external network properties across different scales (geographical and organisational) for economic development, according to three distinct theorising domains: networks for public administration; networks for spatial synergy; networks for economic competitiveness.

A consequence of the plurality of perspectives is conceptual ambiguity and complexity, due mainly to: varying spatial scales; differing strategic focus; differing organisational levels; and fundamentally, differing ontological dimensions underpinning the varying theoretical perspectives, contributing towards some fundamental research concerns:

- the *urban regime* literature is thought ‘rich in insights from numerous disciplines’ but limited due to a ‘piece-meal approach’, general lack of research focused on ‘whole network’ effects and outcomes (Provan and Milward, 2005), requiring a definition ‘that excludes irrelevant issues’ (Wood and Gray, 1991: 143);
- the *urban growth* literature promotes the idea of collaboration and networks between firms and places for economic efficiency, innovation and growth, although disputed for lacking empirical evidence of the economic gains;

- the *urban spatial* literature is largely recognised as a strategic planning concept emphasising the complex nature of urban networks and polycentric structure of urban systems (Davoudi, 2003), thought rather unconsolidated as a theory (Bailey and Turok, 2001).

The implications of theoretical complexity across the literature relevant to understanding ULAC for economic development is realising that networks are studied at multiple levels. Researching networks must therefore clarify both the scale and type of network analysis from the outset: first, in terms of scale, collaboration can take place in various forms, within different settings and across different geographical and organizational scales. For example: at the intra-organisational scale (i.e. between different individuals within an organization); inter-organizational scale (i.e. between different organisations in terms of public-private partnerships; strategic alliances; joint ventures; across different organisations); intra-urban collaboration (i.e. collaborative networks and working within the city); and inter-urban collaboration (i.e. working between different cities).

Second, network analysis can refer to a range of functions, where the ‘composition and size of networks are thought related to the purpose of collaboration’ (Bryson and Crosby, 2006: 49). For example, Rhodes and Marsh (1992) point out, ‘networks differ according to the interest that dominates them...and may be dominated by professional interests, economic or government interests’ (p184). Therefore, it is crucial when studying network literature that the area of interest and primary role of the network is clarified from the outset (i.e. in terms of its ‘function’).

Finally, the main difference between the conceptualizations of organisational networks is thought dependant on whether the network is considered a ‘metaphor for some kind of interaction across an organizational boundary, using multiplex, value relational data that draws in overall network structures’, or whether the term refers to ‘the specific social structure between organizations and analysed via social network analysis relying on uniplex, dichotomous relational data that is constrained to ego-networks’ (Bergenholtz, C., and Waldstrøm, 2011: 54). Thus, the type of network analysis must be clarified in terms of collaboration as a whole network or analysis of the sub-structures of the network, where methodologically, a number of approaches are possible (i.e. ego-network, dyadic, triadic or whole network perspectives) (Wasserman and Faust, 1994).

All types of network analysis are thought important, although an apparent lack of research on whole networks means it is difficult to fully understand how networks function separately from network sub-structures (Isett et al. 2011). Empirically, there is a lack of evidence demonstrating a comparison between ‘whole network’ policy outcomes and counterfactual policy outcomes (i.e. the policy outcomes of individual network sub-actors). The result of differing ontologies and conceptualisations of collaboration policy relating to ULAC make it difficult to compare findings across the research. There is the need for a more systematic, multi-dimensional approach to

researching and understanding collaboration as a policy process that recognises the following network dimensions from the outset:

- Clarify the collaborating ‘actor’ (i.e. Node of analysis);
- Identify relevant theoretical issues from differing perspectives, according to the policy area/function of interest (i.e. The ‘function’ that the network will serve);
- Clarify the ontological perspective underpinning the network analysis.

Based on the above network research considerations, the remainder of part two of the chapter will define the network ‘actor’ according urban local authority collaboration (ULAC) for economic development, before discussing its multi-dimensional characteristics, towards the development of a conceptual framework.

3.3 The Network: ULAC for economic development

Conceptually, given the general confusion regarding collaboration policy terminology according to the network perspective (see for example, Bingham, O’Leary, and Carlson, 2008), understanding collaboration as an economic development policy of urban local government requires clarification of the terminology in the context of this thesis.

As discussed throughout section 3.2, this thesis follows a multidisciplinary approach by drawing on theoretical insights from three main literature domains relevant to inter-urban collaboration (i.e. urban scale) between urban local authorities (i.e. the network ‘actor’) working together across organizational and spatial boundaries for economic development (i.e. the ‘function’ of network analysis).

A definition of collaboration networks relevant to this thesis will focus on economic development, as outlined in subsection 2.3.3, based on collaboration between urban government organisations. An understanding of collaboration networks relationship with outcomes should make explicit reference to the ‘actor’ and ‘node’ of interest, as well as the network ‘function’. First, given that economic development networks can be understood at various levels, the network actor can be understood at the organisational level, according to the public administration literature:

‘Intergovernmental networks based on representative organisations of local authorities, their distinctive characteristics are: topocratic¹⁴ membership (and the explicit exclusion of all

¹⁴ A system can be viewed as ‘topocratic’ if the compensation and power available to an individual is determined primarily by their position in a network (See: Borondo, J., Borondo, F., Rodriguez-Sickert, C., and Hidalgo, C. A. (2014). To Each According to its Degree: The Meritocracy and Topocracy of Embedded Markets. *Scientific Reports*, 4, 3784.)

public sector unions); an extensive constellation of interests encompassing all the services (and associated expertise) and clients of local authorities; limited vertical interdependence because they have no service delivery responsibilities; but extensive horizontal articulation or ability to penetrate a range of other networks.'

Rhodes and Marsh, (1992: 183)

The Rhodes and Marsh (1992) definition of intergovernmental networks is useful for the study of ULAC networks given the recognised important role of the actor in terms of their relative position within the network, as acting on behalf of their organization, shaped and influenced by context, which is 'likely to be strategic, maximizing their own jurisdiction or organization's interests (Ha et al. 2016: 15). However, the Rhodes and Marsh (1992) description of intergovernmental networks provides little by way of explanation of the intended outcome of organisational network linkages, where the role of structure and flow of network linkages 'as a processes of interaction, in terms of an exchange of goods, services, information and contacts among places and nodes' (Camagni and Capello, 2004: 496) is thought an important influence on network outcomes.

The scale of network analysis according to this research represents an aggregation of individual network relationships as 'a structure involving multiple nodes—agencies and organizations—with multiple linkages...taking many forms, including simple individual interactions to multiple networks, flows, and patterns of information within and between groups' (Ha et al. 2016: 16).

Therefore, ULAC according to this thesis builds on the above understanding of networks as:

Inter-urban governmental networks representing multiple linkages of dynamic interaction between individuals, organisations, places and nodes, in pursuit of economic development outcomes for their territory.

According to the above definition offered by this thesis, an understanding of the relationship between ULAC and economic development policy outcomes in Scotland is provided, through an aggregation of individual urban local authority behavior and linkages within the ULAC network. In other words, the collaboration-outcome relationship of urban local government in Scotland is focused on whole network outcomes from which the individual (as representing the local authority organisation) is embedded, rather than the network individual/organisation being the focus of analysis.

Having clarified the theoretical definition underpinning ULAC for economic development applicable to this thesis, it is recognised that network outcomes are affected by a multitude of contexts and factors relating to the functioning of the network, including: i) the node of interest: (i.e. individual, organization, city, region); conceptual clarity in terms of ii) the function of

collaboration (i.e. a service delivery function; a strategic function; a local economic development function). Such conceptual issues relating to network theory requires fuller understanding of what constitutes such functional characteristics of economic development collaboration according to different theoretical perspectives. Therefore, a conceptualisation of ULAC must first clarify the theoretical dimensions according to Table 2 below.

Table 2: Conceptualising Matrix: Theoretical dimensions of ULAC:

THEORETICAL DOMAINS	NODE: URBAN LOCAL AUTHORITY
	FUNCTION: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT POLICY
	Functional Characteristics
Spatial Network Theory	
Economic Network Theory	
Governance Network Theory	

Accordingly, in an attempt to identify a common understanding of the functional characteristics relevant to ULAC across the literature, section 3.4 provides a review of the economic development and urban local government literature according to the various theoretical perspectives. Chapter three concludes with a proposed integrative conceptual framework for the study of ULAC for economic development, taking into consideration both the theoretical and the functional dimensions of ULAC.

3.4 Functional Characteristics of Urban Local Authority Collaboration (ULAC) for Economic Development.

In order for academic research on economic development collaboration to become more integrated, an understanding of its functional characteristics is required. Only through the unravelling of the different functional dimensions of collaboration, can its relationship with policy outcomes for economic development be better understood. In this context, research is overlapping and dense across the multidisciplinary literature. Section 3.4 defines the characteristics to propose an integrative framework that includes network functional characteristics.

As demonstrated in section 2.3.2 a key aim and purpose of ULAC for economic development depends on the theoretical perspective from which it is being discussed. Each of the functional dimensions of purpose; configuration and management are discussed throughout the following section according to the multi-disciplinary literature, clarifying the area of interest from the outset:

- The node of interest: Urban Local Authority Collaboration (ULAC)¹⁵;
- Functional area of interest: serve economic development priorities;
- Identification of the ontological perspective underpinning the network characteristics.

3.4.1 The economic rationale of ULAC:

Economics' early focus on the competitiveness of firms historically focused on the ability of organisations to 'consistently and profitably produce products that meet the requirements of an open market in terms of price, quality, design, relative to rivals' (Martin and Simmie, 2008: 2). Through a gradual shifting institutional focus of endogenous growth theory, there is recent recognition of the positive economic externalities and increasing returns to scale associated with spatial clustering and specialization of institutional activities between urban organisations (Porter, 1994; Krugman, 1995).

Traditional views of urban competitiveness are based largely on endogenous growth theory¹⁶, which focus mainly on the competitive relationship between cities, and thought limited by the apparent 'lack of attention for the importance of external relations of cities and city networks, and lack of recognition of the importance of relational factors' (in terms of external, exogenous factors) of inter-city relationships for competitiveness (Yuhong, and Lijing, 2012: 272).

The increased interest in collaboration policy is viewed the result of thinking that economic development results cannot be achieved without it (Hudson et al. 1999). Collaboration policy is typically viewed as a positive policy solution, even when there is little evidence to suggest it will work in practice (Barringer and Harrison, 2000). The policy rationale relates to the potential advantages for creating 'more resources and more ideas....multi-sector partnerships having the potential to leverage additional resources (financial and social capital); pool existing resources (buildings, staff and information); reduce duplication in resource use; and share risk' (Lowndes and Squires, 2012: 401).

Purely competitive urban strategies of the past are therefore being gradually replaced by more collaborative network based policies (see for example, Dawson, 1992; Parkinson, 1992; Robson, 1992), where city governments often explore policies which emphasise 'horizontal coordination and collaboration between cities' (Graham, 1995: 503). However, the reality of delivering urban policy within a network of collaboration is complex and must be understood within an environment of multi-layered governance arrangements.

¹⁵ The acronym Urban Local Government Collaboration (ULAC) will be referred to throughout the rest of the thesis as the node of interest for network analysis.

¹⁶ See for example: Andersson and Karlsson, 2007; Capello and Nijkamp, 2009; Stimson et al. 2011.

Martin and Simmie (2008) usefully identify four overlapping urban economic competitiveness theories, which emphasise the role of urban networks in various forms: increasing returns theories; knowledge and innovation theories; cluster theory; and cultural economy theories. Each theory emphasises certain institutional (and geographical) networks and processes as key ‘drivers’ of urban success. In this context, there is an important overlap between economic theory and spatial theory relating to agglomeration economies, endogenous growth theory and cluster theory, through a theoretical recognition of spatially localized externalities and knowledge spillovers, (albeit in different ways), from geographically local, rather than distanced interactive types of proximity.

It is important to distinguish between geographic and interactive (organizational) networks across the different theoretical explanations of urban competitiveness, through the economic recognition and importance of ‘proximity’. Taylor (2004) defines urban connections in terms of: the city network; the nodal (city) level connection; and secondary nodal connections (i.e. various organizations within cities), resulting mainly from cooperative urban relationships, as opposed to purely competitive hierarchical urban relationships. Proximity in economic geography ‘introduces space and interactions between spaces into economic theory’, whereas neo-classical economics assumed economic activities took place in ‘placeless realms in which location does not play a significant part’ (Martin and Simmie, 2008: 4). Thus, neoclassical economics was dismissive of the importance of institutions and their complexity, much recognised in organizational theory.

The institutional turn in the economic literature highlights the transactions cost and resource constraints factor affecting firm behaviour (see for example, Williamson, 1985 and Pfeffer and Salancik, 1978), underpinning economic rationale for collaborative forms of organization to help reduce transaction costs (i.e. the costs of running the economic system) through recognition of ‘the role of more qualitative aspects of institutions...through discrete structural analysis’ (Williamson, 1991:269). The distinction of the institutional turn in economics from earlier conceptualisations of the firm, recognise that economic activity is shaped by ‘economizing issues, and issues posed within firm’ (p270) motivating collaborative forms of working.

Organizational proximity is suggested a key factor affecting long-distance working and limiting socio-economic interaction between organisations across large areas, suggesting knowledge exchanges and interactions need not be confined within a given locality. For example, institutional network clusters are useful for promoting innovation and creativity of institutions, and the improved functionality of common projects (Kunzmann, 2004; Goldsmith and Eggers, 2004). Due to the micro-economic, networked activities of cities, collaboration between city administrations is viewed crucially important to city competitiveness by enhancing the interaction of positive externalities (Porter, 2001).

Furthermore, strategic learning from other institutional actors involved in a network is believed to be crucial for cities in sustaining competitiveness under rapidly changing external conditions, including their ability to transfer best practices through learning and to enable cities to form relations on a flexible basis (Leibovitz, 2003; Provan and Milward, 2001). As Storper (1996) indicates, untraded interdependencies, which include formal and informal collaboration and information networks among cities, make possible rapid responses to changing circumstances.

Another key network factor relates to social embeddedness, where norms, customs, culture, structural and political factors (i.e. informal constraints) located and networked in an area can provide advantages in terms of ‘social embeddedness’ (Granovetter, 1985). The informal factors recognised in the ‘New Institutional’ turn in economic thinking, mark a significant change and recognition of networks and informal institutions impacting on urban performance.

The above ‘networked’ advantages are believed to lie in the character of local social, cultural and institutional arrangements. More specifically, insight drawn from institutional and evolutionary economics highlights the importance of network ties of proximity and association, as a key source of knowledge and learning (Amin and Thrift, 1995; Martin and Sunley, 1996; Storper, 1997). Martin and Simme (2008) suggest that location (in terms of proximity) and interaction between locations (i.e. between organisations and geographies) can help to explain how economic forces play out differently in different cities.

Having considered the main economic context understanding ULAC, Table 3 provides a summary of the key ‘network’ characteristics relative to the networks functional domains: purpose, configuration and management.

Table 3: Economic Network Characteristics According to Functional Dimensions:

Economic Network:	Purpose	Configuration
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institutional inter-city networks; • Strategic Learning Networks; • Innovation clusters. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institutional innovation and creativity; • Improved functionality of common projects; • Improve knowledge and innovation; • Provide flexible learning arrangements; • Enhance cultural economies (social embeddedness); • Reduce organisation transaction costs; • Share resources; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secondary-level nodal networks (i.e. between city organizations) • Network ties of proximity (closeness); • Network ties of association (specialisation)

It is clear that economic competitiveness is important and depends on the configuration of both internal and external networks of collaboration within and outwith cities. However, organizing and realizing the benefits of collaboration is rarely identified empirically in economic literature, except

anecdotally (Malecki 2002), and difficult to fully evidence how economic network benefits happen in practice (Loftman and Nevin, 1996).

3.4.2 The spatial role of ULAC:

Collaboration is viewed as ‘inherently spatial’ (Gerber and Loh (2015: 1), in that ‘urban systems both shape, and are shaped by, locational networks and network behaviours’ (Bryson and Crosby, 2006: 49). Urban systems are thought structured according to different network flows: the interurban scale corresponds to flows between core and peripheral districts in different urban regions and intra-urban relations refer to relations in the ‘own’ core and periphery districts involved (van Oort, et al. 2010: 729). The focus here is on the inter-urban level of spatial networks: ‘urban institutions have received significant attention within political geography (see Warf, 1991, for a review). Influenced by both regulation theory and urban regime theory. Van Oort (2010) identified key policy conceptualisations relating to urban networks including :

- spatial integration: when network interaction between different geographies within an urban network provides opportunities for transport and communication, facilitating information flows and relationships between individual urban agglomerations;
- functional integration: when spatial integration helps to ensure urban economic functions delivered by local authorities are differentiated or specialized in different sectors.

Hence, networks between similar types of cities can be useful for place competitiveness, where networks enhance benefits of specialisation, whilst networks between cities of different character can introduce benefits of diversity (Eraydin et al. 2008).

Spatial networks can also provide a synergetic role through the spatial configuration of cities in terms of ‘polycentricity’ (Meijers, 2005; Governa and Salone, 2005; Salet, 2006; Camagni and Salone, 1993; Malecki, 2002; Polenske, 2004). In this context, joint policies and strategic decisions among and within different cities can help to solve the problem of size, as an important determinant of competitiveness (Scott, 1998; Buck et al. 2005; Turok, 2004). Maximising urban size is believed to be a key source of advantage and can be attained by cities of different size by promoting efficient networking and competent governance (Eraydin et al. 2008). Such networks may be particularly critical for smaller areas that lack resources (Arku and Oosterbaan, 2014).

Provide networked externalities (agglomerations):

The geographical (spatial) perspective of networks and collaboration is commonly known as the new economic geography (NEG), which recognises the significance of the structure of networks in terms of agglomerations for economic performance via clustering and the importance of proximity for economic interaction (Oinas, 2002). NEG insights on spatial economics has largely helped to

theorise and measure agglomeration, as well as provide key insights into the structural determinants of urbanisation in terms of the interaction between market structures and the importance of spatial factors.

At the scale of the organization within a city, Huggins and Thomson (2013) suggest that:

‘inter-organizational networks underpinning the flow of knowledge within and across regions are a key capital input within regional growth processes...in that economic growth is partly a function of the value created through inter-organizational flows of knowledge (i.e. network capital)’

Huggins and Thomson (2013: 2)

The recognition of inter-organizational networks (i.e. collaborations principally between firms) for knowledge flows has been widely recognised by economics, geography and management studies (see for example, Maggioni and Uberti, 2009; Bergenholtz and Waldstrøm, 2011).

Industrial agglomeration theory has increasingly recognised the importance of geographic scale for positive external economies across regions and localities in recent years (Phelps and Ozawa, 2003; Phelps, 2004; Malmberg and Maskell, 2006). In other words, economic collaboration requires proximity to ‘help make collaboration better, faster, easier and smoother’ (Maskell, 1999: 50).

At the scale of the city, the structure and ‘intensity of networks’ are important (Docherty et al. 2004: 449) characteristics of ULACs, and likely to be dynamic due to the ambiguity and complexity that is inherent in collaboration (Huxham and Vangen 2005). For example, inter-urban collaboration can be viewed as more than simple networking, due to the potential for the exchange of information, knowledge and resources, all having the capacity to create mutual benefit and achieve common purpose.

Pred and Hagerstrand (1967) and Storper, (2010) suggest that increasing returns are realised through both the geographic and organizational processes relating to: localisation, spatial and economic diffusion of knowledge. Krugman (1994) highlights the importance of the geographic perspective through the recognition of agglomeration advantages between industries, suggesting that ‘the most striking feature of the geography of economic activity....is concentration’ (Krugman, 1991: 5).

The importance of spatial collaboration has also been increasingly recognised through the concept of the polycentric urban region (PUR), in terms of a set of historically and spatially separate metropolitan areas comprising a larger, functionally interrelated urban region (Kloosterman and Musterd, 2001). In this context, collaboration is known as ‘polycentrism’, where regions with

multiple urban centres are functionally interrelated, either through competition or collaboration (Cowell, 2010: 945)¹⁷.

PUR policies have been used as spatial planning tools to support economic competitiveness, through the analysis of patterns of interaction between different geographical nodes, and mainly introduced to encourage a more balanced spatial distribution of economic activity between geographic nodes (Burger et al. 2013). The PUR concept is still largely contested as an accepted definition viewed as being largely focused on conceptual and analytical issues (Maly, 2016). PUR policies promote the idea of policy to support city clusters and city networks, by promoting integrated spatial development strategies for city clusters (i.e. by enlarging particular functional regions) (see for example, Baily and Turok, 2001; Meijers, 2005; Burger et al. 2013). The Randstad region in the Netherlands is a good example of a PUR in reality (see Lambregts, 2009).

However, the PUR concept is potentially limited in its examination of only functional linkages between cities, and lacks a fuller appreciation of the multiplicity of networks, such as existing hierarchical and power relationships within the PUR (Burger et al. 2013). NEG spatial insights alone are thus limited in their ability to establish the *causality* of spatial dynamics (Storper, 2010), by examining only one type of functional linkage between cities and with the need for a ‘general framework in geographical economics’ (p315). In other words, there is a need to better understand the driving *causal* forces behind the processes of collaboration and interaction (beyond functional proximity), and the resultant impact on urban economic development policy outcomes and benefits from ULACs.

The ‘network city’ or ‘urban network’ has been a key focus of regional and urban development policy in recent years and commonly used in urban geography, urban economics, and planning to help analyse the social, economic, and/or environmentally sustainable context of polycentric (i.e. several centres) urban regions (PURs) (Cheng et al. 2013). The term polycentric in relation to urban network theory relates to collaborative working between cities and long recognized as a crucial economic development approach in Europe. For example: Øresund (Copenhagen and Malmö); Lithuania (Vilnius and Kaunas); The Dutch Deltametropolis (formerly the Randstad) (Amsterdam, Rotterdam, The Hague and Utrecht) are all examples of well-established European inter-urban collaboration models. Kansai in Japan (Osaka, Kyoto, Kobe) is another example.

Ostrom et al. (1961) first observed polycentricity as a situation comprised of:

‘many centres of decision-making, formally independent of each other, although functioning in a coherent way, with consistent and predictable patterns of interacting behaviour’

¹⁷ Cowell, M. (2010). Polycentric regions: comparing complementarity and institutional governance in the San Francisco Bay Area, the Randstad and Emilia-Romagna, *Urban Studies*, 47, 945-966.

The New Economic Geography (NEG) perspective of polycentricity can be understood at different scales in terms of: the individual, institution, city, or region. Collaborative networks are defined in terms of: inter-regional; intra-regional (e.g. networked cities like the Ruhr-Rhine Region); or intra-urban (e.g. within the city), where both the intra-urban (regional) and inter-urban (metropolitan) scales are believed important for the governance of fragmented political systems.

Meijers (2006) describes the Polycentric Urban Regions (PUR) as a commonly used term for ‘describing a collection of historically distinct and both administratively and politically independent cities located in close proximity and well connected through infrastructure’ (p1). In other words, polycentricity is a geographical and descriptive concept of the configuration of space and flows of interactions between and within cities (Pompeli, 2006).

From an urban planning perspective, the flows between cities are encouraged via strategic spatial planning policies promoting the idea of polycentricity and used to explain urban structure and growth. In particular, polycentricity has become a popular spatial development tool in Europe since the publication of the European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP, 1999).

Around the same time, much of the academic literature from the 1990s onwards tends to analyse urban systems from the networked perspective, in terms of ‘flows between cities and the importance of external relations of cities’ (i.e. urban network theory), with earlier urban systems research concentrating mainly on the ‘characteristics within cities’ (Liu and Derudder, 2013: 1).

The networked view of cities is predominantly that cities (and regions) compete, as well as collaborate, due mainly to the micro-economic factors and networks within cities, building upon Porter’s (1990) ‘diamond model’ of competitiveness of places (Healey and Dunham, 1994). Such institutional milieu (e.g. governance, policy and networks) are increasingly regarded as the most important factors of competitiveness, in terms of their contribution towards developing social capital (i.e. the features of social organization, including: trust, norms, and networks) (Putnam, 1993), albeit assumed the hardest elements to measure in practice (Webster and Muller, 2000).

Alongside the increased recognition of networks for competitiveness, increasing globalization is a further reason why cities collaborate, mainly to ‘avoid the fiscal and social problems that can inhibit cities’. In other words, cities work together ‘to provide amenities and infrastructure that can make a region more attractive’ and competitive as a whole (Wolfson and Frisen, 2000: 365). In an increasingly globalized world, cities have the opportunity to develop their own competitiveness through the opportunity (and threat) of increased access to world markets, global labour and capital.

Ultimately however, cities only have the capacity to control some of the factors, which determine competitiveness. Indeed, there is research to suggest that competition between different areas can lead to inefficiency and inequality (Goetz and Kayser, 1993), as a key influence of recent policy shifts towards collaborative economic development policy, as opposed to competitive working (Wolfson and Frisen, 2000). Within the field of economic development, there is increasing emphasis on collaboration from policymakers, who believe local governments should cooperate (Arku, 2014), instead of competing, as an essential part of '*win-win*' policy for regional prosperity (Gordon, 2009: 327).

According to Capello (2013: 331):

‘Cities need efficient urban policies with the aim to upgrade the economic functions within the city, as well as the development of linkages outside the city, such as alliances, co-operation agreements, advanced international transport and telecommunications infrastructure.’

Aside from the urban growth perspective of collaboration, Foray and Lundvall (1996) argue that human competence is at the core of contemporary forms of economic development. A key component of what are called third-wave strategies of economic development by American academics (Osgood et al. 2012), relate mainly to: ‘finding new institutional and organizational arrangements with sufficient scope, responsiveness, and flexibility to provide the foundation for economic development’ (Clarke and Saiz, 1996: 543).

Castells (1996: 324) refers to this as the:

‘city network paradigm’, in terms of a successful theoretical framework to overcome the limiting interpretative power of the traditional central-place model by departing from the abstract Christallerian pattern of a nested hierarchy of centres and markets, by breaking the link between urban size and urban function.’

Bertolini and Dijst (2003) describe three main types of urban network configurations: morphologic–descriptive, normative–strategic, and analytic, defined in Table 4 below. The key point here is that by ‘integrating accessibility and proximity features of locations’ a city can be regarded as ‘an open system of connected open sub-systems in which human interaction can take place’ (Bertolini and Dijst, 2003: 40). Thus, the networked view of the city offers a wider perspective than more traditional urban theory by highlighting the importance of spatial configuration within the network theory logic, where ‘size is not the only determinant of factor productivity and economies of agglomeration of large centres’ (Castells, 1996: 325).

In other words, increasing relationships and networks among cities follow a network-logic, where cities collaborate regardless of physical distance, in order to establish economic relationships and thus, influence the spatial organization and resultant urban efficiency, growth, and specialization (i.e. due to economies of vertical and horizontal integration, and network externalities).

Table 4: The Urban Network Paradigm and Network Configurations

Urban Networks	Urban Form	Functionality	Research
morphologic–descriptive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • mostly mid-sized cities; • polycentric/multi-nodal urban regions; • sub centres next to historic urban centres in metropolitan areas; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • functional integration; • competing and complementary based view of spatial patterns of social and economic activity around nodes. 	<p>Batten, D. F. (1995). Network cities: Creative agglomerations for the 21st century. <i>Urban Studies</i>, 32(2), 313–327.</p> <p>Ascher, F. (1995). <i>Metropolis, ou l'Avenir des Villes</i>. Paris: Editions Odile Jaco</p> <p>Dieleman, F. M., and Faludi, A. (1998). Polynucleated metropolitan regions in Northwest Europe: Theme of the special issue. <i>European Planning Studies</i>, 6(4), 365–377.</p>
normative–strategic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • polycentric urban region (PUR) • explicit focus on the horizontal linkages between adjacent cities; • a larger urban area with a wide (competitive) space. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • economically and/or environmentally sustainable • functional interaction; linking different systems; • favoured by planners and designers 	<p>Albrechts, L., and Lievois, G. (2004). The Flemish diamond: Urban network in the making? <i>European Planning Studies</i>, 12(3), 351–370.</p> <p>Albrechts, L., and Mandelbaum, S. (2005). The network society – The new context for planning. London: Routledge.</p> <p>Hall, P., and Ward, C. (1998). <i>Sociable cities: The legacy of Ebenezer Howard</i>. Chichester: John Wiley and Sons.</p> <p>Rogers, R. (1997). <i>Cities for a small planet</i>. London: Faber and Faber.</p> <p>Meijers, (2005). Polycentric urban regions and the quest for synergy: Is a network of cities more than the sum of the parts? <i>Urban Studies</i>. vol: 42 (4) pp: 765-781</p>

Source: Adapted from Bertolini and Dijst (2003: 30) (see Table 1: Perspective on Network Cities)

Much of the empirical research on polycentricism between the 1990s and 2000s, focused mainly on the governance role of local institutions, originating mainly from the United States and Netherlands, and with few studies within the UK.

Indeed, Davoudi (2003) suggests polycentric and networked regional structures ‘appear to be cropping up everywhere as an ideal type of regional spatial structure’ (p72), despite a lack of common definition and empirical evidence about its desirability and effectiveness. Accordingly,

there is a need for insights from urban systems theory to support spatial planning.

The following section provides a fuller assessment of the importance of spatial network theory for understanding the role of ULAC for economic development.

Assessing ULAC according to configuration:

Recognizing the growing importance of the urban network perspective within the NEG literature, most theoretical and empirical studies are largely concerned with understanding the dynamics of urban connectivity (Hamme et al. 2013). The purpose of this section is to assess the role of ULACs within economic development according to network configuration in relation to: city size, scale and scope.

NEG insights on spatial economics has largely helped to theorise and measure agglomeration, as well as provide key insights into the structural determinants of urbanization, in terms of the interaction between market structures and the importance of spatial networks. Spatial networks have been increasingly recognised through the concept of the polycentric urban region (PUR), in terms of a set of historically and spatially separate metropolitan areas comprising a larger, functionally interrelated urban region, of both inter and intra-urban patterns of economic activity (Kloosterman and Musterd, 2001).

The term ‘polycentricity’ can be interpreted as either a planning tool or as a socio-economic policy tool, with PUR policies mainly used as spatial planning tools to support economic competitiveness, by analysing and promoting patterns of interaction between different geographical nodes to encourage a more balanced spatial distribution of economic activity (Burger et al. 2013).

The PUR concept promotes city clusters and city networks via integrated spatial development strategies (i.e. by enlarging particular functional regions) (see for example, Baily and Turok, 2001; Meijers, 2005; Burger et al. 2013). Polycentric characteristics of ULACs therefore relates to the configuration and concentration of networked activity between different geographical nodes ‘or concentrations of physical (i.e. transport) and/or functional (i.e. institutional, social, human networks) connections between nodes in a geographical area’ (Cheng et al. 2013: 165).

For example, Meijers (2005) suggests that horizontal-networked relationships between urban areas can be seen as a new form of spatial organisation supporting economic synergy, in terms of a:

‘situation in which the effect of two or more co-operating or combined bodies or functions is larger than the sum of the effects each body or function alone can achieve’

Hence, the polycentric nature of ULACs for economic development relates to the potential for increased competitiveness, cohesion and regional balance, through the promotion of functional network relationships between nodes (i.e. cities).

Complementarity and synergy effect of PURs:

The Guiding Principles for Sustainable Spatial Development of the European Continent issued by CEMAT suggests the development of urban systems and functions within a network can help to increase their complementarity, and facilitate access to information and knowledge by encouraging national and regional prosperity.

Meijers, (2006a) suggests that the enhancement of complementarity is a main objective of co-operation and policymaking for PURs, in that it is not one city that provides a complete array of economic functions, but rather, the whole system (and network) of cities within a region. Taylor (2004: 88) further explains such complementarity in that ‘power within a network of cities is more diffuse as every node has a particular niche that contributes towards the overall production of the whole region’. Therefore, ULACs aimed at enhancing complementarity can be advantageous for regional development because ‘it improves the range of services offered and the economic conditions of a region and thereby increasing its competitiveness’ (CEC, 1999: 65).

The key point is that the network theory perspective suggests that complementarity within a PUR can act as a synergy-generating mechanism (Meijers, 2005), and the ability to avoid duplication of urban services across different areas. Meijers (2006b), suggests that duplication of facilities in PURs should be minimized to ensure the range of assets on offer across networked cities are complementary, as opposed to competing for economic activity, and as a result, will help increase agglomeration economies.

Albeit that urbanisation is often combined with agglomeration, they are not synonymous, especially if the fastest-growing areas are small cities and towns rather than major cities. For example, Turok, 2013 suggest that it is not urbanisation that stimulates and sustains growth, but rather the form that urbanisation takes and whether it provides an efficient enabling environment (i.e. the distribution of growth across cities of different sizes). The complementarity, distribution and configuration of urban activities are crucially important.

Capello (2013) explains that the spatial network perspective can also be used to help understand the role of city size (i.e. in terms of an efficient size, as opposed to an optimal size), and the relationships among centres. For example, patterns of specialization are a main reason that cities

establish economic relationships, where spatial organization is believed to be fundamental to understanding their efficiency, growth and specialization. Hence, it is not optimal city size that is important in an economic context, rather the efficient size in terms of what a city produces and how it co-operates within the urban system.

Agglomeration economies and industrial networks/clusters:

Collaboration between cities to promote complementarity is also viewed more important than competition in terms of supporting positive agglomeration economies. Importantly, the geographical (spatial) perspective of urban networks recognises the significant role of network capital in terms of agglomerations for economic performance via clustering and the importance of proximity for economic interaction (Oiins, 2002), in the form of polycentricity.

Agglomeration theory in its different forms can help define urban concentration in terms of both the division of labour (i.e. productivity gains from industrial clustering/specialisation of city functions) and economies of scale (i.e. both internal efficiencies to the firm, and external agglomeration economies in terms of locational benefits).

The role of spatial distance and regional agglomerations are important concepts for understanding innovation-based, hierarchical, economies in that these reflect the inter-dependencies between firms, that generate region-specific agglomeration benefits (Storper, 1995), and hence, of particular importance for developing industrial clusters (Porter, 1990).

The concept of agglomeration economies is important for the analysis of industrial location in the NEG literature, where spatial models are used to help explain differences in the distribution of economic growth and productivity across cities (Sedgley and Elmslie, 2004) and the way in which economic agents interact and live (Ioannides and Rossi-Hansberg, 2005).

Specifically, agglomeration in terms of industrial clusters, contain spatial complexities and different types of cluster activity (both within and across a range of activities). As a result, there is a significant literature, which considers city size and shape for maximising the benefits of agglomeration economies. The value of spatial agglomeration (in terms of economies of scope, scale and complexity) (see Parr, 2002 for example), relates to knowledge and information exchange (both informal and formal), in terms of the traditional (neo-classical) ideas of competitive advantage inherent in large urban areas (Doherty et al. 2004). Thus, agglomeration economies suggest that cities are dynamic economic territories and important *determinants of national competitive advantage* (Kresl, 1995, p.49).

Important theoretical considerations of industrial clusters include Michael Porter's study 'The Competitive Advantage of Nations (1990)', which suggests that internationally successful industries often concentrate in a city (or region) to take advantage of local scale and agglomeration economies. In other words, knowledge economy factors relating to: knowledge exchange between individuals and organisations, sectoral innovation and creativity, scale, density and socio-economic diversity of cities (Gordon and McCann, 2000).

Furthermore, some of the more recent work of Richard Florida and 'creative class' theory, (see for example, , 2002, 2003, 2005), suggests that diverse, tolerant and 'cool cities' will outperform other places. Such ideas relate to the increasing importance of a knowledge-driven economy, and the role of the skilled workforce in facilitating the flow of ideas and in enabling adoption of new technology and adaptation to change, means that cities offer benefits through the clustering of people and their ideas. This is a direct result of the agglomeration of economic activity in cities and the economic benefits that this can bring (ODPM, 2006).

A prominent characteristic of economic development is therefore the recognition and reliance on the role of knowledge via the knowledge economy (Abramovitz and David, 1996), and the importance of the *spatial distribution* and dissemination of information (Raco, 1999: 952).

The traditional view of the role of innovation and knowledge within economic theory is that the location and diffusion of knowledge is distributed in a hierarchical, polarised manner, whereas, the knowledge-economy perspective is based on a wider understanding of the role of 'different socioeconomic relationships creating different geographies through hierarchical territorial relationships of localised networks of knowledge sharing, generation and innovation' (Raco, 1999: 953).

Knowledge networks potentially play an important role in the long run, due mainly to: the increasing pace of innovation; the potential for technological improvements; and the increased use of electronic networks (see Foray and Lundvall, 1996). Thus, Raco, 1999 suggests that knowledge distribution is important for the 'competitive advantage of smaller producers working in flexible, market-responsive, information-rich collaborative relationships' (p953).

Yuhong, and Lijing (2012) construct a conceptual model of urban competitiveness (i.e. co-opition) to suggest that the shift towards the city network perspective largely reflects the changing nature of capital and information flows in recent years, due to information and communication technology (i.e. the knowledge and innovation economy) making city cooperation easier.

Huggins and Thompson (2013) takes this concept a stage further, arguing that regional growth is partly a function of the value created through inter-organizational flows of knowledge within and

across regions, and suggest that ‘investment in calculative networks to access knowledge is a form of capital (i.e. network capital), which should be incorporated into future regional growth models in a more formalised way’ (p2).

Therefore, the institutional focus on networks is a form of selective co-operation between locally based producers, acting collaboratively towards long-term growth, based on a view that successful regions flourish as a consequence of institutional embeddedness or thickness (i.e. through the continual improvements in standards of working), by creating ‘local nodes of economic activity’ (Raco 1999: 951). Hence, institutions are understood to provide the basis for localised social and economic networks where strong local institutional relations may act to support regional economic success (see Amin and Thrift, 1995).

Table 5: Spatial Network Characteristics According to Functional Dimensions:

Spatial Network Characteristic:	Purpose	Configuration
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Functional Networks • Complementary Networks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spatial integration/ improved transport and communication networks; • Network Synergy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • spatial integration: when network interaction between different geographies within an urban network provides opportunities for transport and communication, facilitating information flows and relationships between individual urban agglomerations; • functional integration: when spatial integration helps to ensure urban economic functions delivered by local authorities are differentiated or specialized in different sectors. • networks between similar types of cities are thought useful for place competitiveness, where networks enhance benefits of specialisation, whilst networks between cities of different character can introduce benefits of diversity (Eraydin et al. 2008).

The social networks ‘remain something of ‘a black-box’ as to how clusters relate to and impact on the rest of a city’s economy (Martin and Simmie, 2008: 10). Although the ‘new economic geography provides economic reasons for local agglomeration, it is believed to fail to properly investigate the sources of these local advantages (Martin and Sunley, 1996). Thus, consideration of the public administration perspective provides an understanding of the role of networks and how they are organised in order to understand their role for economic success.

3.4.3 Governance role of ULAC:

Agranoff and McGuire (1998) make a distinction between the strategic purpose of networks, delineating ‘policy-making and strategy-making networks from resource-exchange and project-based networks’ (Bryson and Crosby, 2006: 49) affecting their configuration.

The focus here is on strategy-making governance networks of inter-organisational working. In this context, inter-governmental networks refer to semi-institutional and relatively stable network formations that promote collective (or parallel) action in common areas of policy interest. Inter-municipal partnerships represent the main context of partnerships between local authorities, described as ‘the ability to enlist all actors involved [to] generate new ideas and develop and implement a policy designed to respond to fundamental developments and create conditions for sustainable development’ (van den Berg and Braun, 1999: 995).

‘cooperative alliances are a way to enhancing competitiveness and effectiveness that would not be possible through the traditional governance mechanisms of market or hierarchy ’

Provan and Milward, (1995:1).

The above description of collaboration highlights the governance associated with public sector collaboration ‘crucial to understanding collaboration in the urban setting’ (Docherty et al. 2004: 449). The focus here is on the characteristics defining governmental networks between urban local authorities for economic development as an extension of the ‘collective action problem’ in the context of collaboration between local governments (Feiock et al. 2009: 256).

The organisation and structure of urban local government in recent years has been subject of much governance debate, arguing that increasing fragmentation of local government is counterproductive for economic development and ‘accountability’ (Lowry, 2010), requiring ‘good regional government and governance’ mechanism to ‘eliminate development subsidy competition among jurisdictions’ (Feiock, 2005: 5). There has been a significant change in the traditional mechanisms of local governance of cities in recent years: authority is being ‘diffused vertically, upwards towards global institutions and networks, downwards to local communities, and horizontally to a larger and broader range of non-governmental actors’ (Graham, 1995: 143). Formal institutions of urban government are believed to have shifted ‘towards a more diffuse concept of multi-actor governance’ meaning urban collaboration between cities can be viewed as ‘an extension to the process of regime formation and support that has long existed inside cities with complex fragmented systems of governance’ (Docherty et al. 2004: 449).

Network governance theory definitions are important for highlighting how governance is managed and the forms of control of public service delivery, where governance can be assumed to be a ‘a set of coordinating and monitoring activities that must occur in order for collaborations to survive’ (Bryson and Crosby, 2006: 49). Himmelman (1992) offers a ranking of varying levels of commitment and complexity within governance networks, that goes beyond mere collaboration by including government actors as a key component, especially as a means for creating control of collective actions.

Inter-municipal cooperation (IMC) describes the collaborative working between two or more local authorities with some degree of institutionalisation (Hulst and van Montfort, 2012). IMC is assumed to ‘supplement national administrative systems and not replace existing public administration systems’ to ‘make it possible to incorporate mutual interdependencies’ (Hulst and van Montfort, 2012:122) between local government institutions and overcome policy complexities across the boundaries of individual local authority areas.

Network governance between local authorities offers a ‘potential mechanism through which cities can share their resources, physical assets and policy skills’ (Docherty et al. 2004: 448), where positive economic forces are potentially a major factor behind the recognition of collaborative working in the public sector in recognition of ‘collaborative advantage’ (Huxham, 1996), for delivering positive outcomes as opposed to working alone.

At the regional scale, Feiock (2004) suggests ‘the second path to regional development’ recognised by the ‘new regionalism’ stresses the importance of governance for not only efficiency of local government, but importantly, its role in ‘democratic governance and economic growth’ (p5), emphasising the self-governance role of local government, through horizontally and vertically linked organisations.

There are different types of governance structures of collaboration which distinguish the different roles they can play, where different types of network governance coordination are associated with performance (Herranz, 2008), including: self-governing structures; lead organization of decision-making and coordinating activities; and network administrative organization, which are all viewed important influencers of a networks effectiveness (Provan and Kenis 2005).

The importance of collaborative governance structures relate to how the ‘actors relate to each other within the network’ (Eraydin et al. 2007: 2296) and how this impacts upon policy outcomes, in terms of non-hierarchical relationships (Morcol, 2005; Rhodes, 1997; Sotarauta and Linnamaa, 1998), and hierarchical relationships (Le Gales, 2001). Huxham and Vangen (2005) refers to ‘power imbalances’ that can take place within the network and between partners of the network, in that dynamics can impact upon trust relationships and affect policy outcomes. Therefore, governance networks are seen as being crucial in an ever inter-connected world, in that they allow for ‘flexible and dynamic modes of decision-making’ (Leitner et al. 2002: 280), and their non-hierarchical, self-coordinated nature means they are superior for supporting economic growth (Martin and Mayntz, 1991). Hence, self-regulating collaborative arrangements provide ‘intrinsic benefits and advantages over a traditional hierarchically controlled government bureaucracy’ (Heranz, J, 2010: 311)

Referred to as the ‘associational model’ (developed by Cooke and Morgan in 1998), trust-based relationships, learning and network competence, relate to ‘local organising capacity conditions’ (i.e. social capital) for competitiveness, including: administrative organisations, strategic public–private networks, leadership, vision and strategy, political support, societal support and spatial economic conditions that induce and support collaboration (van den Berg and Braun, 1999). The management and structure of governance is important for power relations (Bryson, 2004; Gray, 1996; Le Gales, 2001; Camagni and Salone, 1993), trust, conflict (Bolland and Wilson 1994) and the rules (Kickert et al. 1997; Klijn and Teisman, 1997) by which collaboration is managed, and key characteristic that will impact on policy outcomes.

The context of collaboration is an important influence on the structure of networks, in that changes in government policy are understood to ‘often destabilize systems or alter resources in the policy fields in which networks are embedded’ (Bryson and Crosby, 2006: 49) and potentially rearrange the structure of ties among members (Sharfman, Gray, and Yan 1991; Stone 2004). For example, ‘contextual factors such as physical/financial resources, stakeholders’ incentives and intervention, and institutional constraints need to be regarded as essential in determining local governments’ network activities for economic development’ (Ha et al. 2016:17). Structural configurations are therefore important for the overall effectiveness of networks (Provan and Milward, 1995; Provan and Sebastian, 1998).

Networks are also not free of problems, with the following causes of failure: the lack of incentives to co-operate; objectives may be vague or not provocative; important actors may be absent; while the presence of other actors may discourage the participation of necessary actors; crucial information about goals, means and actors may be lacking; discretionary power may be absent; lack of commitment of actors to the common purpose (Kickert et al. 1997.) However, existing network governance research is understood to underemphasize the complex variety of coordination processes that may operate in public networks over time, and the potential for variable outcomes.

There is a lack of evidence on outcomes, assumed largely due to empirical weaknesses and network gains rarely identified ‘except anecdotally’ (Malecki 2002: 940). Furthermore, most research considering outcomes have been case studies within the collaborative governance literature and tended to look at ‘process outcomes’, as opposed to ‘policy outcomes’ (Ansell and Gash, 2007: 549). Collaboration is thus viewed as mainly intangible, representing a ‘non-price factor of competitiveness that cannot be measured’ (Malecki, 2004: 1103).

Hulst and Van Montfort (2007) have developed a framework for explaining the performance of IMC across Europe according to how it is configured from a public administration perspective, in terms of: administrative forms, governance structures and political organisation. Hulst and Van Montfort present a conceptual framework of IMC in the UK (see Table 6 below), defining various

dimensions for describing and understanding the main factors affecting the overall performance of IMC, as including: Composition (i.e. who is involved); tasks (i.e. policy or service); Scope (i.e. Single-purpose or multi-purpose arrangements); Institutionalisation (i.e. networks, formal agreements and standing organisations); Decision-making powers (i.e. Regional authority or regional agent); Democratic legitimisation (i.e. Political representation and accountability).

Alongside national context (i.e. nature of national administration and local government), these factors are understood to influence the establishment of IMC as either: semi-regional government; service delivery organisation: service delivery agreement: or a planning forum. The Table 6 below summarises the findings from Hulst and Van Montfort on the characteristics of IMC specific to the UK.

Table 6: Conceptualizing Inter-Municipal Collaboration (IMC) in the UK: Functional dimensions

Types of Inter-municipal Cooperation	Composition:	Types of tasks:	Scope:	Institutionalisation:	Decision-making powers:	Democratic legitimisation:
<p><i>Semi-regional governments:</i> managed by local councils;</p> <p><i>Service delivery organisation:</i> almost absent in the UK due to limited autonomy of local government;</p> <p><i>Service delivery agreement:</i> Vertical agreements between local authority and (semi) autonomous public or private agencies;</p> <p><i>Planning forum:</i> especially active in the fields of spatial planning, social-economic development, public housing and environmental planning.</p>	<p>Strong presence of mixed public-private arrangements in service delivery (predominantly central-local); regional public-private networks for social-economic and spatial planning. Pure IMC is promoted by central government.</p>	<p>Public service delivery dominates. Some planning and coordination for social-economic development on a regional level.</p>	<p>Arrangements are predominantly multi-purpose.</p>	<p>Predominance of agreements for service delivery. Networks for social-economic and spatial planning.</p>	<p>Standing organisations are scarce: predominantly regional agents.</p>	<p>Standing organisations are scarce. No legislation with regard to representation and accountability.</p>

Adapted from Hulst and Van Montfort (2007).

The Hulst and Van Montfort (2007) find that IMC in the UK is distinctly different in character to the rest of Europe, largely regarded as a non-mandated process to be established by municipalities themselves as circumstances require. Furthermore, a major limitation of the Hulst and Van Montfort's framework is potentially the lack of systematic demonstration of the success of IMC, due largely to fragmented and anecdotal research to date.

The characteristics identified by Hulst and Van Montfort (2007) can be condensed into purpose: configuration and management summarised in Table 7 below. It is also important to note, that the factors listed are not exhaustive.

Table 7: Governance Network Characteristics of ULAC According to Functional Dimensions:

Governance Characteristic of ULAC:	Purpose	Configuration	Management
Governance networks: inter-governmental networks for strategy and policy coordination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • public resource allocation; • provision and production of goods and services; • Strategic policymaking/coordination 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flexible/dynamic modes of decision-making • Non-hierarchical, self-coordinated self-regulating collaborative arrangements • Degree of formalization/standardization 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trust • Reputation • Influence • Conflict • Rules • Power relations • Network competence

3.5 Summary: Conceptualization of Economic Development Network:

The literature review in Chapter three reveals the growing policy interest in urban collaboration networks, mainly the result of thinking that economic development results cannot be achieved without collaborating (Hudson et al. 1999), and typically regarded as a positive policy solution, regardless of mixed evidence to demonstrate that it works (Barringer and Harrison, 2000).

As a result, there are many studies discussing the obstacles to collaboration between cities in practice (e.g. Lackey et al. 2002; Cigler, 1999; Baker, 1992; Bradshaw, 2000; Cox and Wood, 1994), raising important questions about its methodological and theoretical premise. In particular, the impact and role of complex urban networks on policy outcomes, raises interesting questions such as: the impact of the multi-scale nature of governance arrangements; the impact of different structures on decision-making outcomes; the impact of varying incentives and behaviour of network actors; the nature and configuration of networked interactions at the urban level. In all, this raises further questions about the nature, scope, and complexity of urban collaboration underpinning skepticism of its role (Marsh, 1998).

Although there is general consensus that networks have become important elements of governance practices, difficulties are still understood to be associated with policy networks due to problematic relations between politicians and other actors. Furthermore, although policy makers have articulated their willingness to collaborate in policy making, relatively little is known about how these partnerships act to support regional economic development (Klijn and Koppenjan, 2000). Therefore, a key question relates to: *how urban local authorities collaborate (ULAC) in order to achieve economic development outcomes?*

The above question is a key gap in extant literature given the multi-disciplinary dimensions of network policy and that requires an understanding of ULAC from the main theoretical and function domains, focused on the relationship with outcomes for economic development achieved. The following section will Chapter three with an outline of the conceptual framework structuring the thesis research of the PV of ULAC for economic development.

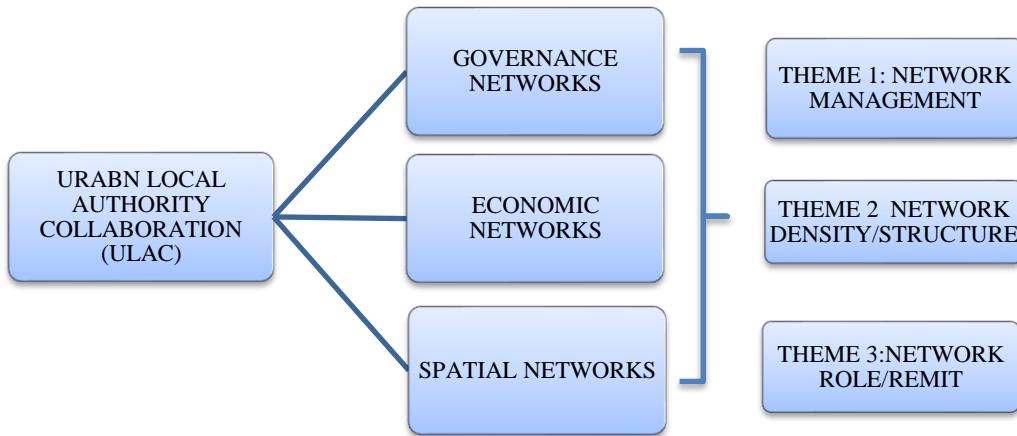
Little information is available on how ULAC functions and what activities are key to supporting it as economic development policy, and limited evidence regarding the outcomes and challenges involved (Arku and Oosterbaan, 2014), especially in Scotland, where all of the cities are being encouraged to collaborate as national policy for the first time.

In order for academic research on collaboration policy to become more integrated, an in-depth understanding of the theoretical and functional characteristics is required, in terms: the networks role and purpose, the networks management and the network structure.

3.5.1 Conceptual Framework of Urban Local Authority Collaboration (ULAC)

The findings from the review of the economic development literature, highlights a complexity and diversity of theoretical discussion relating to the role of networks for economic development. The main functional characteristics of collaboration across the multi-disciplinary literature, relates to three areas: *purpose* (i.e. role/remit/type of networks); *configuration* (i.e. how collaboration and networks are structured); *management* (i.e. how collaboration networks and network actors are managed, interact and function), see Figure 7.

Figure 7: The Functional Network Characteristics Connecting the Literature



A research framework can be developed in line with the three main functional dimensions identified across the network literature. In this context, the research is fragmented and often confusing due to the multiplicity of terminology and variation in perspectives. Only through the disentangling of the different dimensions of networks, can an understanding of how ULAC functions be achieved, towards an appreciation of their relative value for economic development.

Integrating findings from both a review of the economic development literature and urban network literature, a framework for conceptualizing the functional nature of network characteristics relevant to the ULAC context can be achieved (see Table 8 below).

Table 8: Conceptualising Matrix (PART A): Functional Dimensions

THEORETICAL DOMAINS	NODE:		
	FUNCTION:		
	Purpose	Configuration	Management
Spatial	The role/remit/type of network	How collaboration and networks are structured	How collaboration networks and network actors are managed, interact and function
Economic			
Governance			

The conceptual framework is appropriate for researching ULAC in order to provide a dynamic, multi-dimensional approach from the outset, and that clarifies the scale, function and relevant theoretical characteristics relevant to the network process.

As discussed earlier in this chapter, the type of network analysis is of core importance to understanding their relationship with outcomes. A conceptual link across all of the literature relates to the shifting recognition of the new institutional approach to growth and wider role of networks for economic development, away from earlier ideas of innovation-driven endogenous growth theory. Institutional theory recognises that economic and social activity is both ‘an instituted process and a socially embedded activity and therefore context-specific and path-

dependent' where economic outcomes are known to be influenced by network properties, including: mutuality, trust and cooperation (Amin, 1999: 366).

Chapter four will discuss institutional theory as a means for understanding the role and impact of the differences in institutional environment for the policy outcomes of ULAC. The aim is to provide a rigorous approach to the conceptualization of collaboration for economic development across urban local government in the form of ULAC. An integrative analytical framework is outlined, incorporating both theoretical and functional dimensions from an institutional perspective, promoting theoretical relevance without compromising methodological rigor and theoretical depth (Nesbit et al. 2010). To avoid conceptual ambiguity, throughout the rest of the thesis the overarching network term 'urban local authority collaboration' (ULAC) will be used.

Chapter Four: The Public Value (PV) of Urban Local Authority Collaboration (ULAC): *It's all about institutions*

4.1 Introduction:

The literature review in Chapters Two and Three demonstrate that a dense range of collaboration-related research exists across a complex multi-disciplinary literature. Chapter four of the review considers the literature on the role of ‘institutions’ (Bathelt and Glucker, 2013) for understanding the relationship between ULAC and its Public Value (PV).

Lindblom (1993) suggests government has to be able to formulate policy that is intelligent and democratic, with knowledge and ideas said to be the main sources of governmental legitimacy. As such, collaboration policy must be seen to produce a policy solution subject to societal and political scrutiny.

‘Collaboration should create social or public value in the same way as its organizational counterparts, differentiation and specialization, do. Collaboration results need to be assessed because any loss of efficiency due to political, institutional, and technical pressures decreases its public value’:

Bardach (1998: 17)

Assessing public policy and identifying ‘what works’ is complex and largely recognized as a ‘wicked problem’ unlikely to produce a clear answer (Rittel and Webber, 1973: 160). A key consideration of this research is therefore:

How can ULAC achieve greater public value (PV) for economic development, than would otherwise be achieved if urban local authorities (ULAs) acted individually?

First, an understanding of the perceived outcomes of public policy should take into account an ‘understanding of the processes that produce and sustain positive outcomes in society’ (Bryson et al. 2014: 455), in terms of what is meant by Public Value (PV) and the scope of ‘values’ in the context of ULAC in this thesis.

Second, given that the thesis focus is primarily concerned with collaboration policy between government agencies, it arguably, cannot be decoupled from an appreciation of the wider role of institutional context. However, the potential epistemological and methodological fragmentation underpinning the diverse range of theoretical literature relating to collaboration policy-outcome processes prevents an adequate appreciation of existing research. The important point here is that,

concepts are best understood with clarity when they can be understood in more or less the same way across multiple disciplines.

An important theoretical consideration for bridging the range of scholarly boundaries across the network policy-outcome related literature relevant to this thesis is the role of ‘institutions’ for understanding the perceived PV of ULAC. Consistent with Bathelt and Glucker’s, (2013) conceptualization of institutions, the research focus of this thesis is to investigate an economic development policy involving interaction between policy members from both urban and regional contexts.

The relationship between institutions and economic development ‘had been fundamentally overlooked by mainstream economic theory, in general, and growth theory, in particular’, and indeed, viewed as ‘more subjective, less clear, more controversial...and much more difficult to operationalize’ (Rodríguez-Pose, 2013: 1035). Economic development from an institutional perspective, can be defined as an on-going economic process of change that is influenced and facilitated by individuals ‘choices, entrepreneurs and firms made of different forms of institutional organisation (North, 1993). Society in this context is believed to undergo a process of economic change by playing a game involving decision making, rule adherence and contracting (between individuals and organisations), within a structure of property rights and political rules. The process of institutional development from a NIE perspective, takes place between formal and informal rules, modifying economic and institutional behavior over time (Williamson, 2000).

Institutions in the context of this thesis are viewed as:

‘neither organizations nor as rules or simple regularities, but rather...as stabilizations of mutual expectations and correlated interaction...as [non] spatial constructions’

Bathelt and Glucker, (2013: 341)

The above view of institutions is based on the idea that they can be conceived without ‘*a priori* spatial constructions’ (Bathelt and Glucker, 2013: 341), useful for understanding urban collaboration by recognizing the role of agents and organizations, collaboration relationships and the dynamics of social institutions at both spatial and non-spatial scales. Importantly, Bathelt and Glucker’s (2013) relational view of institutions provides a basis for understanding how institutions shape economic interaction by drawing together a range of different views of institutions in a ‘contextual, path-dependent, yet contingent way’ (p342), consistent with the view of this thesis.

Therefore, this final section of the literature review considers the path dependant, contextual nature of institutions for understanding the PV of ULAC as an economic development policy. Network actors are guided by the institutions in which they are embedded, thus institutional characteristics

will differ between network members, requiring an understanding of how institutions affect different network clusters, raising the question as to how different institutional contexts impact the ULAC process. Consistent with Miller et al. (2008), the thesis supports the view that policy outcomes should not be labelled in terms of success or failure (unless they are consistent over time and across different contexts) and instead viewed in terms of public value (PV).

Subsection 4.1 first provides an outline of what is meant by PV for understanding the causal relationship between public policy and outcomes in the context of this research. Section 4.2 follows with a discussion of ULAC as a ‘fuzzy concept’, characterised by a lack of conceptual clarity, deeming it: ‘difficult to operationalize...due to two or more alternative meanings...thus not reliably identified’ (Markusen, 2003: 702). The theory of ‘institutions’ (Bathelt and Glucker, 2013) is used to help overcome the challenge of a multi-disciplinary approach to understanding the thesis focus: the PV of ULAC, clarifying what is meant by ‘institutions’ in the context of this thesis. Section 4.3 continues a discussion of institutional context, providing background to the case study context and Scotland’s ULAC institutional context and nature of different institutional dimensions (i.e. institutional environment and institutional arrangement: Rodríguez-Pose, 2013), later found to play a key role in the main findings of the thesis in Chapter 6 and 7. Finally, section 4.4 of the chapter closes with a summary of the key findings and main research gaps identified in the literature review as a whole, to reveal the required research direction of the thesis:

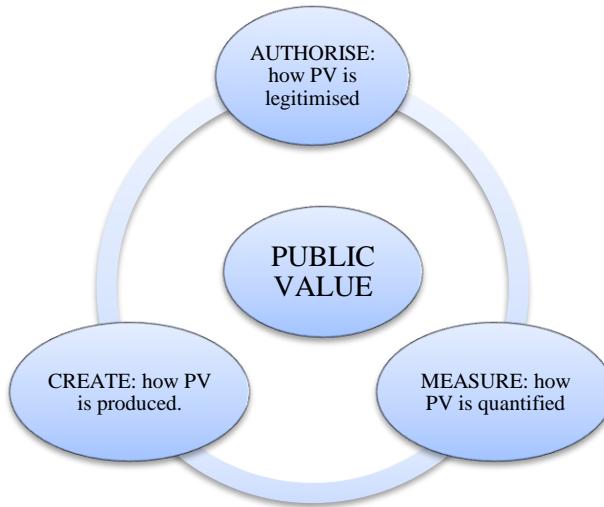
An understanding of the PV of ULAC is not clearly understood, requiring a multi-disciplinary approach to understanding the role of institutions on the ULAC policy process.

4.1.1 The Public Value (PV) of Public Policy

A clear understanding of what is meant by the PV of networked policy as understood in this thesis is important to clarify from the outset, and the difficulties in defining and measuring PV in relation to inter-organisational arrangements between government institutions.

Local government is largely regarded as the central public sector actor in delivering economic development policy, by providing instructions to formulate policy programmes (i.e. the policy process). Much of the existing policy literature considers policy performance as relating to both agency and system level factors, via three main policy coordination mechanisms: ‘market, hierarchy and network’ (Thompson et al. 1991:1). At its simplest level, Figure 8 below provides an adaptation of Coats and Passmore (2008:9) schematic representation of the dynamics underpinning an understanding of the PV of public policy, comprised of three main components: Authorise; Measure and Create.

Figure 8: The Public Value (PV) of Public Policy: Authorise, Measure and Create



Source: Coats and Passmore (2008)

Therefore, taking into account the above three components of PV according to Coats and Passmore, (2008) and consistent with Smith's (2004) definition of PV (defined near the end of section 1.1.1), a conceptualisation of the PV of ULAC according to this thesis relates to three main questions:

1. Authorisation (the network process) - *what purpose does ULAC serve?*
2. Create (the network context) - *how does ULAC take place?*
3. Measurement (network value) - *why it is perceived the way it is?*

The available literature relating to the first two questions concerning *authorisation* and *creation* relate is considered in Chapters Two (Authorisation - WHAT) and Three (Create – HOW) through discussion of the functional domains of ULAC in terms of its: *purpose, configuration and management* across a multi-disciplinary literature.

The final question (3) in terms of the *measurement* of ULAC (WHY) is considered in Chapter Four in the following sections, highlighting the different ways of conceptualising the measurement of outcomes from varying ontological perspectives, to reveal disagreement about how different ‘value’ criteria are conceptualized and measured. Taking into account the importance of both the ‘social’ and the ‘institutional’ context of policy, the measurement of a networks value according to this thesis is therefore consistent with a PV perspective (Smith, 2004).

4.1.2 Measuring Public Policy

Economic literature provides insights mainly into the rationale for network involvement. Economic organisational theory views organizations as being comprised of networks (and constitute a type of institution at the whole network level), where organizational benefits are found to relate to efficiency outcomes, in terms of reduced transaction costs (Williamson, 1985) resource efficiencies (Pfeffer and Salancik, 1978) and scale and scope economies associated with networks. In this sense, early economic research focus on the organizational experience of being involved in networks has resulted in little attention on outcomes from the network. An economic understanding of non-structural outcomes from networks as a whole, are therefore, thought missing (Provan and Milward, 1995).

Sadioglu and Dede (2016) suggest much of existing empirical research on the effectiveness of inter-municipal cooperation (IMC) - similar to the ULAC – is premised on rational choice-based theory, concluding its ‘weak ability to delve into regional problems’ (p148-9) and inefficient process over the longer-term. Feiock and Turnbull (2012) also suggest rational economic approaches to explaining technical efficiency as a preference between competition or collaboration, based on ‘rationalized logic that competition induced spending reductions making government more efficient’ (p3). The economists thus traditionally view the policy process as a rational political-administrative activity, viewing interaction as taking place through hierarchical relationships and bureaucratic institutional frameworks, with focus on factors that shape the actions of individual decision-makers. Game theory has been used for understanding networked settings (Stoker, 1991), by taking into account the full constellation of network structures and interdependencies, as well as individual preferences (O’Toole, 1997). However, the tradition of viewing policy as the outcome of rational decision-making is not without criticism, and believed to fail to take into account multi-actor and multi-level approaches in policy formulation.

From a spatial perspective, network policy research of outcomes are said to lack recognition of the importance of city context shaping outcomes, in terms of regulatory systems, traditions and norms, historical context, location and evolving political and economic systems (Sheppard, 2002; Leitner and Sheppard, 1999).

The public administration literature takes a different view of outcomes, by recognising the need to take into account wider institutions and processes in policy practice (Jacobs, 2014). Performance measurement of network policy from a public administration perspective, considers wider policy context in addition to efficiency and effectiveness criteria, directly related to policy objectives. In this sense, the public administration literature refers to policy outcomes as PV. Stoker (2006) proposes ‘public value management as a new paradigm...suited to networked governance’, due to its focus on networked inter-organizational and cross-sector relations and governance, to provide a means for assessing performance measurement and management (Kalambokidis, 2014).

The ‘institutions and processes that produce and sustain policy’ are important for PV, particularly in collaborative, networked governance processes, where an understanding of ‘managerial behaviour’ as well as ‘democratic and collaborative governance’, are key elements for understanding PV creation (Crosby et al. 2014: 453). Provan and Milward (2001) suggest that collaboration policy should therefore best be assessed by the communities they are trying to serve and in meeting partner expectations through the broader value that accrues to participant organizations. Moreover, along with any of the benefits or values accrued by collaborative inter-governmental working, their costs and barriers will also impact on performance (Agranoff, 2007). Therefore, policy network analysis is believed valuable for helping to ‘directly confront the administrative and political complexity’ (Rhodes 1990: 313) that can be associated with ULAC.

A key difficulty in understanding and measuring policy network performance relates to the generalizability of network findings, given their embeddedness within specific policy contexts. Policy networks relate to a diverse range of institutional forms ‘shaped and constrained by institutional rules as well as regulatory procedures and norms specific to the policy arena’ (Isett et al. 2011: 164). For example, ‘trust’ is a potential criterion for success in formal networks, although the policy context can shape and impact on success, as member commitment may vary. Much of the network policy research emphasises the benefits of networks by presuming ‘often uncritically, that collaborative horizontal arrangements yield advantages, but no disadvantages, when compared to hierarchical arrangements’ (Heranz, 2010: 313).

There are also limitations in the explanatory value of policy networks highlighted by Marsh and Rhodes (1992), suggesting ‘policy networks will never provide an adequate account of policy change, because such networks are but one component of any such explanation’ (p260), given that the policy network concept is regarded as ‘a meso-level concept, it must be combined with macro-level and micro-level theories in order to produce explanations’. Therefore, ‘they [policy network explanations] fail to explain policy outcomes because the driving force of explanation, the independent variables, are not network characteristics per se but rather characteristics of components within the networks’ (Dowding, 1995: 137).

Policy outcomes are said not to occur automatically and differ as products of history, local institutions, and differently structured environments where people live, work and invest. For example, networks are ‘likely to produce other outcomes that may be critical to overall network function’ that may not always be easy to capture or identify: ‘since networks are, essentially, social systems...likely to generate social outcomes related to network participation’ (Provan et al. 2009: 874). The policy network approach is found to produce output content, which is fed back into a hierarchical decision-making process. The explanatory power of the policy network concept is a key limitation of current administration research, with general academic agreement that the

strength of existing conceptions of collaboration relate merely to their descriptive value. In this context, the explanatory power of the policy network concept is limited.

Given all the above, it is clear the policy-outcome relationship is ‘neither straightforward nor easily conceptualized’ as ‘outcomes of collaboration vary significantly, depending on which theoretical perspective a researcher takes’ (Miller et al. 2008: 102). Assessing collaboration policy-outcome processes are complex, such that the dynamic nature of social behaviour in collaborative settings means it is difficult to fully understand their true value.

The apparent lack of evidence to support a causal connection between collaboration policy and outcomes can be said to relate to the existence of multiple theoretical perspectives across the different strands of related literature, making it conceptually challenging to connect various empirical studies to policy outcomes. The problem is compounded by the complexities of measuring policy performance. The direction of causality within networks and their impact on the economy is still largely unclear, raising important questions about the fundamental causes of change and how city agents influence policy outcomes in practice (see Storper, 2010, for example).

Therefore, different methodological approaches to measuring performance add complexity due to: networks of various form/structure: from an ego-network, dyadic, triadic or whole network perspective (Wasserman and Faust, 1994). Networks can also be formal or informal, where local government tend to rely on formal networks for managing economic development, comprised of informal networks characterising the relationships between network actors (Agranoff and McGuire, 2003). A key methodological difficulty understanding intergovernmental network structures also relates to the ‘lack of a clear network boundary’ concerning the nature of the network structure (Bergenholtz and Waldstrøm, 2011: 540). The issue of boundary is resolved by applying either a realist approach (actors themselves defining social boundaries) or the nominal approach (imposing the boundary conceptually based on the analytic purpose). There is also some academic debate about the appropriate unit of network analysis and whether examination of the ‘whole network’ should be considered more important, or whether the component substructures are as important for consideration (Isett et, 2011). There is a general lack of empirical research focused at the whole network level hindering the ability to understand ‘how the whole functions separately from its parts’ (Isett et, 2011:162), and as such, both units of analysis are assumed important. These complexities are discussed more fully in section 4.2.

The apparent shift in the regionalist literature towards an appreciation of the autonomous interdependent nature of networked actors in horizontal relationships of interactive and reciprocal nature (Thompson et al. 1991) highlights the importance of analysing the impact of institutional context on the value of collaboration. By considering the forms and politics of urban partnerships and broader governance arrangements across different city-region environments, this wider

conceptualisation views collaboration ‘in an increasingly networked society’, and its ‘unique potential to create public value’ (Miller et al. 2008: 103). Bardach (1998) argues that collaboration policy outcomes and success should be best viewed in terms of Public Value (PV) as a ‘value-creating’ process that is ‘partly descriptive … and partly normative’ (Crosby et al. 2014:448). According to Smith (2004), the PV of policy requires ‘telling a story…to bring together debates about values, institutions, systems, processes, and people…allowing one to link insights from different analytical perspectives…to aggregate issues for scholarly analysis’ (p68). Creating PV in this sense, relates to ‘the extent to which PV criteria are met as some combination of input, process, output, and outcome measures’ (Crosby et al. 2014: 449).

Overall, in view of the various ontological and theoretical approaches across the literature and its inherently complex nature, it is believed ‘unlikely we will ever arrive at a single approach to evaluate collaboration outcomes’ (Miller et al. 2008: 104), requiring ‘a pragmatic and non-ideological approach’ (Coats and Passmore, 2008: 5), from a coherent multidisciplinary, multi-dimensional perspective. Any conceptualisation of the policy-outcome relationship must also make clear ‘the analytical perspective’ from the outset (Bergenholtz and Waldstrøm, 2011: 540).

The institutional perspective of the PV of ULAC suited to the analytical approach of this thesis relates to two main points. First, the ability to bridge insights across a range of ‘scholarly boundaries’ (Smith, 2004: 69) from different analytical fields (i.e. economic, spatial and governance literature), allows for the aggregation of discussions on ideas from an institutional perspective. Second, it is difficult to utilize policy network theory ‘to move beyond mere description and into policy explanation’ on ‘matters of substance’ (Rhodes, 1990: 311), requiring a ‘model of the actor…as key to better policy explanation’ (Blom-Hansen, 1997: 669). By ‘telling a story’ (Smith, 2004: 68) of the three main functional areas of the ULAC policy process (i.e. the context; the process and value), the approach in the thesis is to take into account the role of the ‘urban’ and ‘national’ institutional context of the network actor involved in the ULAC process.

From an institutional perspective, PV relates to not only any set of contributing factors that enable policy outcomes, nor how they flow (or sort) into a location, but how the factors interact within the particular policy process in a convoluted way. In this sense, PV differs across policies due to complexity: human interactions and institutional settings varying across policy, meaning assessing the PV of policy network outcomes is complex (see figure 2.1 in Pawson, 2006: 22). The assessment of ULAC and its PV appropriate to this thesis is therefore not focused on the evaluation of outcomes, rather, it is aimed at understanding the PV according to network dimensions, in terms of: their purpose (what); management and configuration (how), as an explanation of its public value (why), by drawing from a range of relevant disciplines, including economic, political and geographical perspectives. Thereafter, the PV of ULAC policy can be comprehensively

understood from an institutionally sensitive conceptualisation. The following section provides a fuller discussion of the institutional perspective of the PV of ULAC as understood in this thesis.

4.2 Institutional Perspective of Economic Development Networks between Government Agencies

Institutional theory makes a distinction between sociological (i.e. cultural, normative and cognitive behaviour) and economic (i.e. rational, self-interested, logical) explanations of human behaviour, including the role of power, its distribution and how it affects relationships, via ‘a set of related analytical ideas that help to bring theoretical dimensions together to explain the relationship of networks with outcomes’ (Blom-Hansen, 1997: 674). In particular, institutional insights consider issue of both agency (the behaviour of individuals) and structure (the role of organisations) for shaping policy.

Recognising there are different types of institutionalism (see Jessop, 2001), ontologically, the focus of the research interest here is to bridge economic, spatial and governance insights of institutions as ‘the basic unit of social organisation’ (Amin, 2001: 1237), by drawing on institutionalist perspectives relevant to the study of economic development, emphasizing ‘the importance of social and cultural conditions’ of economic activity (Cumbers et al. 2003: 325).

To ensure ‘the role of institutions [is] considered in an explicit and systematic way’ (Blom-Hansen, 1997: 674), institutional theory for understanding economic development policy in the context of this thesis draws mainly upon: Bathelt and Gluckler (2013) and Evenhuis, (2017) multi-scalar economic geography perspectives of institutions; Rodríguez-Pose (2013) conceptualization of informal and formal network rules, ties and structures; and Lowndes (2001) for understanding urban political processes. The view of institutions in this research is thus suited to the ontological view of institutions as shaping, but also being shaped by the environment, contrasted with more rationalistic perspectives (Rodríguez-Pose, 2013).

This section provides an overview of the institutional insights relative to: Rodríguez-Pose (2013), Bathelt and Gluckler (2013), Evenhuis (2017) and Lowndes (2001), in order to clarify and synthesis an extent understanding of institutions for economic development.

4.2.1 Defining Institutions:

Institutional analysis from a social science perspective, is regarded one of the ‘most widely used frameworks’ (Araral and Amri, 2016) for understanding networked processes, in particular, its use for understanding the influence of the recent ‘place-based approaches to territorial development’ (Tomaney, 2014: 231).

Public sector institutions and individuals involved in networks are viewed as predominately shaped and embedded in institutional context, resulting in network policy outcomes that are ‘influenced by a set of contextual factors (i.e. exogenous)’ (Araral and Amri, 2016: 74). Given the research focus on understanding ULAC as an economic development policy involving government agencies representing both national and urban scales, Bathelt and Glückler (2013) and Evenhuis (2017) multi-scalar conceptualisations are relevant in the context of this thesis. The ontological perspective of institutions for economic development across various levels of scale, are viewed as:

‘structures that shape social interactions [and] the interplay of sets of social structures at various levels of scale’

Evenhuis (2017: 2-3)

‘...from a relational perspective [of] how institutions emerge in a contextual, path-dependent, yet contingent way...[through] the roles of agents and organizations, the economic practices and relationships in which they engage, and the resulting social institutions and their dynamics at different spatial and non-spatial scales’

Bathelt and Glückler (2013: 341-342)

Evenhuis (2017) perspective of institutions for economic development makes a key distinction between various types of institutions and their somewhat diverse roles, recognizing that ‘structures can shape and constrain individual choices’ Gertler (2010: 4). Bathelt and Glückler (2013) provide a relational economic geography perspective by integrating approaches from different fields of the social sciences, whereas Evenhuis (2017) relational perspective is slightly wider as it focuses attention on the subnational scale of various types of institutions. Institutions can refer to both the institutional arrangement (i.e. organisations, regulatory agencies, procedures, agreements, routine processes, rituals) and the institutional environment (i.e. macro-environment context, norms, regulations) relative to both formal (i.e. rules, procedures, contracts) or informal structures (i.e. norms, conventions, traditions, routines) (Evenhuis, 2017: 3), where the dynamics of institutional change vary relative to the different types of institutions (Evenhuis, 2017) (refer to Figure 9).

Therefore, understanding ULAC networks in economic development involving government agencies from differing institutional contexts, views institutions as: economic development networks for economic gain (Bathelt and Glückler, 2013) involving interaction between government actors embedded within different institutional contexts (Evenhuis, 2017).

4.2.2 Formal and Informal Institutions in Economic Development Networks:

A key theme in academic literature is recognition of the important role of institutions ‘in shaping processes of economic development’ (Cumbers et al. 2003: 328). Institutional analysis in

economic research broadly focuses on how activities are organised in different contexts and their importance for economic processes, highlighting the significance of ‘path dependency of collective practices, which circumscribe economic potential’ (Amin, 2001: 1239), recognising that economic activity of agents is conditioned and constrained by institutional structures. Institutional context is believed to impact economic activity and outcomes (Storper and Rodriguez-pose, 2006).

Williamson (2000) provides a comprehensive review of the New Institutional economics (NIE), its diverse nature, dimensions and complexity.

Traditional institutional geography insights view collaboration between local government agencies as being ‘inherently spatial’ (Gerber, 2015: 1), for information sharing, policy development, or land use planning, for example, from a ‘meso-level understanding of economic life of cities and regions’ (Amin, 2001: 1237). The economic geography literature suggests that ‘spatial context matters in different settings’ (p1238) for the features of ‘embededness’ (Amin and Thrift, 1994) and ‘path dependency’ (Storper, 1997) relative to the historical, political, cultural, and policy content shaping a places overall institutional context.

Regardless of a range of economic, spatial and governance institutional perspectives, institutionalisms largely perceive the economy through a broad set of social rules and norms (Amin, 1999), in terms of: the role of informal conventions as well as formal rules and structures; the way in which institutions embody values and power relationships; and the impact of institutions upon behaviour, and interaction between individuals and institutions (Lowndes, 2001).

Institutional theory considers the role of institutional structures and activities (i.e. formal and informal) for economic, social, cultural, or political ends, that can: act both as a constraint (North, 1990), and enabler of networked behavior (Bathelt and Glückler, 2013); as well as define and shape actor behaviour according to organisational position, authority, and rules (Ostrom, 2005).

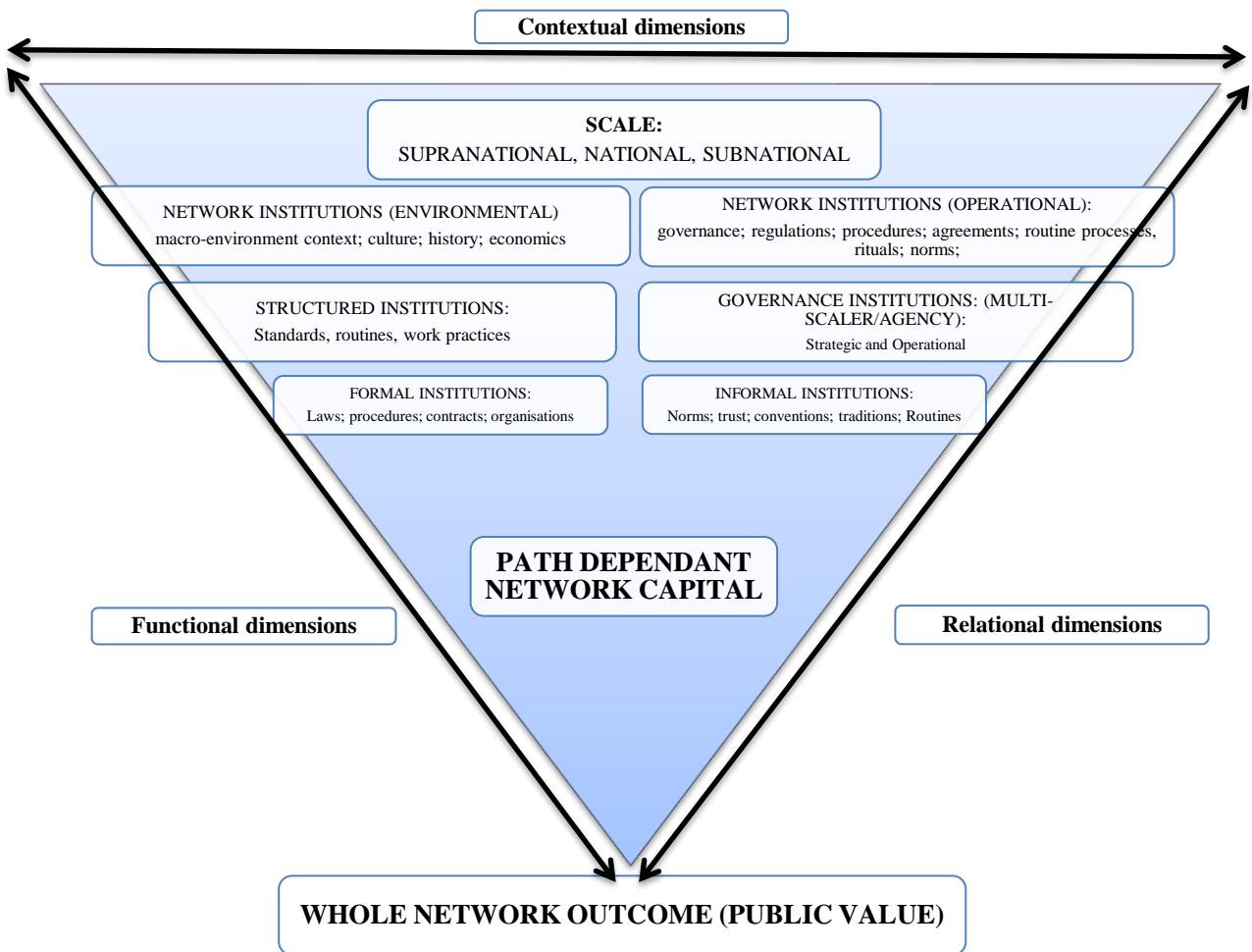
However, ‘how institutions matter’ (Rodriquez-Pose, 2013: 1035) is a key concern of this research, where economic development policy is understood as being largely embedded in national policy approaches that negate the importance of local institutional context (Pike et al. 2006). The view in this thesis is that ‘institutions matter’ (Rodriquez-pose: 2013: 1036) for economic development at the national level (Jackson and Deeg, 2008), but also, at the subnational level, across various scales, by taking into consideration the role of different types of institutions.

Evenhues (2017) conceptualises institutions for economic development by paying particular attention to the importance of a ‘differentiated and multi-scalar understanding of institutional change in regions and cities...provide[ing] scope for agency’ making a clear distinction between the different types and functions of institutions in economic development.

Therefore, the approach to the thesis research is sympathetic to the institutional approach in Evenhues (2017) and Bathelt and Glückler (2013), sharing their ontological positions on the role of

institutions in economic development at the subnational level. The research analyses the role and impact of different dimensions of formal and informal institutions on the PV of ULAC, according to: functional, contextual and relationship dimensions, relative to the institutional environment, function and social embeddedness (see Figure 9).

Figure 9: Path Dependent Institutional Dimensions in Economic Development



The figure provides a framework for understanding institutional impacts in economic development, and the different dimensions within a complex set of networked activity. ‘operational institutions’ relate to the working of the network itself in terms of constituted processes either formal or informal. The ‘environmental institutions’ relate more to the external scale of the network (i.e. national or international level), which largely condition and impact the lower level institutions within the network, that affects the culture, beliefs, traditions, experiences, historical context, and political views (i.e. socio-cultural influences of the whole network context). Therefore, the operational and environmental institutions can be both internal and external to the network process. The background of larger political, economic and social structures at a certain point in time will

ultimately ‘influence the nature and success of networked processes in practice, as well as their historical context influencing the causes, as well as consequences of networks’ (O’Toole, 1997: 47). Institutions can also be further grouped into ‘structures’ (e.g. chambers of commerce, business associations, labour unions) and ‘governance’ (e.g. multiple actors, across multiple levels of society) (Evenhuis, 2017).

All of the institutions, both internal and external, are either formal or informal institutions, with the overall effect on the networks outcomes dependant on the underlying nature and dimensions that the institutions take. Formal institutions are believed more relevant and important ‘for the steering and coordination of initiatives pertaining to economic development in particular regions and cities’ (Evenhuis, 2017: 2), given their ease of visibility and relevance in economic development.

Importantly, the role of institutions for understanding the PV of ULAC relates to their ‘institutional thickness’ (Rodriguez-pose, 2013:1037), as network capital, resulting from the combination different types of institutions. There is an overall view that formal institutions are more important, although the role of informal institutions is also important, but unclear exactly how due the difficulties with isolating the complex combination of both formal and informal.

Therefore, the institutional nature of the framework is important for understanding the relationship with policy outcomes, relative to three main dimensions: functional, contextual and behavioural, dependent on different levels subject to self-reinforcing mechanisms. Path dependency ‘can be used to focus critical attention on the importance of agency and structure’ (McCarthy, 2007: 33): ‘agency’ to explain local governance, strategic stakeholder behaviour, and ‘structure’ to explain social relations and how contextual factors affect decision-making.

This thesis will demonstrate how both formal and informal institutions (Lowndes, 2001) matter for understanding the PV of ULAC. The notion of path dependence can help to bring the framework together, viewing the network as an ongoing dynamic process, rather than inevitably ending in a stable state. Figure 9 demonstrates how an institutionalise approach to understanding economic development is multi-dimensional, complex and path dependent in nature for understanding the policy-outcome relationship, dependant on the networked institutional processes, properties and characteristics (i.e. network capital defined by Huggins and Thomson, 2013). The institutional context both within and outwith the formal instituted network will impact the direction and nature of whole network effects and flows, where the aggregation of effects across different levels (i.e. the community; the network as a whole; and the networks individual components) and scales (i.e. supranational, national, subnational) determine the overall causal relationship between the whole policy network and its PV (see section 4.1).

The institutional view of the economic development policy in the context of this thesis, is akin to ‘something more than a collection of atomised firms and markets driven by rational preferences and a standard set of rules’, instead, it is viewed as:

‘a composition of networks and collective influences which shape individual action; a highly diversified set of activities owing to the salient influence of culture and context’

Amin (1998:4)

The formal and informal institutions of local government and governance are viewed as being important for the overall economic performance of the city and the region. Rodriguez-Pose (2013) notes, the view of institutions as both ‘cause and consequence of economic development’ making them especially difficult to assess given the apparent endogeneity of different institutional dimensions within and outwith the process.

In order to make clear boundary limits to an institutional approach to network analysis in the context of this thesis, clear specification of the networks policy function (i.e. economic development) and the scale of network analysis (i.e. analysis of the PV of the whole network effect resulting from collaboration between local and national government agencies within the formal network) is clarified from the outset.

The context chosen to study the process of ULAC from an institutional perspective involves national and urban local government in Scotland. In line with that suggested by Feiock and Steinacker’s (2005) in terms of the importance of actor attributes, the following section considers the institutional attributes of ULA’s and national government as the main collaborating actors in the context of this thesis. In line with an institutional perspective, the institutional features of ULA’s (as the collaborating actor) are key to understanding the relationship between ULAC and its PV at the subnational level.

The importance of institutions in the context of this thesis relates to the context of economic development policy in Scotland and the ‘growing importance of multi-actor networks’ (Lowndes, 2001:1956), requiring institutional insights of emerging arrangements for understanding the role of both formal and informal institutions at the subnational level.

4.3 Institutions and Economic Development Networks: Local and National Government (see also section 2.2 of the Thesis)

The role of institutions and their relevance for understanding context relative to ULAC concerns the literature pertaining to government agencies involved in economic development. The fragmentation of elected local government and prevalence of multi-actor policy networks in recent

years, suggests that ‘institutions’ are not the same as ‘organisations’, given that informal coalitions and partnership working is commonplace in policy (Lowndes, 2001).

The Institutional Collective Action (ICA) Framework (Ostrom, 1990) has been used for analysing collective action between institutional actors, such as cities, and government agencies (Feiock, 2009), where Feiock and Steinacker (2005), highlighting how the heterogeneity across different local government institutions can impact on collaboration outcomes and economic divisions. Specifically, contextual factors relating to network structures matter to help formalise policy networks, as key to their performance. The ‘contextual factors promoting or constraining local economic development institutions’, are believed to shape the behaviour of network actor interaction (Ha et al. 2016: 17).

Therefore, insights concerning the institutional dimensions of ULAC suggest the political nature of LA institutions are defined by rules, in turn, constraining the actions of the participating actors. Formal structures characterizing intergovernmental networks often involve some form of contractual process (e.g. a manager, network broker/ administrative organization) that plays a key role in coordinating the network without top-down authority unlike hierarchies. Provan and Milward (1995) suggest network effectiveness is based on network structural characteristics (i.e. degree of centralisation) and network stability (i.e. contextual factors). Structural attributes familiar with governmental settings include: formalization, standardized procedures, and report monitoring (Christensen, 1999). Provan et al. (2009) also identify ‘task-oriented indicators’ for the achievement of network embeddedness as an indicator of network value, based on three social outcomes: organizational trustworthiness, reputation, and influence.

Differences across political institutions shape actor incentives, in turn, influencing network behaviour and outcomes as a whole; where the whole network outcome is potentially inefficient when institutional actors’ incentives differ significantly. Mitigating institutions are believed to be one solution for dealing with different institutional actors within network settings: the establishment of regional governments is one such mechanism for solving horizontal collective action problems across metropolitan regions, although depends on ‘the degree of autonomy the mechanism affords local actors’ (Feiock, 2009: 359).

Feiock and Steinacker’s (2005) study of institutional collective action (ICA) amongst local governments suggests that much of the network research has focused on ‘the relationships between actors, to the neglect of actor attributes’ (p267). Research derived from sociological perspectives, based on the structure of ties, are supposed to direct attention away from the attributes of actors that shape their interest in cooperation, forming a key research gap in the literature.

The aim of the research thesis focus will thus consider institutional context in terms of actor attributes and their PV for economic development. It is worth considering whether ULAC in Scotland has been used as a means for reconciling economic development challenges resulting from institutional content and differences between Scotland's ULAs. In order to understand the relationship between ULAC and economic development policy by Scottish ULAs with varying institutional contexts, fuller understanding of the institutional dimensions are considered important, and to what extent differences across urban local government may impact on the PV of policy are considered in the following sections, leading to the conclusion of the chapter, highlighting the key knowledge gaps and related research questions.

Local Government Context:

Given the theoretical context to institutional perspectives of economic development policy, the changing management and structure of local government in the UK in recent years is an area in which new institutionalise insights have been 'self-consciously applied, although often more in passing than as a systematic structuring device' (Lowndes, 2001: 1964). While there exists a range of policy network studies of local government collaboration from an institutional perspective (Ha et al. 2016; Hulst and Montfort, 2012), few provide a multi-disciplinary focus on the role of scale (e.g. urban scale of local government) as a key institutional characteristic affecting collaboration outcomes.

The academic research highlights the importance of 'contextual factors...for encouraging local governments to engage in collaborative economic development activities' (Ha et al. 2016: 16). The extent to which institutional context of local government matters and is defined (i.e. urban, city-region, metropolitan definitions), the literature points to 'the need to map the structure of networks among local governments', to 'enhance our understanding of the potential and limitations of policy cooperation' (Feiock and Steinacker, 2005: 267). In this context, an institutional perspective can provide 'powerful tools for understanding change inside local government bureaucracies' (Lowndes, 2001:1953).

However, Nelles (2013) suggests that 'determining what constitutes the 'actor', without reference to policy and institutional context, is problematic', in that an institutional understanding of the city actor (as the urban local authority) requires 'reference to a specific pattern of relations at a specific point in time' Nelles (2013: 1353). Thus, a 'systematic study of how variations in political and economic institutions affect...the performance of policy subsystems', is required, in that 'policy subsystems cannot be divorced from their institutional context' (Araral and Amri, 2016: 81).

Institutional Ties:

From an institutional perspective, there is wide discussion in the literature of the role of formal and informal institutions, and a lack of knowledge on the effect that network context may have on a networks ability to solve complex problems (Jacobsen, 2013). Research also suggests that institutional differences between network members is not what is most important to network effectiveness, rather, the nature and strength of ties between network members: ‘weak ties’ link members of different social groups, while ‘strong ties’ are concentrated within particular groups. Weak ties are less time-consuming, less intense and less intimate than strong ties but serve to create ‘bridges’ between actors with different interests and identities, generating a potential for collective action. It is the institutionalisation of weak ties that constitutes the challenge for governance within the disaggregated urban polity. Institutions do not always take an organisational form; rather, they are comprised of rules that are both created by, and constraining of, political actors.

Clarke (1995: 514) argues for the importance of local context in shaping urban regimes, where a narrow focus on composition and structure of formal institutions obscures the important ways in which the overall structure of the local institutions affect the ability of groups to influence policy.

Institutional differences can also affect the choice, behaviour and functionality of collaboration networks, where institutional differences among local government stakeholders as key influencing factors, include: financial/economic conditions; the development environment of communities; political institutions; policies; regulations; urban growth regime/regulations (Ha et al. 2016: 16); level of autonomy; functional scope; strategic consensus (Nelles, 2013: 1351). LAs and the individuals working on behalf of their city have specified authority to commit their local authority into contractual agreements. The ICA framework suggests an actors’ strategic action in a collaborative context depends on the extent of ‘preference integration among actors in the composite network, with capacity for conflict when preferences diverge’ (i.e. principal-agent problem) (Feiock, 2009: 358).

Much of the existing economic development network research on institutional differences has focussed on the differences between ‘a variety of organizations from different sectors’, or ‘distinguish between public and private sector network linkages’ (Ha et al. 2016: 16), (see for example, Herranz, 2010; Isett and Provan, 2005). There is understood to be a need for ‘a reformulated theory of the (diverse) institutional constraints within which urban political processes operate’ (Lowndes, 2001: 1967).

A recent OECD study draws attention to the importance of local and regional institutions in the process of economic development, identifying a ‘new paradigm’ of regional policy via the role of softer and informal institutions: tapping under-utilized economic potential, creating integrated development programs, and developing soft infrastructures organized in relation to functional economic areas rather than administrative boundaries, supporting the importance of institutions for the effectiveness of ‘place-based’ development policies (Tomaney, 2014).

Drawing on the institutional characteristics highlighted by Hulst and van Monfort (2012) a clear distinction of the importance of institutional characteristics between local government actors working on the same issue area (i.e. economic development) relate to three main factors: formal structures of the state; administrative culture; and legislation, incentives and policies of cooperation. The extent to which institutional characteristics matter to policy outcomes will vary according to the specific nature and institutional setting.

Hulst and van Monfort (2012: 140) suggest future ‘research into factors for success and failure of co-operative arrangements’ between local government institutions requires ‘in-depth case study research [to] reveal how different elements of the administrative context interact in concrete situations’, to help understand ‘the performance of different forms of inter-municipal co-operation in terms of efficacy, efficiency and democracy’. In particular, a key research gap is the need to investigate ‘the relation between the territorial scale of local government and the presence of co-operative arrangements’ to help understand the role of scale as a feature of the collaboration involved (Hulst and van Monfort, 2012: 139).

Accordingly, a key research question is around the nature and role of specific institutional contexts of urban local government. Specifically, in the context of ULAs in Scotland, there is the opportunity to understand more fully, the role and impact of Scotland’s urban local government institutional context, and its influence on the relationship between urban local government network actors at a specific point in time; particularly when Scotland’s institutional environment is undergoing a period of change and constitutional flux.

The next section will introduce the institutional context of ULA’s in Scotland as a suitable unit of analysis and setting for the basis for the rest of the thesis research.

4.3.1 Institutional Context: Urban Local Authorities (ULAs) in Scotland

The previous section outlined the recognition of institutional context for understanding policy outcomes, including the role of ‘actor attributes’ (Feiock and Steinacker’s, 2005). The important role of actor attributes and ‘contextual factors affecting political institutions of local economic development’ (Ha et al. 2016: 17) is key to understanding their relationship with policy outcomes for economic development. The institutional context chosen to study the PV of ULAC as economic development policy is the Scottish economy. As Scottish urban local authorities recently embarked on economic development collaboration, they are working within a wider local government institutional policy environment, whilst building relationships with other Scottish urban local authorities from dissimilar economic contexts. An understanding of Scottish local government and cities is therefore key to understanding the role of institutions in the lead up to the development of ULAC as policy in Scotland in recent years.

City context: Aberdeen, Dundee, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Inverness, Perth and Stirling

The cities of Scotland (refer to Appendix 3 for city key facts) are defined as areas with over 3,000 people (the urban), constituting some 81 per cent of Scotland's total population (ONS, 2012).

Scotland's cities are the powerhouse of the national economy and where the majority of people live. The metropolitan city areas and the city-regions comprise a major proportion of the Scottish economy: 72 per cent of gross value added (GVA) and 49 per cent of total employee jobs for the four largest city-regions alone (Glasgow, Edinburgh, Aberdeen and Dundee) (ONS, 2012).

Our understanding of urban geography and local authority boundaries in Scotland more generally, are a key factor to understanding the spatial role that urban networks play in Scotland. Scotland's cities are economically important, providing around one-third of all Scottish jobs and with the highest proportion of the population living and working within the main city-regions (see Table 9).

Table 9: DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF SCOTLAND'S CITIES

Geographic Area	Population Size ¹	Unemployment Rate ⁴	Employment Rate ³	Political Leadership (Local Authority) 2017
Glasgow	615,070	6.5%	67.3%	Con/Lab
Edinburgh	507,170	4.4%	71.3%	Snp/Lab
Aberdeen	229,840	5.4%	70.2%	Con/Ind Lab
Stirling	93,750	4.4%	72.4%	Snp/Lab
Dundee	148,270	7.0%	66%	Snp/Ind
Inverness ²	56,660	3.7%	77.2%	Ind/Ld/Lab
Perth and Kinross	150,680	3.4%	77.1%	Con/Ld/Ind
Scotland	5,404,700	4.8%	72.9%	N/A

1 – Data derived from Mid-2016 Population Estimates Scotland (NRoS, 2017:Table 9)

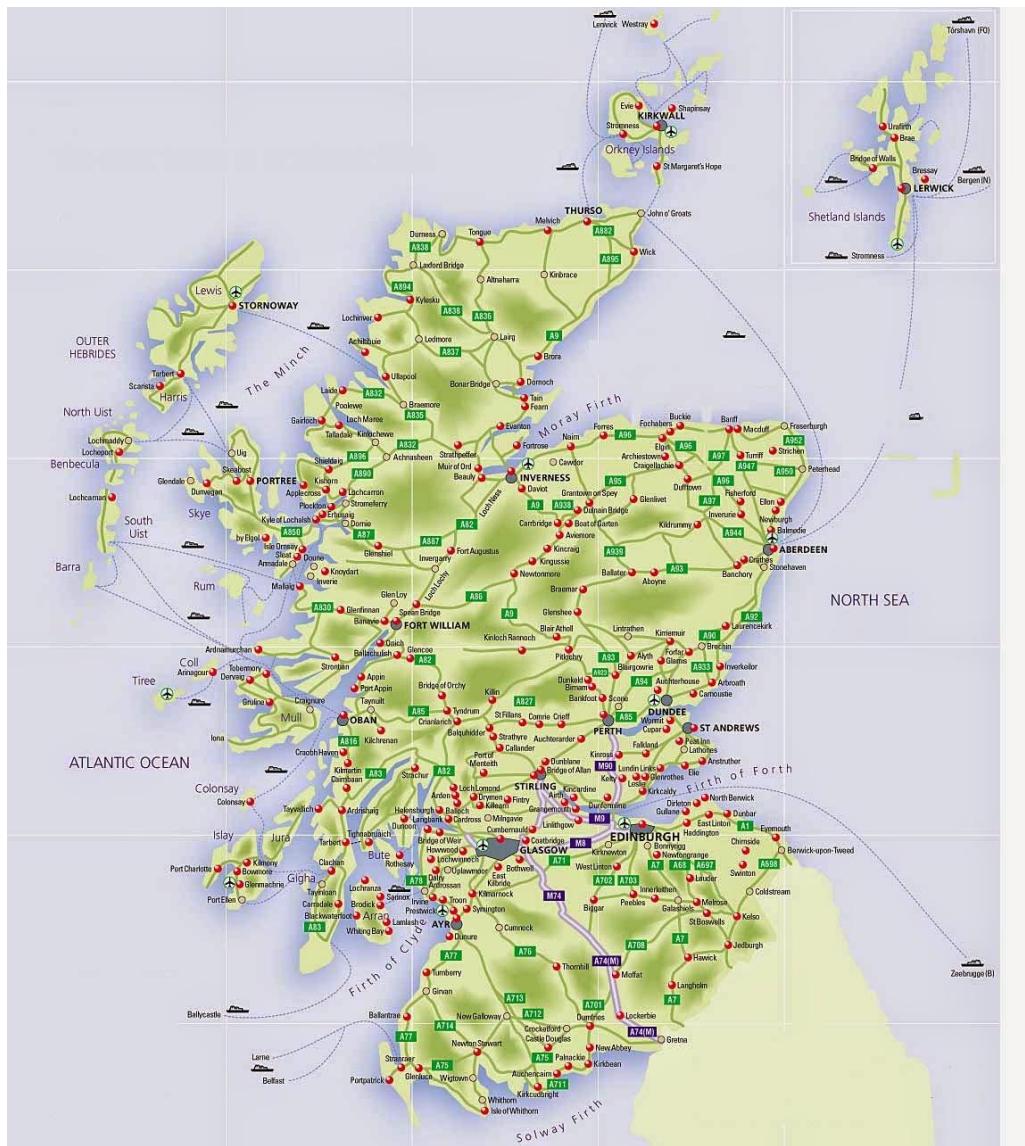
2 – The data for Inverness are computed from locality information from 2012 estimates since Inverness forms a much smaller part of Highland Council than do the other Scottish cities of their respective Council areas.

3 – Data derived from Regional Employment Patterns in Scotland: Statistics from the Annual Population Survey 2016 (Scottish Government, 2017: Table 1.1).

4 - Data derived from Regional Employment Patterns in Scotland: Statistics from the Annual Population Survey 2016 (Scottish Government, 2017: Table 2.3).

The largest of Scotland's cities is Glasgow, with an average population of just over half a million (615,070). Edinburgh is second with a mid-2016 population of around 507,170. The other two major cities are Aberdeen (229,840) and Dundee (148,270).

Figure 10 – Location of Scottish Major Towns and Cities



Source: www.printable-maps.blogspot.co.uk

Figure 10 provides a map of Scotland's cities and Towns. Scotland's cities vary significantly in size (see Appendix 3 for details on Travel-to-Work-Areas - TTWAs) and apparent that some of Scotland's cities are indeed comparable in size to some of its small towns. It is also apparent from Appendix 3 that Scotland is relatively urbanised (with just over 51 per cent of the population residing in Scotland's urban TTWAs). The issue of size and density of Scotland's cities is considered important for clusters policies (Turok, 2008), recognising the importance of working between small or medium-sized cities to help 'open up possibilities for regional economic growth' (Meijers, 2008: 2323).

Scotland's cities also experience very different growth patterns, reflective of their diverse economic base and variety of structural change over recent years. Table 9 highlights the variable economic performance across Scotland's cities, demonstrating that city economic performance not

only varies with size, but its density, diversity, visibility and connectivity (Storper, 2013), giving some justification for why ‘bespoke’ city economic policies are needed.

However, extensive policy debate surrounds the appropriate geographical scale and structure for which policy should focus, as highlighted in section 2.3. The formal institutional definition of the city refers to the local authority legal boundary definition. Given that functional economic connections (e.g. economic, housing market, travel-to-work, marketing or retail catchment factors) of cities are often not hard bounded (Rodriguez-Pose, 2008), cities do not function in isolation of their wider metropolitan and regional networks, often working in both collaborative and competitive form. In other words, the ‘conceptual space’ of city and city-region concepts are ‘largely imprecise without reference to a specific set of linkages and context’ (Nelles, 2013: 1352). In this sense, from an institutional perspective, both informal and formal institutions are important for urban performance.

In the context of this thesis, formal institutions are defined by the ULA institutional boundary, and informal institutions defined by wider economic and social networked linkages. The research focus of this thesis thus contends that the cities managed by ULAs are defined by spatial, economic and social network flows. Accordingly, the following section provides an overview of formal and informal ‘networked’ institutional context of Scotland’s urban local government, as a contributory factor to understanding the relationship between ULAC and economic development performance of interest to this research.

4.3.2 Local Government in Scotland: Formal and Informal Institutions

As previously mentioned, the formal and informal institutions of local government are complex at the regional and urban scale, characterised by fragmented powers across different scales of governance. Institutional reconfiguration and policy complexity are commonly associated with the delivery of economic development in Scotland and the extent and nature of different formal and informal approaches to economic regeneration subject to much debate.

A description of the institutional evolution of local government since the 1970s – in terms of powers, funding, grant mechanisms and geographic structures – is provided, to help first understand the nature of changing institutions and powers of local government in recent years and since the establishment of the Scottish Parliament in Holyrood in 1997.

Formal institutions of local government in Scotland

Scottish local government was transformed in 1975 by the findings of the Wheatley Commission and the subsequent Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, removing the Victorian system of

counties, burghs and districts and implemented a two-tier sub-national government system of regions and districts. The only exclusions to this were the island areas of Western Isles, Shetland and Orkney, which were unitary authorities, and a pre-cursor to the changes that followed. The system survived until further change in 1996 as a result of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1994. This removed the two-tier system and saw the introduction of 32 unitary LAs. The 32 elected unitary Local Authorities (LAs) work within a highly centralised system of complex legislation. Scotland's LAs are governed by locally elected councils every 4 years, where local economic development is not a statutory responsibility, requiring a multi-sectoral approach to policy delivery and resulting in convoluted institutions, network of boards and partnerships across local government structures.

Following a referendum in 1997 on devolution, the current Parliament was established by the Scotland Act 1998, in which the system and structure of local government was maintained. The implications for local government following devolution in Scotland meant 'local authorities now work in a party-political and national institutional landscape allowing little room for manoeuvre, with the bulk of their budgets and the majority of their responsibilities mandated by the Scottish Government' (Pugh and Connolly, 2016: 325).

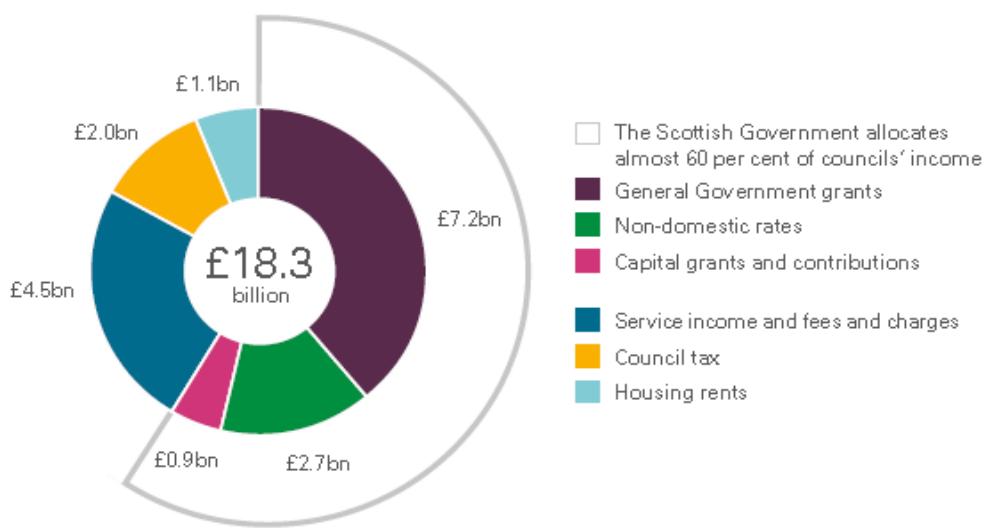
Local government in Scotland is largely restricted in its powers, functioning on behalf of central government and acting in accordance and within the formal powers of the Local Government Act 2003, providing services largely in relation to local delivery of national services (e.g. school education; social work) and more generally, local services for citizens (e.g. libraries and museums, cleansing, parks and other green spaces) and those that combine both aspects (e.g. town planning).

However local government in Scotland has been organised, its funding methods have remained broadly similar, in term of: a tax on housing, a tax on business premises, a transfer from a higher-level government and rent and fees. Figure 11 shows the most current data on LA income streams, with almost 60 per cent coming from Scottish Government Grants and only marginally over 10 per cent coming from own-source tax revenue. The apparent inequality in local government's revenue stream is important for understanding accountability and institutional powers of Scotland's local government.

Prior to the re-establishment of the Scottish Parliament in 1999, LAs institutional relationship was between regional (pre-1996)/unitary authority (post 1996) government and the Scottish Office, a department of the United Kingdom government. Christie and Swales (2010) argue that one of the functions of the Scottish Office and the Barnett formula (i.e. by which increases or decreases in Scotland's central government allocation were putatively determined) was to secure a settlement *above* any that the formula may otherwise determine. Devolution has changed the previous funding relationship, and the balance of power and consequences of it, in two main ways.

First, it is no longer guaranteed that the political party of government in Edinburgh will be the same as that in London – it last was in 2007 – and so all the ‘soft’ informal relationships of party politics are lost in such circumstances. Second, the Scottish Government had to carve out its niche and determine its functions. The Scotland Act 1998 set out the role, competencies and powers of the Scottish Executive-to-be in 1999. However, less than twenty years later, the Scottish Government replaced the Scottish Executive, and the power to vary income taxation was extended from 3p in the pound to 10p in the pound. As a result, Scotland now receives half of VAT receipts, where previously, all receipts went to the Exchequer in London.

Figure 11: An Overview of Local Government in Scotland 2016



Source: Audit Scotland (2016)

The Scottish Government’s new funding and devolved powers have not been without political tensions with Westminster, UK government. The party political context at the time is key to understanding the implications for local government from changing political relationships and institutions.

From 1997, the local government system in Scotland had to deal with a Westminster for a short time before devolution. With a landslide Labour victory achieved in the 1997 general election and subsequent majority Labour administrations in Scotland from 1999 to 2007, coincided with Labour run administrations in the majority of Scotland’s seven cities, maintaining the soft ties of party political power and relationships. However, the election of the SNP-minority administration in 2007 changed political institutional dynamics, due to a new administration with a different long-term vision for where it wanted Scotland to be and the powers it wanted Holyrood to have. What followed was the implementation of an SNP-minority administration with a different vision from previous years, for the relationship between local government and central government.

Formal institutions of national legislation and government policy delivered and accounted for by local government, shape the specific services of local government. A concordat was drawn up in 2008 between the newly titled Scottish Government and Scotland's LAs, setting out funding levels and streams for LAs over the budget cycle. The Scottish Government and LAs new relationship through the concordat also ended ring fencing of certain local government spending areas. Each LA in Scotland, through a community planning partnership arrangement, was to set single outcome agreements (SOA) with Scottish Ministers, mapped directly onto the Scottish national performance framework. The result was a return of a degree of previously centralised decision-making power to LAs via the SOA, setting a new tone for the new inter-governmental relationship in Scotland:

‘In assessing what share of … funding should go to local government, the Scottish Government has taken account of the unique position held by local government in the governance of Scotland and the major contribution local government will make to all of the Government’s Strategic Objectives and the successful delivery of national outcomes… While the Scottish Government must set the direction of policy and the overarching outcomes, under the terms of the new relationship proposed in this package, it will stand back from micro-managing service delivery, thus reducing bureaucracy and freeing up local authorities and their partners to meet the varying local needs and circumstances across Scotland.’

And goes on further to state...

‘For the entire package to remain intact, and as part of their contribution to the new relationship, the Scottish Government and local government will each do what is required to ensure delivery of key government policies and programmes including…freezing council tax rates in each local authority at 2007-08 levels.’

Scottish Government: Concordat (2007)

There was now an explicit link between the Scottish Government as policy setters and local authorities as outcome achievers, setting a new tone of performance management of local government. For the first time, the inter-governmental relationship in Scotland was formally set out, clearly stating the hierarchical nature of central government. The one tax source open to local government (i.e. council tax), was also by *de facto*, now under central government control, with the concordat making a clear policy threat that to upset the agreement and alter tax rates, would bring the system down. The changing institutional relationship between central and local government is set out as one of reward and coercion, where both parties must understand that the outcome is zero-sum.

The historical account of the changing political and economic institutions in Scotland since the development of national government at Holyrood, is key to understanding the context of local governments more recent perceptions of a gradual centralisation of local government, due to a gradual eroding of powers held before devolution. Scottish local government control (including its finance and taxation powers) by the Scottish Government in recent years, and the reduction in local government autonomy relative to both funding discretion (reduced tax powers) and the accretion of central control over powers and duties, has altered the formal institutional relationship (i.e. financial and degree of relative autonomy by councillors) between the Scottish Government and local authorities (LAs) significantly.

The changing context is reflective of a proactive Holyrood, arguably, more ambitious than Westminster was before. However, the benefits of subsidiarity to Holyrood aren't certain to apply to other levels of local government below that. More recently, following the publication of the Smith Commission in November 2014: *Scotland in the United Kingdom: An Enduring Settlement* announced additional new responsibilities and greater fiscal autonomy for Scotland, and how aspects of these areas translate to local government. By implication, the benefits of devolved powers for Holyrood are being increasingly scrutinised by other tiers of local government.

A number of City Region Deals (or City Deals) agreed or planned across Scotland, have changed the inter-governmental relationship in Scotland further still, with work ongoing to develop Regional Economic Partnerships in some areas outside of city regions. City Deals were first introduced in England in 2011, to encourage economic growth by shifting decision making away from central to local government. In Scotland, City Region Deals focus on cities and their wider regions, with three currently agreed (and a further four under discussion) in Scotland, representing a partnership of funding between the Scottish Government, UK Government and Scottish LAs (currently involving 23 of the 32 LAs in Scotland).

As a result of the various historical, economic and political changes in formal institutions affecting local governments' policy and power, spending and fiscal powers is a key battleground in light of on-going public spending cuts in Scotland.

Informal institutions of local government in Scotland

Within the wider context of austerity government in recent years, there exists a complexity of devolved formal and informal policy structures across various sectors and agencies of local government in Scotland, including for example, NHS health boards, regeneration companies and an array of local authority-led initiatives (e.g. UK/Scottish/local funded and bespoke city region deals). Scottish local government now 'operates in a fragmented, complex and interconnected

policy and service delivery environment characterised by associational and joint arrangements’ (Pugh and Connolly, 2016: 321).

The move from an industrial to a more information-based society in recent years, is believed to have influenced the development of new city relationships, leading to a growth in both regional and urban development policies based on complex networks of ‘both horizontal and vertical economic and social interactions, both within and between cities’ (Cheng et al. 2013: 165). Hood and McGarvey (2002) note that the discourse of partnership has been prevalent in the Scottish local governance context since at least 1992. As such, Scottish LAs now operate in a ‘fragmented, complex and interconnected policy and service delivery environment’ characterised by ‘associational and joint arrangements’ (McGarvey, 2014: 45).

‘In November 2007, the SNP Government agreed a new concordat with local government, attempting to set out a new relationship based on ‘mutual respect and partnership’ (Scottish Government, 2007: 2). The responsibility for the delivery of local economic regeneration functions devolved to Scotland’s LAs are characterised by the emphasis on informal institutions of partnership working, reflected in their community planning role, to ensure the coordination of local policy in line with national priorities. Area-based approaches are partnerships comprised of key actors at the regional, sub-regional and local levels, aimed at collectively tackling the causes of deprivation, although formalized by recent legislation in Scotland including the Public Bodies (Joint Working) (Scotland) Act 2013 and the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015.

‘the diverse nature of the context of crosscutting and multi-level partnerships has led to opaque accountabilities throughout Scotland. Scottish local government, as a level of governance, exemplifies the very ubiquity and ambiguity that the term ‘governance’ embodies’

Pugh and Connolly (2016: 321)

The realignment of local authorities’ responsibilities and their role in delivering economic regeneration since 2011, has been a recent attempt to rebalance local regeneration activity, given the background context of complex funding and governance arrangements and reduced autonomy of local government over the last decade.

Scotland, as an economy in institutional transition, has seen substantial changes to the ‘rules of the game’ confronting Scottish urban local government with high institutional uncertainty. It is worth considering whether changes in the nature of formal and informal institutions across Scotland’s urban local government have had any significant implication for ULAC as policy, where Scotland’s urban local government will be shown to play a key role in the development of

collaboration as an economic development policy network in Scotland, given the context of informal and formal institutional change.

Accordingly, the next section will discuss Scotland's urban policy activity relative to ULAC in Scotland in section 4.3.3.

4.3.3 Re-emergence of cities policy in Scotland: The Scottish Cities Alliance (SCA)

The renewed focus on cities in Scotland post 2010, with the formation of the Scottish Cities Alliance (SCA) as a new more autonomous form of 'Cities Policy' in Scotland, followed a 'Review of Scotland's Cities' (Scottish Executive, 2002) commissioned in 2001 by the then Scottish Executive¹⁸ and the first time cities as a spatial unit, had received explicit focus since the formation of the Scottish Parliament in 1999 (Turok, 2004). The 'Review of Scotland's Cities' report provides significant policy recognition of the functional importance of cities and the city-region, by acknowledging the positive impact that Scotland's cities have on their surrounding areas, and the importance of their functional markets (i.e. housing and labour) for wider patterns of demand, infrastructure and service provision. The policy response was to announce a City Growth Fund (CGF) of £90 million over three years for infrastructural improvements to promote economic development (Scottish Executive, 2002), alleged a rather limited response to the complex problems facing Scotland's city-regions (Turok, 2004). A subsequent review of the CGF concluded that the impact of the fund had been largely limited, remaining in place until 2007-08, and thereafter, cities funding being mainstreamed until the creation of the *Agenda for Cities*, which introduced the Scottish Cities Alliance (SCA).

Urban governance in Scotland is shifting towards the recognition of political fragmentation and the importance of functional economic connections beyond the urban core. The cities review points to how the fragmented nature of the political leadership across Scotland's local government can be seen to limit their capacity to act strategically in the long-term, or act in the best interests of the wider city-region, suggesting that the central city and suburban/rural neighbours should form stronger partnerships, although a lack of detail on how this should happen. 'The Cities Review' provides the first mention of the now Scottish Government's focus on the importance of collaboration between its core cities, stating, "the unavoidable mismatch of administrative city boundaries with patterns of activity, means that collaboration/co-operation between authorities, agencies and partnerships will always be necessary to ensure the effective planning, delivery and monitoring of the impact of services and infrastructure."

¹⁸ The Scottish Executive is now renamed the Scottish Government.

What followed was the establishment of the Glasgow-Edinburgh Collaboration Initiative (GECI), established by the then First Minister of Scotland, Jack McConnell, in June 2006 as a ULAC. Part of the aim of the then Scottish collaboration policy was to ensure there were enduring economic and social benefits from large investments, both locally and for Scotland as a whole (Turok, 2008). The GECI was a partnership between Glasgow City Council (GCC), the City of Edinburgh Council and Scottish Enterprise, governed by a Steering Group led by the respective Council Leaders. The GECI collapsed not long after its establishment, due to a lack of political support for collaborative working across Scotland's two main cities (need a ref to support this).

Despite previous failed attempts at inter-urban collaboration policies in Scotland (i.e. GECI) and the fairly rudimentary understanding of the factors affecting inter-urban collaboration in empirical research, the collaborative importance of cities has regained momentum in influencing the thinking about inter-urban collaboration as policy in Scotland:

‘Cities are crucial for global sustainability and should promote greater and smarter collaboration and partnerships between the public and private sectors and between cities themselves.’

Grant Thornton: Sustainable Cities (2011)

Aside from the GECI being dissolved, the Scottish Government has continued with a refocusing and general de-cluttering of economic development policy in Scotland, to promote more local approaches to policy and with a particular focus on cities and economic outcomes. The first review of economic development policy in Scotland took place in 2007, primarily aimed at empowering local authorities and local actors to take on more responsibility for delivering economic development functions, including: the introduction of the *Concordat* between Scottish Government and local authorities in November 2007, including the review of Single Outcome Agreements (SOA) by local authorities and community planning partners (CPPs); the restructuring of Scottish Enterprise and scrapping of Local Economic Forums (LEF) in 2010; the subsequent update of the National Performance Framework in December 2011, and more recently, the commission by the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA)¹⁹ to review public services and local authority funding in Scotland.

An increased recognition of cities by the Scottish Government was reflected by the appointment of a Minister for Cities in 2010, primarily focused on progressing urban economic performance. Collaborative urban policy in Scotland is defined by the Scottish Government’s ‘Agenda for Cities’

¹⁹The Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) represents the joint interests of Scotland's LAs. The key relationship between the Scottish Government in Edinburgh and local authorities (LAs), is through their the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA).

- Scotland's Cities: delivering for Scotland' (2011), resulting in the subsequent establishment of the Scottish Cities Alliance (SCA), to help progress a framework for closer collaboration and co-ordination between Scotland's cities. The renewed focus on urban areas in Scotland was at the same time being reflected by the UK government, who published 'Unlocking Growth in Cities' aimed primarily at the eight English core cities, emphasising the economic potential of urban economies (ODPM, 2011), by progressing a framework for closer urban collaboration and co-ordination.

The establishment of the SCA is clearly stated in the 'Agenda for Cities' (2011) as being 'primarily aimed at attracting external investment to stimulate economic activity and create jobs, by encouraging cities to collaborate on projects of significant economic potential'. The 'Agenda for Cities' was the result of an intensive collaborative exercise between the Scottish Government and the seven Scottish Cities at the time (Glasgow, Edinburgh, Aberdeen, Dundee, Inverness and Stirling). As a result, the institutional configurations of cities policies being steered by the SCA are a dominant feature of an explicit cities agenda in Scotland.

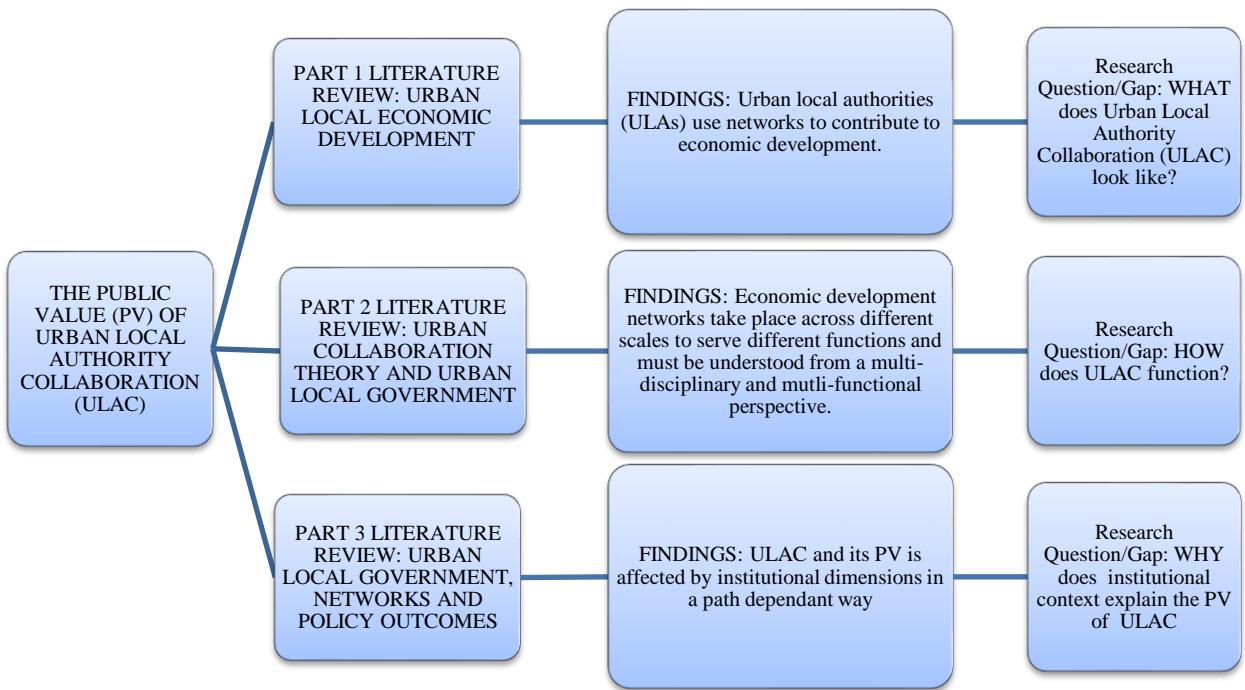
Overall, subsection 4.3 demonstrates how network actors in terms of Scotland's urban local government will collaborate with urban government institutions of very dissimilar institutional context. Scotland's urban local authorities have been shaped by a number of spatial, economic, historical and political contexts over many years, likely to present challenges between the urban local authorities working together across urban boundaries. The following section discusses the economic development literature to identify what is known about the impact of institutional differences (i.e. institutional distance) for the outcome of economic development collaboration, before concluding the chapter.

4.4 Conceptual Framework of the Relationship between ULAC and Policy Outcomes:

The key research gaps found during the review of the literature on the relationship between ULAC and policy outcomes is presented in this concluding section, forming the basis of the main research objectives and integrative conceptual framework shaping the thesis research.

Figure 12 summarises the findings and research gaps from a review of the academic literature relating to urban economic development (Chapter Two), networks (Chapter Three), institutions and policy outcomes (Chapter Four).

Figure 12 – Research Gaps: The Public Value (PV) of ULAC



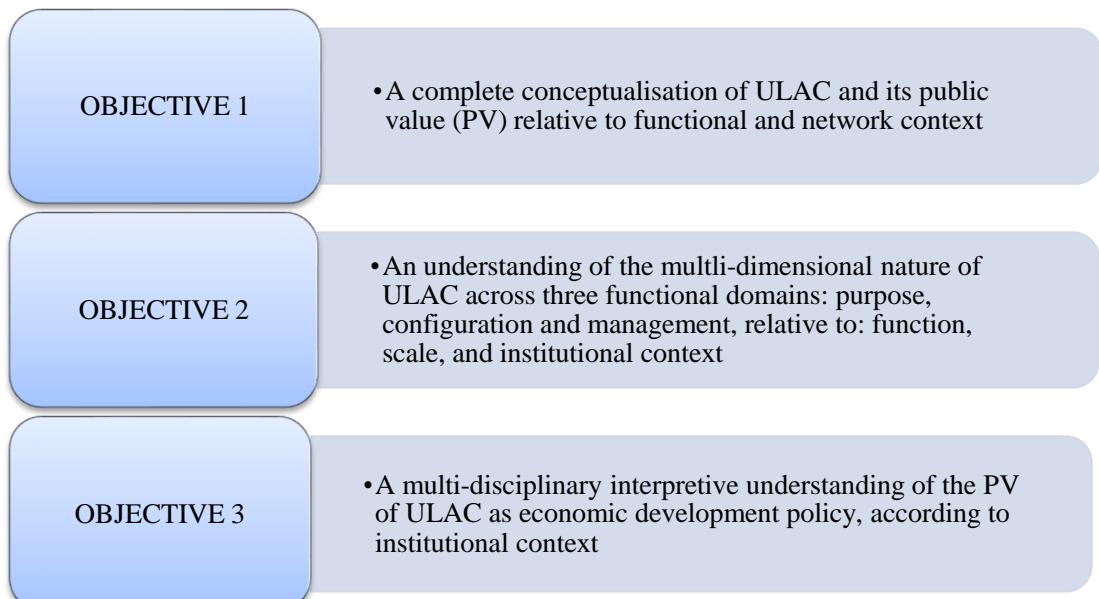
4.4.1 Aims and Objectives

As a result of the multidisciplinary review of the literature in the context of urban local authority collaboration (ULAC) for economic development, the thesis' research question identified from the synthesis of knowledge gaps is:

What is the Public Value (PV) of urban local authority collaboration (ULAC) as economic development policy according to the role of institutions?

In order to fully investigate the research question and knowledge gaps on the PV of ULAC, the research objectives identified are detailed in Figure 13 below:

Figure 13: Research Objectives



The next subsection presents the integrative analytical conceptual framework that will guide research on the topic of ULAC for economic development policy outcomes according to institutional context.

4.4.2 Integrative Conceptual Framework

The integrative conceptual framework (see Table 10 below) has been derived through the integration of the three main literature review chapters in terms of: the economic development role of urban local government (Chapter Two), collaboration and urban networks (Chapter Three) and institutional networks (Chapter Four). The integrative framework brings all of the insights from the literature review together (Table 10) and incorporates the key research gaps, research questions and supporting objectives together:

- AUTHORISE - A description of **what** ULAC looks like relative to three functional domains (*purpose, configuration and management*);
- CREATE - An explanation of **how** ULAC and its functional domains create public value (PV)²⁰, relative to *the role of institutional context (formal and informal institutions)*;
- MEASURE - An interpretive explanation of **why** the PV of ULAC can be explained by *economic, spatial and governance* institutional insights.

²⁰It is worth noting that explicit counterfactual assessment of the PV of ULAC is not considered within the thesis approach, and assumed to be as controversial and challenging a measurement process, as is establishing an approach to PV estimation of collaboration policy in itself. As such, the focus of the thesis in the first instance, is focused on a conceptual assessment of the PV of ULAC. Thus, counterfactual measurement is considered a potential avenue for follow-on research.

Table 10: Integrative Conceptualisation Framework: Institutional Perspective of the PV of ULAC as Economic Development Policy

NETWORK CONTEXT: SCALE: Network-level Outcomes; FUNCTION: Strategic Economic Development; INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT: Government Agencies					
THEORETICAL DOMAINS	FUNCTIONAL DOMAINS (PART A)			NETWORK OUTCOMES (PART C): PUBLIC VALUE	
	Purpose	Configuration	Management		
Spatial	Achieve spatial synergy/integration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Secondary-level nodal networks (i.e. between city organizations); Network ties of proximity (organisational closeness); Network ties of association (functional specialisation) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Network Synergy Network Density (connectedness) Functional integration Complementary cohesion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incentive Aligning (shared purpose/understanding of networks purpose) Networks Structural Effectiveness (strength of network ties) Networks Operational Effectiveness: (Problem solving capacity/clarity of purpose); Network Social Capital (Relationship Efficiencies/trust/equality). 	
Economic	Achieve economic efficiency gains	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve knowledge and innovation; Allocative/productive efficiency; Economies of scale/scope; agglomeration economies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flexible learning Functionality of common projects; Institutional innovation and creativity; Reduce transaction costs; Share/leverage resources. 		
Governance	Achieve efficient policy function, coordination, and implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flexible/dynamic modes of decision-making Non-hierarchical, self-coordinated self-regulating collaborative arrangements Degree of formalization/standardization Formal structure of the state (i.e. administrative tiers, responsibilities, scope and autonomy of local government, number and size of local authority) Upper-level government's approach to collaboration policy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trust Reputation Influence Conflict Rules Power relations Network competence Incentive structures 		
INSTITUTIONAL DIMENSIONS (PART B)*: (ENVIRONMENTAL; SOCIAL; FUNCTIONAL):					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FORMAL: Rules/Laws/Contracts/Organisations. INFORMAL INSTITUTIONS: Culture/routines/traditions/values/norms 					
* The institutional dimensions relate to those identified in Figure 9: Path Dependent Institutional Dimensions in Economic Development					

4.4.3 Key research gaps from the literature:

There is a diversity of collaboration research relevant to urban government, although largely empirical and descriptive in nature. Government policy networks are conceptually difficult to analyse due to the problematic nature of political and network relations. Relatively little is known about how government networks act to support economic development (Klijn and Koppenjan, 2000), resulting in a lack of studies analyzing how different types of policy networks relate to network outcomes (Provan, Fish, and Sydow, 2007), and little available information and evidence on how policy networks function and the policy outcomes involved (Arku and Oosterbaan, 2014). For example, organizing and realizing the benefits of collaboration are rarely identified and understood (Malecki, 2002), and difficult to fully evidence (Loftman and Nevin, 1996). Thus, much of existing evidence is largely ‘anecdotal’ (Malecki, 2002: 940), and ‘lacking a distinct intellectual tradition’ (Isett et al. 2011: 160) for understanding the causal relationship between ULAC and outcomes.

Specifically, there is a lack of understanding of the diverse nature and determinants of success of collaboration between local authorities (Hulst and van Montfort, 2007). Inter-municipal Collaboration (IMC) is prevalent in Western European countries, although, thought relatively underdeveloped in the UK and an apparent lack of information on how it operates, the factors influencing its performance, and the different institutional arrangements in use (Hulst and van Montfort, 2012).

There have been various studies that consider the role of collaboration, and specifically, inter-urban collaboration between cities (Carley, 2000; Carley, 2006; Edwards et al. 2000) in Scotland (see for example: Bailey et al. 1999; Bailey and Turok, 2001; Turok and Bailey, 2004; Turok, 2008; and Docherty et al. 2004). Whilst sympathetic to collaboration at the ‘urban’ scale from the outset, Docherty et al. (2004) seeks to offer ‘potential answers to the question why collaborate’ (Docherty et al. 2004: 445) by deconstructing its theoretical premise and rationale. However, the study provides limited insight of the dynamic nature of collaboration or how it can be best measured as key factors underpinning the rationale of collaboration, thus requiring a fuller more comprehensive multidisciplinary perspective.

In extending Docherty et al. (2004) by reconstruction and conceptualisation of urban collaboration in relation to economic development in Scotland, there is an opportunity to establish a more holistic methodological framework via the ULAC context. By providing a conceptualization sensitive to the role of ‘institutions’ as context, the nature, role and function of ‘urban collaboration’ can be more fully understood.

Furthermore, the institutional context of ‘urban collaboration’ as policy in Scotland has changed significantly since Docherty (2004), with the evolution of a new cities policy in Scotland in more recent years. Accordingly, the importance of filling the above research gaps relates to the increasing policy focus on both the competitiveness and collaborative role of cities for economic performance in Scotland and UK generally (see for example, Pasquinelli, 2013). Therefore, a geographically focussed in-depth study of the PV of ULAC in Scotland is timely, taking explicit account of the role of institutional context for conceptualisation.

4.4.4 Ontological positioning of the conceptual framework:

Ontologically, the chapter has shown how the explanatory power of different analytical approaches to network policies relationship with outcomes varies and is complex. The literature review has demonstrated how policy network processes can be analysed in both a causal or systemic way or integrative or differentiated way; all of which are influenced by the dynamics of network processes.

The view in this research is that by bringing together overlapping theoretical perspectives relative to urban network insights (i.e. economic, spatial, governance networks), it is possible to take into account a dynamic range of explanations to provide a holistic theoretical position. There is much debate surrounding the bringing together of differently informed institutional perspectives (i.e. sociological governance and spatial perspectives with rationale economic perspectives), leading to ‘an intractable divide between [the] incompatible approaches to institutional analysis’ (Hay and Wincott, 1998: 953). Whilst simple models in social science can provide insights on generic features of network processes, the thesis research resonates with the position of Lowndes (2001: 1968), in that ‘the different strands of institutionalise thinking’ can be brought together to help bridge ‘the ontological distance between sociological and rational choice approaches’ (Lowndes, 2001: 1968).

Importantly, a key aim of the research is to bring together research insights from across the main theoretical domains of the literature (i.e. economic, spatial and governance insights), that share ontological positions, consistent with for example, relative economic geography (see also Bathelt and Gluckler, 2003) and institutional interpretivism in public administration (see Hay, 2011). Therefore, through thick descriptions of the ULAC institutional context to help understand the local, specific and unique nature of urban policy networks, the conceptualisation of ULAC is useful for understanding the role and uniqueness of network dimensions within a contextualised institutional context, fundamental to understanding the PV of networked policy.

4.4.5 Summary

The literature review of the last three Chapters (Two, Three and Four): urban economic development, policy networks, and institutions have highlighted the lack of understanding of ULAC and its relationship with economic development outcomes through an institutional lens.

The literature recognises that urban collaboration is beneficial for economic development (Docherty et al. 2004), however, theoretical complexity underpinning network literature means a coherent multi-disciplinary, holistic conceptualization of its relationship with outcomes is lacking. Furthermore, whilst the literature acknowledges that institutions are important for understanding networks, there is a specific lack of understanding of the role of institutional context on the relationship between ULAC and policy outcomes for economic development (Hulst and van Montfort, 2012), from a multi-disciplinary institutional perspective (Lowndes, 2001).

Understanding the relationship between ULAC and policy outcomes requires analyzing: what is developed (i.e. the networks functional dimensions: *purpose, configuration, management*), how the network develops (i.e. the institutional dimensions: *formal and informal*) and why its PV developed the way it did (i.e. theoretical dimensions: *economic, spatial, governance institutions*), through detailed explanation of network mechanisms within a particular context, helping to explain: *the PV of ULAC from an institutional perspective*.

The focus on a multi-disciplinary explanation of the role and impact of institutional context on the PV of ULAC is a key gap in the literature (Hulst and Montfort, 2012), requiring a description of the mechanisms and factors underlying the collaboration process through in-depth, rich context-based descriptions, helping to reveal explanatory characteristics within the case study data. The next chapter will follow with a fuller explanation of the methodological approach to the thesis research.

Chapter Five: Methodology

5.1 Introduction

The Chapters Two, Three and Four reviewed the literature and empirical research relating to ULAC, recognising the complex ‘fuzzy’ nature (Markusen, 2003) of terms underpinning an understanding of ULAC, resulting in a lack of conceptual clarity across academic disciplines and informing the development of a conceptual framework (section 4.4.2) to facilitate an empirical inquiry into:

The public value (PV) of urban local authority collaboration (ULAC) as economic development policy: the role of institutions.

In order to explore the complexity of multiple conceptual identities associated with collaboration processes, the research explains the rationale for choosing an in-depth context-based qualitative single case-study research for conceptualising the PV of ULAC that appreciates the importance of role the ‘collaborators’ (i.e. the network member) identity. The chapter provides the rationale for the methodological choices, clarifying both the ontological and epistemological reasoning (Guba and Lincoln, 1998), and the need for a contextualised approach that recognises the important role of formal and informal institutions for collaboration as economic development policy (Rodríguez-Pose, 2013).

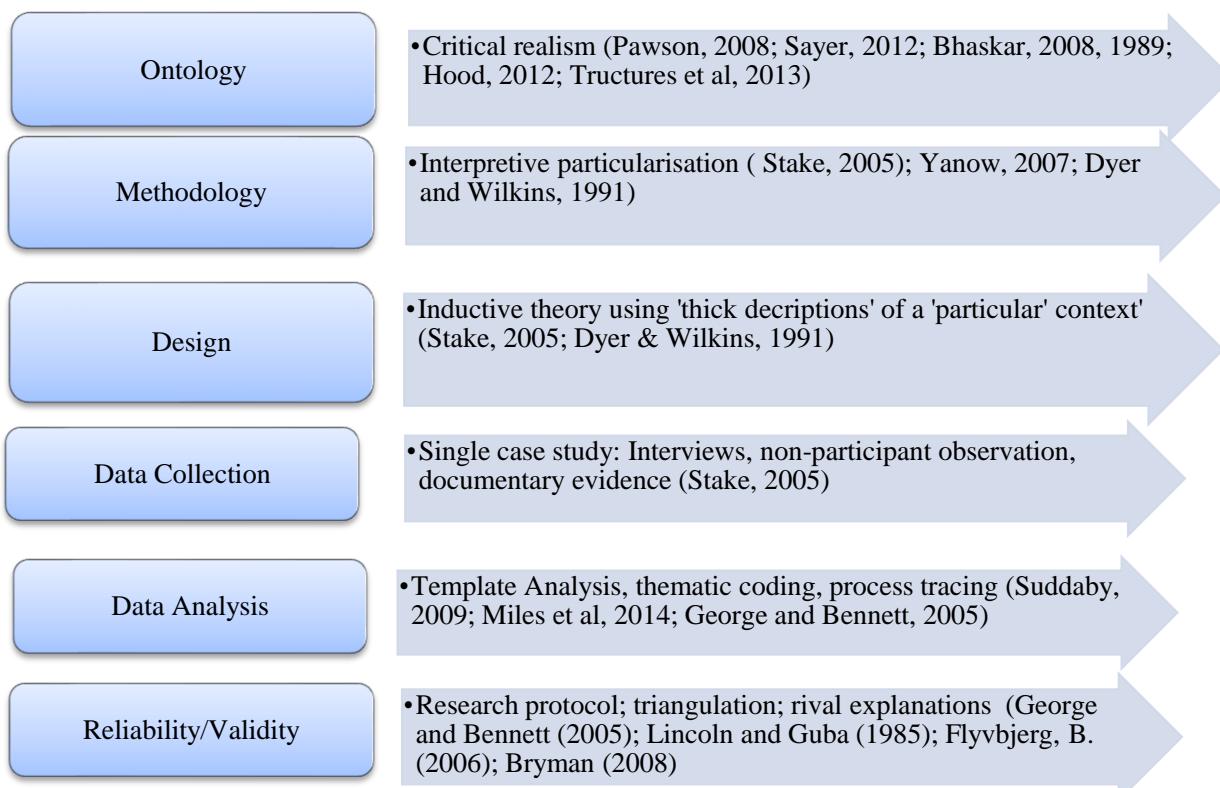
The selection of a suitable research methodology was thus primarily concerned with methods appropriate for the achievement of the primary research objective: to conceptualise the PV of ULAC and the role of institutions. First, the research methodology was required to investigate varying formal and informal institutional contexts framing collaboration and its rationale. Collaboration policy is characterized by political and social constructs, calling for interpretation on a context case-specific basis (Lincoln and Guba, 1985), through rich descriptions for understanding the important role of collaborators’ identity and context within which policy takes place and is shaped. In order to understand what is shaping the experiences of those collaborating (i.e. in this case, predominantly political institutions), thick descriptions from case study research can provide deep insight (Lincoln and Guba, 1985) of the ‘particular’ collaboration setting and process.

Second, the methodology choices were challenged by the complexity associated with investigating dynamic policy-outcome relationships, particularly relating to the thesis attempt to gain insight from a multi-disciplinary theoretical perspective. According to Abma and Stake (2001) ‘social interaction’ is an important aspect to understanding the holistic nature and public value of a policy, by describing context to help judge and understand the true ‘complex’ aspect of policy outcomes. A deep understanding and description of contextual dynamics within a specific collaborative

setting is therefore crucial for conceptualising the relationship between ULAC and outcomes in practice, in line with Dyer and Wilkins (1991) arguments that single interpretive case studies provide rich descriptions of the context in which experiences occur.

Albeit argued ‘there is no way to establish, beyond contention, the best [methodological] view’ (Stake, 1995: 108), Stake (2005) emphasizes the uniqueness of a single case-study approach for being able to understand the importance of the ‘particular’, through rich descriptions of ‘context’ within which collaboration can take place. The thesis methodological approach supports Stake’s (2005) interpretive approach to investigating the role of a particular context, believed to be suitable for the research focus on government institutions as the ‘collaborator’, and the ‘particular’ complex contextualized ‘urban collaboration’ setting in Scotland. The selection of a single case study design was thus based on the ability to investigate collaboration policy characterized by some degree of institutionalization over time. Figure 14 summarises the research methodology and approach, discussed more fully in the following chapter sections.

Figure 14 Research methodology



Stake’s (2005) single-in depth case study approach uses ‘interpretive particularization’ approach to interpreting data, by appreciating the importance of human experience and its subjective non-fixed nature, and the way in which ‘institutions are experienced by actors’ (and substantially comprised of actors with more or less agency). Thus, an interpretive approach that appreciates the importance of the ‘particular’ content of an in-depth case study approach, is valuable for understanding how

actors ‘make sense of, or apply meaning to, institutionalized practices and structures’ (Suddaby, 2009: 181).

Stake’s (2005) interpretive technique for understanding ULAC from an institutional perspective is particularly useful for capturing ‘process narratives’ (Suddaby, 2009: 189), to help assess how ‘interactions are understood, not only by the researcher, but also by the participants engaged in them’ (p189). Process-narratives using thick descriptions are presented throughout Chapters Six and Seven, to help trace the ULAC-outcome relationship.

Section 5.2 elaborates on the research design and interpretive explanation through in-depth single case study. That section is followed by a discussion of the process of case selection (Section 5.3), followed by section 5.4 describing the thesis’ ontology and epistemology. Section 5.5 presents data collection and data analysis’ techniques, including a subsection on research quality (5.5.3). Finally, section 5.6 concludes the chapter and summarises the main elements of the research methodology.

The remainder of the chapter discusses the research approach and design, first detailing the epistemological premise to developing a framework for answering the main research question:

What is the PV of ULAC as economic development policy, relative to the role of institutions?

5.2 Research Design

The aim of this thesis is to theorise by proposing a contextualised interpretive explanation (Stake, 2005) of the relationship between ULAC and outcomes.

5.2.1 Introduction

As both the policy-outcome process and contextual factors relating to institutions were of interest, the research design was based on the ability to provide deep insight into a context-based case study, taking into account individuals narrative and interpretations of the process. The research design for analysing policy processes, in this case, the relationship between ULAC and economic development policy outcomes by Scottish ULAs, is based on Stake’s (2005) interpretive case study approach for understanding the particularization of a situation, through contextual factors (relating to formal and informal institutions). Stake’s (2005: 449) belief is that cause–effect ontologies are too ‘simplistic’ and ‘fixed’, requiring understanding through recognition of the individual’s subjective experience and context. Using process narratives, the methodological approach to the research design is to describe the process of ULAC aimed at ‘causal explanation of its course and effects’ through the interpretive understanding of social action by embracing both ‘explanation and understanding’ through the interpretation of human actions (Bryman, 2008: 15).

Stake (1995) advocates the use of a single case study for providing insight into the complexity and particular nature of case analysis, through which meaning of the ULAC-policy outcome relationship and policy process can be created by ‘figuring out what policy-relevant elements carry or convey meaning’ (Yanow, 2004: 111).

5.2.2 Interpretive Process Explanation from a Single Case Study

Any understanding of the institutional frameworks involving collaboration requires an appreciation of the expectations upon which they are based. In other words, it is necessary to understand what the collaborator expects to be achieved, if to understand fully how and why the collaboration arrangement takes on a specific form and relates to outcomes. Interpretive research can be particularly useful for understanding and describing policy mechanisms within complex settings involving governmental institutions.

The choice of a single rather than multiple case studies follow the persuasive arguments of Dyer and Wilkins (1991) and in particular, Burawoy (1998), who present a strong case for extended case method that recognizes the importance of both context specificity and the historical contingency of institutional development akin to an institutional approach in this thesis.

5.2.3 Single Case-study and Context-Dependent Logic:

Stake (1995) describes two types of case study – the intrinsic case study and the instrumental case study. The intrinsic case study is ‘not undertaken primarily because the case represents other cases or because it illustrates a particular trait or problem, but because in all its particularity and ordinariness, [the] case itself, is of interest’ (p 237). Given the Scottish institutional context of ULAC, the purpose of using the single case study is therefore not to understand ‘some abstract concept or generic phenomena’ (p237), instead, to use the single case study situation to reveal its unique story. Concrete, context-dependent knowledge of in-depth case studies can help to provide a thorough understanding of the characteristics and peculiarities of situations under consideration.

Chapter two, three and four highlighted the multi-disciplinary nature of ULAC in that, its functional and institutional characteristics requires an appreciation of underpinning theoretical dimensions (i.e. economic, spatial, and governance network dimensions). Consistent with Stake (1995), the value of a qualitative single case study approach is the ability to appreciating the possibility of ‘multiple views’ (p65). The research approach taken here is recognising the influence of context on the process of collaboration between urban local authorities, that requires a single case study approach in order to appreciate the nature and influence of a variety of complex contextual factors.

Recognising the potential limitations of theorising through single case study research (Yanow, 2008), a cross-sectional comparative study approach could also have been used. However, the single-case study approach is thought most useful for describing and understanding the ‘specific’ network situation. Therefore, to ensure validation of the research findings and given its multi-disciplinary nature, the thesis ensures a clear consistent approach to theory triangulation to enable verification of the findings from multiple perspectives (see Yin, 1994).

5.2.4 Explanatory Value of Single Case-study Approach

The importance of a single case study design relates to its ability to provide insight into the ‘deep structure and social dynamics’ of a particular setting, that better appreciates the more ‘tacit and less obvious aspects’ of the setting that is arguably ‘more accurate although appropriately tentative’ (Dyer and Wilkins, 1991: 615) investigation of the single study setting. Within-case research design is said to be important for ‘process tracing...a procedure for identifying steps in a causal process leading to the outcome of a dependant variable of a particular case in a particular historical context’ (George and Bennett, 2005: 176).

The value of process tracing in within case research is its ‘causal mechanism component of causal explanation’ (George and Bennett, 2005: 224), by describing and connecting the different stages of a policy process leading to policy outcomes, in context of dynamic events within that process.

The research approach in this thesis applies process tracing, by analysing the sequence of events within the SCA case study across three stages of the networks development, and analysed from an institutional perspective using the conceptual framework (see Figure 1) developed from the literature review. The conceptual framework is then used to help explain the PV of ULAC within its historical context, and through deep contextual understanding of processes underpinning the sequence of events according to a process tracing approach.

The interpretivist approach of the thesis means that ‘process tracing allows the researcher to look for the ways in which this link manifests itself and the context in which it happens. The focus is not only on what happened, but also on how it happened’ (Porter and Keating, 2008: 233). The value of process tracing in the context of this research, thus relates to the ability to analyse the research gap; to identify the role of both formal and informal institutions affecting the networks development process, and understanding of what and how it developed relative to the ‘urban’ and ‘national’ context of government institutions within the network.

The thesis research is consistent with Stake, (2005), Hood (2012) and George and Bennett (2005) in terms of an interpretive approach to a causal explanation from a critical realist ontological perspective, using process tracing from a single case study to:

‘disprove claims that a single variable is needed to explain an outcome...by excluding all explanations but one, if that explanation makes a process-tracing prediction that all other theories predict would be unlikely...[within] a path dependant historical process.’

George and Bennett (2005: 224)

...based on the belief that:

‘cause and effect is transmitted through discretely structured but open systems; the interactions of one causal mechanism will influence the operation of others, so that the outcomes of any intervention are never predictable’

Hood (2012: 7)

The case study findings presented in later chapter use process tracing to summarise processes and factors that may explain the network process from one step to the next. The following section will explain the process of case selection how it was identified and selected.

5.3 Case Study Identification

The research strategy and approach uses a case study methodology, involving the empirical investigation of a ULAC within its real life context, through insights from multiple sources of evidence (Yin, 2013), providing a unique opportunity to research a situation that is largely unfamiliar in existing empirical research and the basis for significant generalization (Allison and Zelikow, 1999).

A wide set of literatures are available offering different perspectives on the use and validity of case study approaches. Though admitting that conceptions vary, Gerring (2004: 342), defines the case study as ‘an intensive study of a single unit for the purpose of understanding a larger class of (similar) units’. That is, case studies provide a deep context-specific investigation, where some limits can be drawn on what falls inside and outside the case study, with the view to theorising beyond the area in focus. Meyer (2001: 329) notes that one of the strengths and weaknesses of case study research is that there ‘are virtually no specific requirements guiding case research’, and can thus be regarded as a strength in that the research strategy permits flexibility.

The extent to which a case study can inform and test theories is much disputed within social science literature, particularly for determining whether research findings are unique to the case

study setting, or part of a common trend. Case studies are thus recognized for their ability to understand policy processes within a particular context and setting (Hoggart et al. 2002), rather than their ability to test specific theories or hypotheses underlying the processes. Benton and Craib, (2001) suggest case studies are most useful for understanding policy processes (e.g. the role, management and configuration of ULAC), as opposed to testing or predicting outcomes and theories underpinning policy processes. In other words, case studies can help to inform theory by analysing policy in practice, helping to ‘verify a theoretical notion, contradict another, and discover some new theory, concept or model’ (Vaughan, 2000: 182), helping to unravel the “loose ends of a case study...the stuff we can neither expect nor explain that pushes us towards theoretical breakthroughs’ (Vaughan, 2000: 176).

The case study approach requires the need to familiarize with varying sources of information, and discourse analysis helping to understand how ideas and concepts are produced in a particular physical and social setting. For example, case study interview data can be used to help understand an individual’s actions and perspective within a given institutional setting. The context may be important to understanding the policy processes themselves, requiring the researcher to look beyond the interview text by considering underlying contexts. Documentary analysis thus supplements the interview materials to help provide a fuller understanding of the meaning of different discourses, and taking into account the complex relationship between people, places and policy.

Overall, the use of case study methodology for conceptualising ULAC is viewed valuable for this research due to its ability to unravel the policy process in practice, potentially helping to raise questions about existing theoretical rationale and insights on the relationship between ULAC and policy outcomes. The case study methodology will help provide insights and understanding of ULAC within their particular physical and social setting, concerning their role and configuration in achieving economic development outcomes, as well as insights as to how they are managed and affected by the different network relationships within the ULAC

5.3.1 Case Selection and Institutional Factors

Case study research can provide a helpful framework, rather than a model or theory, for understanding the important role of policy transfer, policy diffusion and lesson drawing within policy network situations. The impact on ‘policy transfer’ as an outcome of collaboration relates largely to the role of power relations within networks (i.e. see the principal-agent problem literature), methodologically understood to require a case study approach to ensure ‘investigation of detailed interaction between the various principals and agents and identify the interactions and outcomes of individual cases with their own institutional, historical and political specificities’ (Bartlett, 2005: page).

5.3.2 Case Study Choice

Analysing ULAC through a single case study serves as an ‘extreme case’ (Yin, 2003) for the purposes of theory building from a multi-disciplinary perspective. The use of extreme cases facilitates theory building because the phenomena under study are ‘closer to the surface’ and easier to observe (Eisenhardt, 1989). During the literature review it became apparent that ULAC is closely related to Inter Municipal Collaboration (IMC) as a concept involving collaboration involving mainly local authorities (see for example, Hulst, 2012, Hulst and Montfort, 2012). However, there are currently ‘few studies considering local government collaboration in the UK’ (Hulst, 2007), and in particular, a lack of consideration of the ‘scale’ of local government as a key characteristic of the collaboration process (Hulst and Montfort, 2012). Therefore, the selection of Scotland as the case study for ULAC is believed to provide a unique empirical opportunity for academic research. In particular, the Scottish example is unique further in that the ULAC case study is the first example of a formal institutional partnership of collaboration involving all of Scotland’s urban local authorities. Refer to section 4.4. for an overview of the SCA case study.

5.4 Research Philosophy

5.4.1 Introduction

The methodological approach to research must correspond with the epistemological views on the nature and assessment of knowledge. In other words, the researcher’s ontological position concerning people’s beliefs regarding ‘the nature of social entities’ (Bryman 2008: 18). A key challenge for the nature of social activity in the context of this thesis using the conceptual framework (see Table 10) to explain the PV of ULAC as economic development policy in Scotland (i.e. the Scottish Cities Alliance), is the backdrop of national institutional flux, increasing localism, and austerity government as case study context. Therefore, by taking an interpretive methodological approach (Stake, 2005) to the research, the focus of the research is on establishing understanding by gathering insights from those involved in the policy network process in Scotland (i.e. government agencies).

The ontological and epistemological position best suited to an institutional approach to understanding the PV of ULAC within a specific Scottish context, is the researcher’s normative belief that an interpretive critical realist approach works best for this research (see also Bathelt and Gluckler, 2003 and Hay, 2011). The ontological position proposed by Sayer (2004) is that ‘it is not causal explanation over interpretive understanding, it is one of using both...where critical realism argues that they are...interrelated (p12).’ Thus, a critical realist ontology suited to an investigation of the nature of causality in the ULAC-outcome process, is consistent with the view that an

interpretivist approach (Stake, 2005) can also serve a causal explanation in that interpretivism and critical realism are related.

The emphasis of the importance of an interpretive critical realist approach relates to the contextual importance of explanations, without the need for establishing ‘universal laws’ (Ackroyd and Fleetwood, 2004: 166). For example, Harvey (1998) argues that critical realism recognises the centrality of key questions, including: ‘How are texts and interpretations used within the interaction of institutions? How do they generate and participate in the relations of power and ordering’ (p85).’ The ontological position of the thesis consistent with an interpretive critical realist approach, focussed on providing explanation, interpretation and understanding of the causal nature of policy processes, contextually dependant on the underlying mechanisms and structures within which networked policy is situated. Hence, the critical realist ontology is deemed most suitable for taking into account the important role of institutional context at the regional, urban and local level of the ULAC network setting.

Consistent with Bathelt and Gluckler (2003) (see Table on p124) perspective of the importance of a critical realist (evolutionary perspective) approach to the study of economic and social geography (akin to the economic, social geography and governance academic context of the thesis), views human action as taking place within ‘contextual’ ‘open systems’ and cannot be explained by ‘universal laws’ (p126). Recognising that critical realism ‘is not necessarily the only methodological alternative toward a relational economic geography’²¹ it is viewed to be particularly relevant for conceptualization that appreciates the importance of ‘context’ and ‘contingency’ (Bathelt and Gluckler (2003: 128), consistent with the theoretical approach in this thesis. In other words, critical realism is believed to ‘provide a fundamentally different epistemological perspective of causality that systematically accounts for context-specificity in human action’ (Bathelt and Gluckler, 2003: 126).

Critical realism (Hood, 2012, Sayer and Pawson, 2006) suggests that there ‘exists a reality independent of our senses’ (Pawson, 2006: 20) for interpreting the ‘real, actual and empirical’ (Hood, 2012: 7). The critical realist ontological position in this thesis is to view ‘cause and effect as being transmitted through discretely structured but open systems’ (Hood, 2012: 7), through explanation and appreciation of both structure and agency as being ‘fundamental to the constitution of our natural and social reality’ (Reed, 2000: 527). Thus, critical realism is regarded as a form of ‘structuralism’ focussed on ‘discovering the unobservable structures that guide or determine

²¹ See Harvey and Braun (1996). *Justice, nature and the geography of difference*. Vol. 468. Oxford: Blackwell (1996), and also Reed (2000). *The limits of discourse analysis in organizational analysis*. *Organization* 7.3: 524-530.

events, irrespective of the beliefs of individuals or the meanings of actors' (Bevir and Rhodes, 2016:53).

By considering the complex nature of causality within the ULAC-outcome process within the particular ULA setting, the critical realist ontology is that policy outcomes are not generalizable or predictable, and best understood within their 'objective reality formed of both events and underlying causes, and although these dimensions of reality have objective existence, they are not knowable with certainty' (Clark, 2011).

Importantly, consistent the ontological position proposed by Sayer (2004:12), in that 'it is not causal explanation over interpretive understanding, it is one of using both...where critical realism argues that they are...interrelated.' Thus, the critical realist ontology suited to an investigation of the nature of causality in the ULAC-outcome process, is consistent with the view that an interpretivist approach (Stake, 2005) can also serve a causal explanation in that interpretivism and critical realism are related. The emphasis is on the contextual importance of explanations, without the need for establishing 'universal laws' (Ackroyd and Fleetwood, 2004:166), instead, focussing on explanation, interpretation and understanding policy processes in context of underlying mechanisms and structures. Hence, the critical realist ontology is suitable for taking into account the important role of institutional context at the regional and local level of the ULAC network setting.

Consistent with an interpretive methodological approach of this research, the selected epistemology is thus consistent with the methodology in terms of how the nature of knowledge is accessed. Section 3.5.2 outlines the critical realists ontology suited to investigating the PV of ULAC, followed by a discussion of the researcher's reflective positionality on the research (section 3.5.3).

5.4.2 Critical Realism and Collaboration Policy Research

The epistemological approach to research requires an awareness and choice of how to interpret or read case study material (i.e. the ontology). The collaboration policy and network nature of this thesis research required a critical realist approach towards the case study material, appreciating that collaborators are 'both producers as well as products of the corporate culture' in relation to the agency-structure relationship positioned by critical realism (Welch et al. 2011: 753). In other words, the epistemology of critical realism is 'interpretivist in nature, assuming that our knowledge of structures, mechanisms, and events is constrained by our ability to access only a portion of the events that occur, and is historically and socially constructed and thus inherently subjective' (Tructures et al. 2013: 935).

Critical realism is a relatively new approach with limited studies in the area of collaboration or networked policy settings (see Hood, 2012 and Tructures, 2013). Critical realism can be useful for describing causality within complex network policy settings by explaining how certain events are produced from structures, actions, and contextual situations. Collaboration and network policy within an urban local government context incorporates a range of structural elements, that from a critical realist perspective, both formal and informal, for example: the rules and structures within the network; collaboration mechanisms; individual collaborators; the relative position of the collaborator within the network; and the resources available. Such structures of collaboration are dynamic and complex, where a key strength of critical realism is its ability for understanding complexity within collaboration settings through its explanatory focus and reconciliation of agency and structure and recognition of the wider knowledge of individuals (Clark, 2011).

The research approach adopted here is also consistent with the methodological approach by Tructures et al. (2013) and Hood (2012), to support critical realist case study research, involving explanation of collaboration-related processes relative to: key events; structures and context; dynamics and collaboration mechanisms; empirical corroboration of hypothesized mechanisms, and adoption of triangulation and multiple research methods. Critical realism is useful for understanding the structure of collaboration processes that result in causal mechanisms generating specific events throughout the process, and an appreciation of contextual influences on that process. In the context of ULAC, from a critical realist perspective, the structures and context of the collaboration process is the focus for explaining and understanding outcomes in a dynamic, complex open social system of policy making. In this sense, internal network structures and mechanisms are potentially subject to external dynamics, explaining how network events are caused and generated.

Thus, causality within the policy-outcome process is assumed to be non deterministic, based on the view that structures ‘exist in open systems...of hypothetical mechanisms’ (Tructures et al. 2013: 935) interpreted as generating or causing the observed pattern of events within the observed case study context. Hence, the ontological approach in thesis is consistent with the view that ‘outcomes of any intervention...are never predictable...and dependent on interpretation’ (Hood, 2012: 7).

A key requirement of the thesis research approach is the need to interpret the role of informal institutions (i.e. norms and values) within the case study context, through verbal and non-verbal observations. The characteristics and skills of the researcher will have an important role interpreting the research data, as well as ‘all research is an interpretation of an already interpreted world’ (Welch et al. 2011: 744). Therefore, subsection 3.5.3 considers the important role of the researcher consistent with critical realism, and the researcher’s experience and relevant skills in relation to the research process.

5.4.3 Reflexivity: Researcher's Influence on Ontology

The requirement for a ‘hermeneutic and phenomenological call for reflexivity’ towards research relates the a researcher’s ‘positionality’ in terms of their lived experience and ways in which the researcher’s personal background may: shape access to research intelligence (i.e. persons, organisations, documentation); and, shape understanding of research data (Yanow, 2007: 117).

First, the researcher has both lived, studied and worked in Scotland for all of her life, with some 20 years experience working in, and researching, public policy in Scotland. In particular, the researcher has previous experience of designing and delivering ‘collaboration’ policy in Scotland: as a senior policy manager in Glasgow City Council (e.g. 2014 Commonwealth Games Legacy) and Scottish Government (e.g. Framework for Economic Development), and academic researcher at University of Strathclyde (Regional Policy in Scotland). As a result, the researcher has a well-rounded knowledge of Scotland’s national and local economic development policy/agency context. The researcher is thus investigating a thesis research topic with significant prior knowledge and personal views built on experience, as well as existing professional networks to agencies and individuals directly relevant to the research case study. Second, the thesis research fieldwork involved undertaking a part-time internship within one of the organizations directly connected with the case study, as a potential ‘partial-insider’ to the ULAC case study research.

Given the above context, it is important to reflect on any implications this may have for the thesis research and researcher’s own ontological position on the thesis research. The research focus on Scottish Government and local government meant being able to ‘find ways to negotiate this protectionist [policy] environment’ when in the ‘uncomfortable position as organizational outsider’, and viewed as either ‘student, practitioner’ and/or, ‘researcher’, having a relative impact on the ability to access research intelligence (Einagel, 2002: 2). Doctoral researchers are regularly viewed as being ‘on the periphery of the academic community’ (Einagel, 2002: 2), which is also understood to either enhance, or hinder data accessibility.

In relation to gaining access to individuals and agencies, prior knowledge and well-established professional connections with the public policy sector in Scotland, provided: a) legitimacy and credibility when negotiating data access; b) access to a wide network of individuals and agencies when identifying potential Scotland collaboration policy case-studies; c) a more empathetic, refined and knowledgeable approach to issues discussed during interviews.

Furthermore, implications from being regarded a ‘partial-insider’ to the case study process, or viewed as a ‘professional’ instead of ‘student researcher’ given previous working connections, meant taking a cautious and reflective approach to interpreting the data. The aim was to ensure research findings reflected the interviewees experiences, rather than the researchers pre-existing

opinions. As a result, a reflective approach to the data access, collection and interpretation was required, so as not to prejudice the results: academic supervisor's providing 'outsider' scrutiny to the fieldwork and interview approach and questions. Open interview questions were used to provide the option for wide discussion of the topic relative to the interviewees chosen direction. This was of particular importance given the ontological position of the research aimed at providing thick descriptions (Ponterotto, 2006) of contextual circumstances that provide meaning through explanation, including the opportunity for the individuals' subjective understanding to be captured within the explanation of the ULAC process.

There is recognition that researchers will always impact research findings, as participants themselves in the research process. Given that the epistemological approach can influence the data gathering process and analysis, the interpretive approach acknowledges that everything is understood and analysed within a specific social context. A degree of reflective realism is required to help understand the way that knowledge is constructed, and to reflect on any preconceived ideas of the research findings and preconceptions (Davies, 2007).

Qualitative research often involves a degree of subjectivity (Cook and Crang, 1995), meaning the positionality of the research findings will involve a degree of openness to challenge, although as Cook and Crang (1995) suggests, value can still be created from the researchers 'acknowledgement' of such limitations. Thus, it is acknowledged that the positionality of this research cannot be regarded as completely impartial from preconceptions and knowledge of how the world is understood, or the positionality of the research in terms of the epistemology in defining and understanding collaboration as a ULAC, due to the diversity of interpretations and definitions of what constitutes 'collaboration', as highlighted in Chapter two of the literature review. A key factor in achieving positionality of the research has been to gain as full an understanding of the research 'context' as possible, through the researcher undertaking a visiting position within the case study organisation over the course of the data collection period, to allow as much experience and insight into the case study as possible.

Having explicitly discussed the ontological and epistemological aspects, and building on aspects related to the researcher's potential impact on qualitative research, the next section will discuss the impact of cultural-cognitive differences between the researcher and the participants in the context of data collection and analysis of an institutional context of ULAC.

5.4 Data Collection and Analysis

Data collection and analysis were intertwined in an iterative process throughout as advised by Miles and Huberman (1994). The methodology for data analysis drew upon Miles et al. (2014) for a guide on overall data analysis, including: data coding and condensation, data display and

presentation, and conclusion drawing and verification (see figure 1.1 of Miles et al. 2014: 14). Policy network analysis is often criticized as merely demonstrating the general features of a network albeit ‘a very useful tool for describing the policy process’ (Blom-Hansen 1997: 673). Limitations of policy network analysis relate to the lack of research providing a persuasive explanation of policy outcomes via fully determined causal explanations (Dowding, 1995). Therefore, an explanation of the collection and analytical approach to ULAC case study (as a policy network), using template analysis and document analysis is provided in the following subsections, helping to provide insights into the features constituting ‘good policy deliberation’ (Hajer, 2003: 191).

5.4.1 Data Collection

Document analysis is used as the analytical approach to the primary data to allow for an examination of both the discourses (i.e. documentation) and observations (i.e. interviews) contributing towards the conceptual understanding of ULAC within its respective reality. An in-depth analysis of the SCA in ‘real-time’ involved data collection and observation between October 2013 to mid-2016. The data covers the period from 2010 to 2016 and is comprised of observations at meetings, workshops, informal interactions, semi-structured interviews, and archival data (see Table 10 below).

Table 11: Data Sources

Type of data	Source
Semi-structured interviews (17 Hours (approx.)	23 Informants
Non-participant Observation Data (107 Hours (approx.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Study workshops x 2 (8 hours); • Management team meetings x 3 (6 hours); • Stakeholder governance meetings x 3 (9 hours) • ‘Insider’ observation (one-day a month over a 12 month period: Jan 2014-Jan 15
On-Line Mediums; Published Reports; Internal Organisational Documentation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Press release; Print/online media; Social media; Websites; Newspapers/magazine; Audio Evaluation reports; • Progress Reports; Performance Reports; Strategy documents; Minutes of meetings; Official Government Publications; Board Papers/Governance documents; Policy Documents.

Non-Participant Observation:

Part of the data collection process involved spending a period of time (between mid-2014 – Mid-215) as a non-participant observer within the organisation of the chosen case study organisation

(i.e. within the Scottish Council for Development and Industry: SCDI based in Glasgow), collecting data by keeping a writing a diary of observed events and meetings (refer to Appendix 6 for information on the observation proforma). As a non-participant observer, documentary evidence (i.e. the organisations administrative records) were also collected and used to corroborate interview evidence. The members of the organisation were aware of the purpose and scope of data collection process and non-participant attendance at meetings (refer to Appendix 7 for copy of Plain Language Statement and Data Consent Proforma), that allowed observation of the actual ‘collaborating’ to help understand the important role of context during observation of operational process. This was to help provide the opportunity for triangulation of the various pieces of data: comparing interview data (interviewees interpretation of the operational process), with non-participant observation data (interviewers interpretation of the operational process), and documentary evidence.

Documentary Analysis:

Documentary evidence and analysis is a major component of the qualitative research approach, and equally as important as the interview data, through the recognized value of analysing key pieces of information, including: strategic plans, meeting minutes and annual reports. Internal and external documents were collected, including documents from the member organizations of the SCA network, and external press and policy related documents, and analysed and coded for keyword content in line with the template analysis. The different types of documentation include different content and provide different types of information (refer to Table 12). For example, internal meeting documentation included a record of certain decisions, who was involved, why certain events or decision were made. Whereas, publicly available documentation (i.e. National Policy Reports) provide information on stated policy objectives and policy rhetoric, that can be compared with the internal meeting papers to help understand the relationship between stated policy documentary with operational and implementation processes.

Table 12: Documentation included for documentary analysis (Archival Data: 2010-16)

DOCUMENT TYPES	ANALYTICAL PURPOSE
ON-LINE MEDIUMS: Press release; Print/online media; Social media; Websites; Newspapers/magazine; Audio;	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify other actors involved in the SCA• To find more background information• Capture additional informed opinions on the SCA policy• Identify additional sources of city data/information
ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS: Evaluation report; Progress Report; Performance Report; Strategy Paper; Minutes of meetings; local authority internal reports (minute of committees; council policy reports/papers)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To identify the different actors involved• Trace key events, policy process; decision making processes
PUBLICLY AVAILABLE POLICY DOCUMENTS: Formal Policy Documents (relating to high level policy and political statements) – published by the relevant organisations as members of the SCA (e.g. Scottish Government Policy; SCA Published Documents).	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify official political and policy rhetoric on purpose of SCA• Identify the different objectives of the stakeholders involved• Identify key sources of data relevant to the network member organisations/institutional characteristics

Semi-structured Interviews:

Informants for interview were chosen on the basis of being able to inform the main research question concerning the relationship between ULAC and economic development policy outcomes, and in line with an interpretive approach aimed at: ‘giving a voice to the interpretations of those living the experience’ (Corley and Gioia, 2004: 178).

Qualitative data were collected through face-to-face, in-depth semi-structured interviews, conducted and lasting between 30 minutes and an hour. The practitioners responded to a series of open-ended, semi-structured questions (Appendix 5), allowing the interviewer to option of probing further for specific details of interest, and to add or remove questions as necessary (Denzin and Lincoln, 2003).

The qualitative information and interviews were gathered from the most senior persons representing Scotland’s cities within the SCA and with some prior knowledge, experience or engagement with the SCA (see Table 2). Senior practitioners, namely Senior Politicians, Chief Executive Officers (CEOs), Directors and Senior Managers were invited for interview in respect of their relevant experience, level of responsibility, and importantly, knowledge and familiarity of the SCA. The participants had wide-ranging experiences in economic development, from 4 years to more than 30 years. The experience of these individuals was investigated to gain greater insight

and understanding on the purpose, management and configuration of urban collaboration in practice.

A total of thirty-two individuals, including one senior local politician per city, were invited to take part in an interview. Twenty-three ($n=23$) in-depth interviews were secured and undertaken in total; in some instances, both a CEO/senior officer and politician interview were not secured for each of the seven Scottish cities. All seven cities were represented in the 23 interviews either by a CEO/senior officer, politician, or both, and included eight ($n=8$) interviews representing a national perspective, and four ($n=4$) interviewees who were previously involved but not involved at time of interview. The collection of the interviews took place between January and October 2015, which was the same time as a Scottish election for Scottish devolution during the summer period of 2015, and a Scottish local authority election. The implications for surrounding political context meant securing interviews was problematic. Therefore, the research prioritized interviews that provided a range of coverage across all the main localities of Scotland (i.e. seven Scottish cities) (see Table A3 in Appendix 3).

Twenty-three practitioners participated and interviewed, albeit thirty-two people invited for interview. Although the Scottish Government were invited for interview (i.e. both the relevant Minister at the time, and Senior civil servant representatives), no one was available for interview. However, saturation point was thought reached at twenty-three with no additional information sought through interviews after that point (see Charmaz, 2004).

5.4.2 Data Analysis

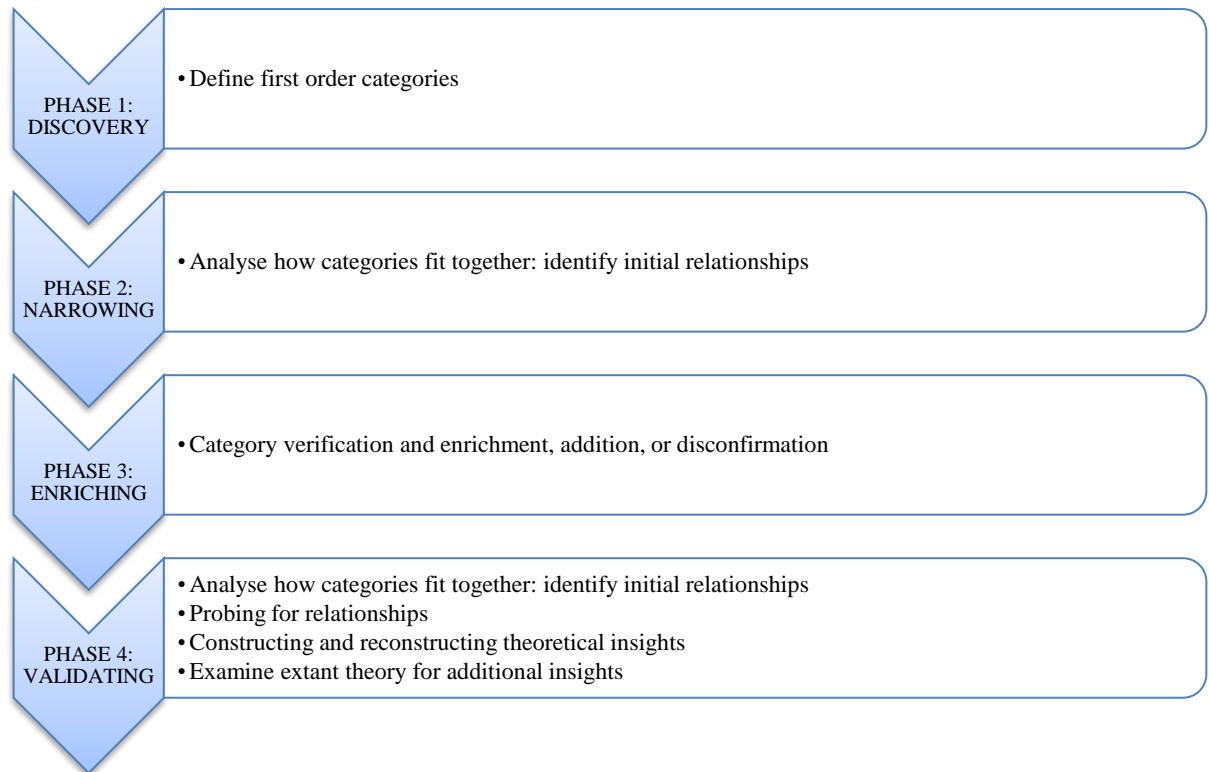
Consistent with Miles et al. (2014), the first stage of the data analysis process involved reducing and organising the data (i.e. the quotes taken from interview transcripts) into first order codes in line with the main functional themes developed in the conceptual framework, and entered into NVIVO as the organising and analysing tool. All the interviews were transcribed and coded into the three main functional domains (i.e. Purpose; Configuration; Management), followed by the development of emerging themes during the next phase of deeper analysis of specific areas of interest (Miles and Huberman 1994).

A second key stage in the data analysis process involved using data displays and presentation of the data into tables and charts to further interpret the reduced data. Descriptive timelines and network structure diagrams, along with process tracing (George and Bennett, 2005) tables presented with case findings in Chapter Six.

The network process identified over the study period (i.e. network identification, implementation and growth), was presented using analytic-data displays (Miles and Huberman, 1994) to provide a

‘visualisation of the unfolding methodological process’ (Pratt, 2009: 860), shown in Figure 15 (adapted from Pratt and Rosa (2003: 397)).

Figure 15: Thematic Data Analysis



An initial timeline of key events within the network process was first developed from the interview data in order to provide a display of the key sequence of events chronologically during the study period. Subsequently, consistent with Miles and Huberman (1994) descriptive explanations and a timeline of events were then turned into descriptive codes consistent with the conceptual framework (i.e. first order codes: purpose; configuration; management). Typical first order codes were consistent with items identified through the conceptual framework (see Figure 15).

Further within-case analysis was then undertaken to identify any patterns that may help to explain the ULAC-outcome relationship, and compared across the various respondents’ data to determine whether a pattern is consistent. The analytical process used template analysis as a ‘recursive process-oriented, analytic procedure’ (Locke, 1996: 240) of inductive analysis in line with (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). The analytical process was aimed at identifying causal mechanisms of the networked process, investigating the key events explaining certain policy outcomes.

In order to identify potential causal mechanisms indicative of the PV of the ULAC process, process tracing charts and sense making tables were produced for each distinct stage of the networks process defined by key events. Within each network stage, first order and second codes were used alongside process tracing (George and Bennett 2005), to help analyse the Interview Questions. For

example: ‘why did the cities decide to first collaborate’ described the rationale (A = what); ‘what happened following the decision to collaboration’ highlighted the role of context and institutional mechanisms (B=how); and impact of institutions (why) that led from event A (i.e. cities initial decision to collaborate), to process B (Scottish Government’s formalisation of SCA structures), leading to value C (perception of the value of formal structures). This procedure was carried out across the three separate stages of network identification, implementation and growth stages, leading to the development of first and second order codes (analytical concepts) (Yin, 2013).

Network structure diagrams, process tracing tables and sense making statements are included with the findings in Chapter 6, 7 and 8. Throughout the data analysis, emerging findings were continually matched back against the rich context-based interview data to ensure a close fit between the collected data, emerging causal explanations and developing network development process models, in an iterative process of verification (Miles and Huberman 1994).

Template analysis and analytical coding process:

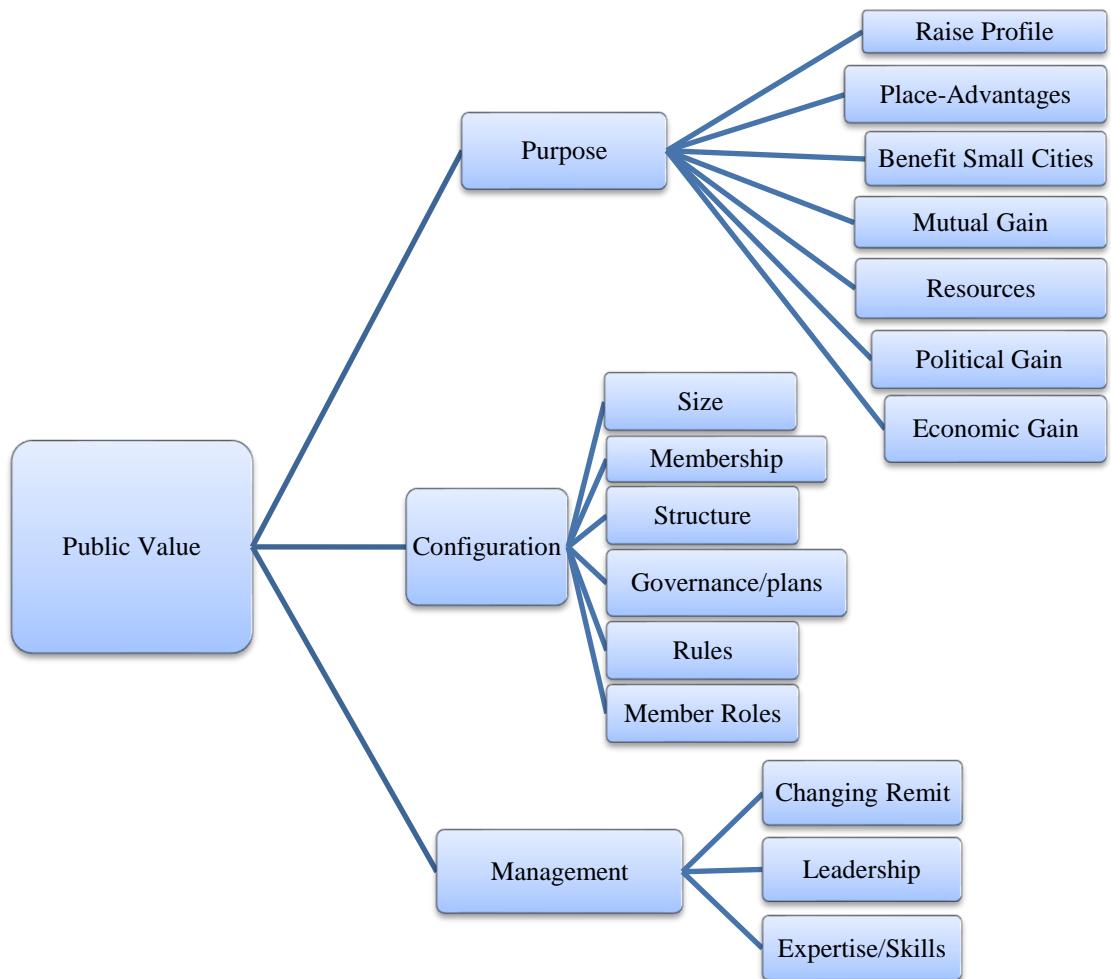
The data analysis takes an inductive approach (Lincoln and Guba, 1985) combining theory-driven template coding (King 1998, 2004) with inductive code generation methodology (Boyzatis, 1998), to help identify key data themes and aggregate dimensions (Gioia et al. 1994). The template analysis involved a ‘recursive process-oriented, analytic procedure’ (Locke, 1996: 240), as the basis for rigorous analysis of the qualitative data and used to analyse the process-based factors of the policymaking process.

The process of analysis began with the first cycle of coding of the interviews and documents on the pre-established first order categories in relation to the three main functional domains of ULAC, derived from the literature review (see Figure 16 below), by focusing on the interviewees perceived rationale of the purpose, configuration and management of ULAC. The interviews focused on the broadly defined functional domains of ULAC as first order codes, in line with that outlined in the integrative conceptual framework in Chapter Four:

- **Purpose of ULAC:** The role/remit/objective of ULAC for economic development;
- **Configuration of ULAC:** The ownership, organisational structure, size and nature of membership of the ULAC network and what it looks like;
- **Management of ULAC:** The implementation process of the ULAC network and how network actors are governed and interact;
- **Public Value of ULAC:** The network member’s perceived value from being involved in ULAC.

The first stage in coding was to identify key concepts in the data and group them into the three main template categories, using NVIVO to organise and develop into first order codes (Strauss and Corbin, 1990) using the language and statements provided by the interview informants, to represent simple descriptive phrases. The first order coding (i.e. template analysis) is used to identify themes in advance (i.e. a priori themes) and developed after the initial literature review and refined and modified during the analytical process. The first order codes helped to ‘thematically organise and analyse textual data’ (King 2004: 256) representing three descriptive levels of ULAC, as ‘an inventory of topics for indexing and categorising’ (Miles et al. 2014: 74).

Figure 16: The Descriptive Dimensions of ULAC (First, Second Order Coding)



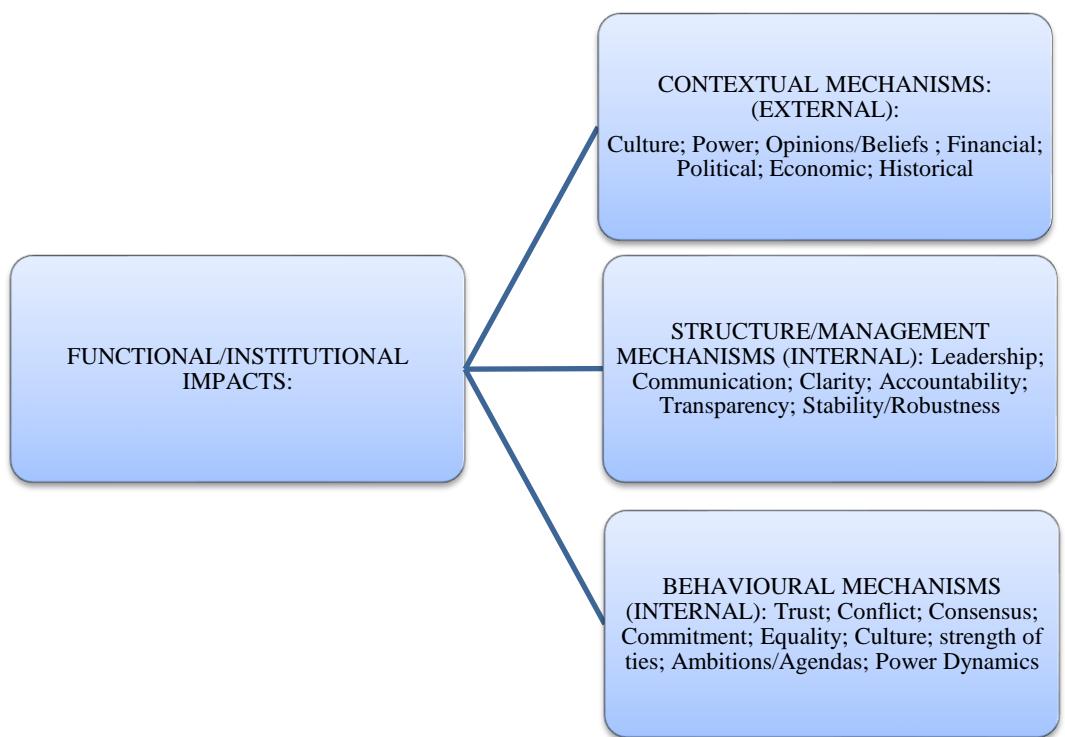
Consequently, the first and second order codes were further developed to identify any linkages, relationships and subdividing categories through an inductive process of discourse analysis to help provide ‘replicable and valid inferences from data according to their context’ (Krippendorff, 1980: 69). Thus, a second cycle of coding was undertaken to identify relationships or ‘pattern codes’ (Miles et al. 2014: 86) between the codes, revealing: key themes; causal or explanatory codes; people dynamics; and theoretical constructs (Miles et al. 2014). Axial coding identifies key

relationships between and among the first round of coding and reassemble into more analytical themes to form the basis of the emergent conceptual framework.

The pattern codes were then clustered together to reveal three aggregate analytical dimensions, representing a new set of higher-order analytical themes (see Figure 17 below), and comprising the basis of the emergent conceptual framework. In other words, the first and second tier codes identified in the first round of coding were analysed to establish bottom-up themes, developed and refined during the analytical process to ultimately identify various attributes relating to higher order analytical themes (refer to Appendix 10).

The coding process helped to form a network process narrative that continued until the emerging theoretical relationships and additional interviews failed to reveal new data relationships. The final data structure makes up the conceptual model of the network-outcome relationship.

Figure 17: The Analytical Dimensions of ULAC (Aggregate dimensions)



The analytical coding is focused on identifying causal explanations following the first round of coding, focused on identifying institutional impacts: both formal and informal, and internal and external to the network. The various causal relationships are identified through the process tracing and sense-making.

The contextual dimensions can be both internal and external resulting mainly from environmental

institutional factors. ‘Structural and management dimensions’ relate largely to the operational institutions of the network, and the ‘relationship dimensions’ relate to impact on the social relationships between the members of the network. All of the identified dimensions result in functional and institutional impacts from the whole network, which can be used to explain the networks PV.

Each interview was recorded and transcribed verbatim. NVIVO software was then used to identify themes and patterns in the data (see Appendix: coding Framework), and was useful for indexing segments of text in relation to the Template themes (King, 2004) and is therefore used for eventual interpretation and judgment of the data.

Key response categories were created prior to line-by-line coding, which is generally considered the most appropriate coding process (Strauss and Corbin, 1990) – (i.e. capital letters within the coding framework guide), an interactive and inductive process allowing the data to direct the development of themes.

Transcripts were coded according to the emerging themes and then reviewed by key categories several times to ensure that concepts relating to the same theme were placed in the same category. The same coding scheme was used for all interviews, which is the most effective way to compare responses. A topic list was also used to ensure that data analysis was consistent (Krefting, 1991; Patton, 1987).

The analytical approach to establish meaning from case analysis involved an interpretive approach to establishing meaning from ‘data that is situation-specific’ providing ‘highly contextualized meanings’, (Yanow, 2007: 113), using thick descriptions (Ponterotto, 2006) to ‘develop vicarious experiences (Stake, 1995: 63). The ‘thick descriptions’ help to ‘interpret the behaviour within the context’ by interpreting an individuals thinking and what is being observed or witnessed (Ponterotto, 2006: 542).

5.4.3 Research Quality: Validity, Reliability and Triangulation

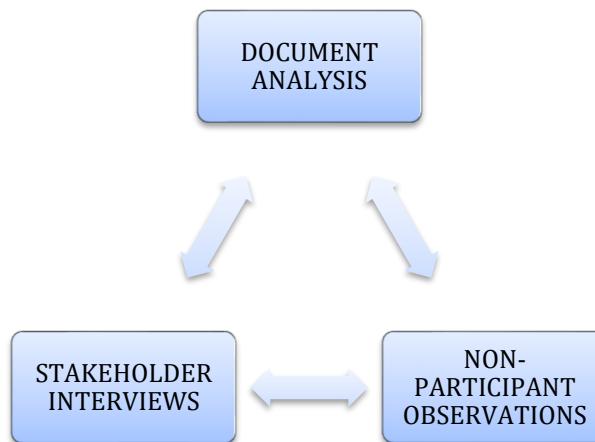
In line with the research protocol adopted at the outset of the thesis approach, provided an indication of: the research gap, research questions; theoretical context and included a sample semi - structured interview guide.

Various sources of information was used as evidence gathering, mainly: interview data; observation; internal and external documentation relating to the case study organisation. The strength and reliability of the data collected and sourced externally, was sense checked during the interview process with expert participants (mainly of CEO, political or senior officer status), who were able to provide suggested information sources and some cases, provided additional materials.

Furthermore, the reliability of selecting individuals for interview and sourcing of information was sense checked at the start, during and end of the data collection process, referring to members of the host-case study organisation for continuous guidance on matters concerning: ‘who should be interviewed; what documents area available; where can information be sourced; what are the best sources of information’.

Therefore, to ensure the data collected was reliable, a process of triangulation was used. Triangulation (Figure 18) is a method most commonly used to help check and establish data validity. Given that more than one method of data was collected, this helped to capture the different dimensions of the research questions and ensured validation of the research findings. Also, given the range of different methods of data collection in various formats, a direct comparison of the results from each method was not possible as different methods used in qualitative research may only provide a partial view of the whole picture. Therefore, the result was also assessed against other empirical interpretations and observations found in the academic literature, specifically those relating to institutional insights.

Figure 18: Triangulation



Given the political nature of the case study selected (i.e. involving national government officials, politicians, and senior officers), the research approach was required to ensure it was delivered in a suitably ethical manner, to protect the confidentiality of those selected for interview and observation. As a result, all interviews were transcribed using codes (e.g. RI1; RI2...RIX) to protect the identity of those interviewed.

To ensure that research participants were treated with respect and confidentiality, the researcher has a moral and ethical obligation (Greenwood, 2015) to the interview approach. As a result, the approved approach to the interview process meant that no transcribed or recorded data was shared with anyone except the interviewee (post-transcription to allow for feedback), consistent with the

ethics and confidentiality approach approved by the University Ethics Committee (see Appendix 7).

Finally, a key the drawback of the single-case design is its inability to provide a generalizing conclusion, particular within a context that is though specific or even rare. One way of overcoming this is through the process triangulating the study with other methods, in order to confirm the validity of the process.

5.4.4 External and Internal Validity

Unlike positivists' thinking on the importance of generalisabilty as criteria for supporting the validity of a research approach research (see Yin, 2003, for example), interpretive research approaches to policy analysis are 'highly contextualized, rather than aiming for generalizations that might be applicable, in a context-free manner, to all situations' (Yanow, 2004: 111). In this sense, the purpose of an interpretive single case study approach is not to 'generalize to other cases' (Bryman, 2008: 57), rather, to understand a situation in-depth in order to generate theory relating to the specific. Indeed, Flyvbjerg (2006) argues that generalization from single case studies 'may be central to scientific development' in order to supplement alternative methods, based on the view that 'generalization is overvalued as a source of scientific development and the force of example underestimated' (p13). In other words, the in depth nature of single case study research is to provide well documented research that can support theoretical arguments, thus, the importance of being able to 'make connections between different ideas...and how well the researcher generates theory out of the findings' (Bryman, 2008: 57) is supposed more important than generalisability.

The purpose of this research therefore, is not to be able generalize the findings, in line with interpretivist theory, by 'rejecting generalization since each instance of observed social interaction is unique and social settings are complex and indeterminate' (Denzin, 1983).

5.5 Conclusion: Methodology for the Study of the relationship between ULAC and policy outcomes

Chapter five has described the research methodology used in this thesis relevant to the key research questions and suitability to the study of institutional context. Although various other methodological approaches were considered possible (i.e. multiple case study) during the research design process, this meant considering various empirical examples and the range of approaches for identifying the best opportunity for deep investigation of ULAC as a process.

Key factors considered during the selection of the most suitable approach related to:

- The ability to understand the important role of institutions through deep contextual insight of functional, political and institutional processes (single case study design);
- The ability to take into account the ‘social’ context of public value and the nature of policy outcomes;
- The ability to identify the important role of both agency and structure within the policy process (through process tracing, sense-making and thick descriptions)

Based on the above consideration during the research design process, the PV of ULAC and the role of institutions is conceptualised and analysed in the remainder of the thesis, to provide a valuable contribution to both academic, empirical and policy research. Chapter Six moves on to present the first set of findings from the in depth case study analysis, to first identify and describe what ULAC looks like in Scotland, before leading into more analytical chapters in Chapters seven and eight, to reveal the conceptualisation of the PV of ULAC through the role of institutions.

Chapter Six: ‘What’ does ULAC look like: *its purpose, configuration and management?*

6.1 Introduction

Following on from the literature review in Chapter Two, Three and Four, the research focus and aim of the thesis is to: *Conceptualize the Public Value (PV) of urban local authority collaboration (ULAC) by considering the role of institutions*. The conceptual framework (Table 10) is structured around a multi-disciplinary, new institutional perspective (Lowndes, 2001), building on Stake’s (2005) interpretive explanation through the qualitative exploration of an in-depth single case study.

Chapter Six presents the first set of findings from the qualitative research, examining what ULAC in Scotland looks like along with representative data in the following subsections. The central deductive assumption is that the SCA is composed of a limited number of public sector institutions and elite policy professionals. The aim is to draw upon both documentary evidence compared to interview respondents’ perceptions, concerning the purpose, configuration and management of the SCA network over the study period January 2010 until mid-2016, to reveal the SCA key structures and the hierarchical nature and management of the network.

The chapter provides a descriptive account of the purpose, structure and management of ULAC by identifying a series of critical events, to facilitate the interpretation of the PV of ULAC in later chapters (Chapter 7 and 8). The first of three research question is addressed:

What is the mutli-dimensional nature of ULAC across three functional domains: purpose, configuration and management?

First, section 6.2 provides the strategic rationale on the purpose of ULAC according to documentation and members of the SCA across the study period (2010 to 2016), to reveal the changing identify of the network over time. For analytical purposes, the analysis of the SCA’s development over the study period reveals a series of key events between conveying three distinct network phases: Network Identification (T1); Network Implementation (T2); and Network Growth (T3). The key network time periods were identified and validated across the range of respondent’s statements, to reveal critical moments shaping the development of the SCA over the study period.

Second, in line with an interpretive critical realist approach, section 6.3 provides the individual network members’ narrative on their perceptions and understanding of the functional characteristics, structures and objectives of ULAC, analysed in line with the three network timelines to reveal areas of dissimilarity among network members understanding and rationale of

what ULAC in Scotland represents. Finally, the interviewees' narrative of the functional nature of the SCA is identified to provide a typology of 'What ULAC in Scotland looks like' across the three distinct time periods. A dynamic policy process of interaction between the network members is revealed through the narrative of local government senior officers (Chief Executive Officers and Service Directors), elected members (council Leaders) and other actors involved in the network process.

6.2 ULAC in Scotland

The analytical data in the following sub sections is taken from three main sources of information: a) secondary information, from meeting notes, policy/strategy documents, press articles (i.e. mainly used to support the understanding of the case study material, rather than contributing to the development of theoretical codes); b) observation of meetings between the individual representatives and member professions and organizations of the ULAC network c) interview data from key representatives of the ULAC. It relies on coding and on categorizing of information in accordance with the template analysis and methodological approach discussed in Chapter Five.

Analysing coded data and emerging themes to ensure explanation goes beyond mere description, requires clarification of how these themes were derived 'through the use of structured organizing charts' (Pratt, 2009: 860). The data is thus presented as follows:

- A timeline of key events within each network phase to help with process tracing;
- A network structure diagram highlighting significant structural differences between each of the three network phases;
- Thick descriptions of the network characteristics, drawing on key statements from the coded data throughout the discussion.

The combined timeline of events and network structure diagrams provide an overall analytical representation of the process tracing of the data, to provide an interpretive understanding of: what ULAC looks like in Scotland.

6.2.1 Network Phases and Membership

Three key network phases (i.e. Network Identification; Network Implementation; and Network Growth) were identified based on important network milestones/events indicating substantial changes to the networks organisational structure and strategic direction, as found in supporting documentation and archival information and validated by respondents statements. Figure A9 in Appendix 9 provides a summary of the key SCA network phases identified over the study period, to represent a time line of events between January 2010 and ending June 2016, in chronological

order. The following sections explain each of the events in turn, relative to the different stages of the network process.

The network ‘identification stage’ started in 2010 with an informal group of six cities and the Scottish Council for Development and Industry (SCDI) participation. The Scottish Government then formalized the network in 2012, leading into the ‘implementation stage’ following the first full meeting of the SCA, including the Scottish Government and SCDI as Chair in March 2012. The implementation phase represents a two-year period when the SCA was being formalized, including various new governance processes, structural and staff changes. The network then moves into a ‘growth phase’, characterized by further important staff changes and clarification of the strategic direction and governance structures. In particular, the network growth period, during which observation and interviews took place, the SCA was reviewing the governance relationship with the Scottish Government, before the launch of the ‘Empowering Cities Report’.

Although the nature, structure and management of the SCA network changes over time, it is useful to briefly define the main membership at the outset. The main organisations involved through the different stages of the SCA are as follows (refer to Appendix 11 for institutional details on each organization):

- The Scottish Council for Development (SCDI)
- Scotland’s main Urban Local Authorities (ULAs)
- The Scottish Government

The key phases of the networks development leading towards the networks perceived strategic ‘empowerment’ are described in detail in the following sections. It is important to understand the key events and the nature of changing membership, throughout the SCA’s formalisation and structural journey to allow analysis of the PV of the network in later chapters (i.e. chapter 7 and 8) and to help identify its changing contextual identity over time. The following sections (6.3, 6.4, 6.5) provide fuller examination of the range of documentation and personal statements concerning the purpose, structure, and management of the SCA.

6.3 Network Identification (T1) – (January 2010 December 2011)

The ‘Network Identification’ phase sees ULAC moving from a situation of an informal cities lobbying group in 2010 with no formal structures to support the networks development, to one that ends with the announcement of a Scottish Cities Alliance (SCA) by the Scottish Government in December 2011, as a key policy mechanism leading to the formalization of ULAC in Scotland in 2012. The Scottish Council for Development and Industry (SCDI) played a key role in facilitating and supporting city collaboration in the network identification phase. The SCDI maintain their

coordinating role following the announcement of a national SCA policy, acting as chair throughout the implementation phase of the network.

6.3.1 Strategic Rationale

A formal statement of the need for a network of collaborating cities in Scotland was signaled by the first signing of ‘Scotland’s Six Cities: A Shared Vision for Scotland’s Success’ in May 2011, stating:

‘We the undersigned recognise the essential role Scotland’s Six Cities play in creating and delivering a successful economic future. We will work individually and collectively in partnership with government, stakeholders, and citizens to drive forward our shared vision of a successful, inclusive and sustainable Scotland’

‘Six Cities Vision’ (May, 2011: 2)

The signing of the ‘Six Cities Vision’ was facilitated by the SCDI as a national (and supposed impartial) organization. The signing of the vision is significant in reflecting a shared commitment and strategic ambition of cities to be recognized as key drivers of Scotland’s economy, promoting collaboration between cities as a key element of a cities policy agenda as follows:

‘to extend economic partnership and collaboration with each other for mutual benefit, while recognising and celebrating their distinctiveness and diversity’

‘Six Cities Vision’ (May, 2011: 3)

The following shared priorities and values are stated in the ‘Six Cities Vision’:

1. Our Cities need infrastructure that delivers economic impact
2. Our Cities need innovative finance and investment models
3. Our Cities are creative centres of productivity, knowledge and innovation
4. Our Cities are key to a sustainable Scotland
5. Our Cities deliver inclusive partnerships with people, regions and government
6. Our Cities are the international gateways to Scotland

The priorities of the ‘Six Cities Vision’ reflects a strong emphasis on infrastructure development and investment as a key driver of urban economic development, raising the awareness of the need for a cities collaboration policy in Scotland. The early lobbying work for a cities agenda in Scotland supported the development of a dialogue with Scottish Government officials during 2011, that would help raise the national policy significance and recognition of the need for a dedicated Scottish cities collaboration policy.

At this stage in the process ‘Network Identification’ is significantly shaped by the Scottish Government’s publication of ‘Scotland’s Cities: Delivering for Scotland – ‘Agenda for Cities’ (December 2011). The Scottish Government announced a policy to work with the Scottish Cities of Glasgow, Edinburgh, Aberdeen, Dundee, Inverness and Stirling, facilitated by the SCDI, stating:

‘This agenda has been developed with the six cities and the SCDI. It sets out where we collectively think collaborative efforts between the six cities, Scottish Government, national agencies, academia – and, critically, the private sector – can have most impact...We do this in the strong belief that successful cities strengthen city regions for the benefit of all of Scotland...It is the role of the Scottish Government to help our cities realise their city visions and strengthen these partnerships. We will do all we can to provide that strategic support and to remove barriers, but it is cities themselves, with their partners, that must be in the driving seat...This Agenda for Cities sets out our collective ambitions.’

‘Agenda for Cities’ (December, 2011)

The Scottish Government’s ‘Agenda for Cities’ was the first official policy stating the formal establishment of the Scottish Cities Alliance (SCA), creating seed corn funding to support a cities collaboration policy in Scotland:

‘The six cities and the Scottish Government will establish the Scottish Cities Alliance [SCA] to take forward a programme of collaborative action. This alliance will be independently facilitated by the SCDI, continuing the role they have previously carried out for the six cities.’

‘Agenda for Cities’ (December, 2011: 11)

The stated vision in the ‘Agenda for Cities’ is for:

‘A Scotland where our cities and their regions power Scotland’s economy for the benefit of all’

‘Agenda for Cities’ (December, 2011: 6)

The Scottish Government’s ‘Agenda for Cities’ statement makes clear the ambition for two ‘enabling frameworks’ to: ‘strengthen collaborative action’ and ‘improve access to finance’, focused on the following key objectives:

1. developing a clear investment prospectus for Scotland’s cities that optimises sustainable economic growth;

2. aligning public investment to priorities in a way which helps support and maximises private sector investment;
3. delivering high impact projects and programmes in areas which best support our cities sustainable economic growth ambitions; and
4. developing effective UK and international city-focused collaborations

The early SCDI facilitated cities network focussed on lobbying is key to the Scottish Government's recognition of 'network identification' through the establishment of a cities policy in Scotland at the end of 2011, resulting in a subsequent formalisation of the SCA as a collaborative partnership between the Scottish Government, SCDI and Scotland's six ULAs up to the end of 2011.

6.3.2 Narrative on Network Identification (T1) (January 2010 – December 2011):

Networks Purpose

With the increasing emphasis of economic development policy to collaborate for resource and efficiency outcomes in recent years, the 'Six Cities Vision' reflects ambitions for greater recognition of the important economic role of closer working between Scotland's cities for the wider benefit of the regional economy and sustainable economic growth, emphasising the need for 'empowerment and strategic support from government' (SCDI, 2011: 2).

Recognising the varying size and diversity across Scotland's cities, the perception that cities could benefit from working closer with each other, as well as with the wider city-region, was referred to:

‘the initial concept of the city-region was the start, and a carefully constructed narrative around the travel to work area’

Respondent (I23)

‘so we felt a dialogue on collaboration should focus on growth rather on competition on the misery index! Then the smaller cities came on board’

Respondent (I7)

Recognising the economic potential from greater city collaboration, there was acknowledgement among six of Scotland's ULAs during 2010 that the economic and spatial diversity of Scotland's cities is a key rationale of greater collaborative working:

‘it was recognized that, the important role that cities can and should be playing in other countries around the world, we began to consider that if we wanted Scotland to achieve its full economic potential, that having strong cities with strong economies that attracted lots of

investment would be a really positive approach to start taking, and that getting the cities together to try and find a way of helping them be more than the sum of their parts would be a really strong way to do that'

Respondent (I22)

The size of Scotland's cities was a particular characteristic underpinning Scotland's cities desire to collaborate:

'as a small city...we don't have the capacity to do it all ourselves'

Respondent (I11)

'Scotland's cities are...economically diverse, geographically diverse...Probably a sense that Glasgow and Edinburgh have something in common. Dundee and Aberdeen at a push. The rest of them quite different.'

Respondent (I8)

'given the size of Scotland and the scale of our cities, there is a greater need for partnership working, both at a larger city like Glasgow and Edinburgh who by working together could actually probably achieve more, unlock capital, unlock funding, derive synergies, internationalise, and at the same time, help to almost pull up the smaller cities'

Respondent (I18)

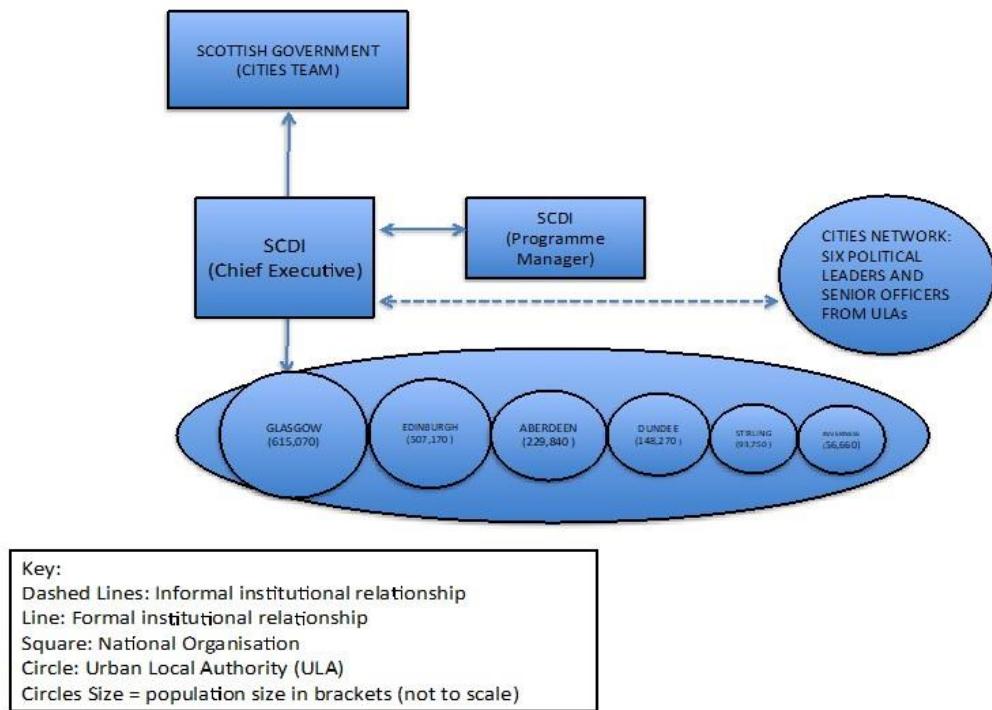
Given the initial rationale for closer working between Scotland's cities, the purpose of the cities network was articulated by the signing of a 'Six Cities Vision' document, representing a renewed commitment between Scotland's cities of all sizes, to work in partnership for mutual economic benefit. The cities ambitions and purpose of the cities network clearly states cities ambitions to gain national recognition for cities to collaborate in Scotland, with cities formally stating their commitment to work together in a concordat agreement: 'The Six Cities Vision'.

Network Structure

The second key aspect of city network member's perceptions relates to the structure of collaboration during the identification stage, to reveal the nature of the different institutions and network ties between the members of the network. The cities network is comprised of Scotland's six cities at this stage (given that Perth and Kinross aren't yet recognised as a city), and including the SCDI as a member. Through consideration of the range of perceptions of the collaborative working at this stage, the structure and hierarchy between the members of the network is revealed.

The network structure diagram (Figure 19 below) during network identification stage highlights the institutional-related structures. To help bridge a relationship between the six Scottish cities, SCDI formed an informal coordination role by establishing a ‘cities group’ to help support cities lobby the Scottish Government. The SCDIs role in facilitating the Scottish cities group involved the SCDI’s Chief Executive (CE) attending the cities network meetings, supported by a programme manager within SCDI.

Figure 19: Urban Local Authority Collaboration (ULAC) – SCA Network Identification



The nature of the institutional relationships between the cities and the SCDI within the cities-network at this stage is relatively informal, with the SCDI represented at the group by their Chief Executive and mainly senior representatives from Scotland’s six cities attending the meetings, albeit, not always the ‘right’ people believed to be attending at this stage:

‘we didn’t get necessarily the right representatives from the cities attending meetings all the time’

Respondent (I1)

‘the Chief Executives and some Leader’s wouldn’t attend, but by on large, well attended’.

Respondent (I20)

It was perceived that having SCDI as a member of the group, they could help provide a facilitation role in addition to their existing relationship with cities, but additionally, they could help to resource the facilitation process:

‘The Chief Exec didn’t chair it…as an action-orientated think tank, [SCDI] represent all of Scotland, [SCDI] working very closely with all the local authorities and with the cities for years…actually managing the COSLA relationship as well’

Respondents (I18)

SCDI’s role is perceived as helping to resource the facilitation of the group given their already established relationship with the cities. In the latter stages of the implementation stage, the Scottish Government would announce the creation of the Scottish Cities Alliance (SCA), which would then lead to some changes to the existing structure of the cities-network in the following stages:

‘Following the run-up to the May 2011 Holyrood elections, the SNP included a manifesto commitment to develop a City Strategy for a Scottish Cities Alliance (SCA) to be formed’

Respondent (I12)

Although the cities recognised the need to work together to raise the profile of a cities strategy in Scotland, their existing links with the Scottish Government were not within the cities network at this stage. The structure of the cities group excludes the Scottish Government, although recognising the need for, and lack of, an institutional relationship with the Scottish Government at the time:

‘There wasn’t a cities team in the Scottish Government when it all first started…the [Scottish Government’s] Chief Planner kept saying, well, actually I’m not sure I’m the right person here. Then a cities team was established [by Scottish Government] during the summer of 2011, and we finally had someone we could talk to’

Respondent (I1)

Then in September 2011, an officer from one of the cities was seconded into the Scottish Government following the election, reflective of a previous lack of civil servant structure to support cities within Scottish Government and that would lead to the announcement of an SCA policy by the Scottish Government in December 2011:

‘I ended up spending just over three months working in government with the team, as I say, with a very clear focus of pulling together a strategy document. The idea of the Alliance I think really came from them but I was helping to shape the early stages of that…the

[Scottish Government's] main constraint was the lack of manpower, I would say, both within that team and across the wider government piece which I think is why they welcomed an additional pair of hands with open arms'

Respondent (I1)

At this stage in the network development process, the structure of the cities network relationship with the Scottish Government is external to the group, up until the creation of a cities team within the Scottish Government and until an officer from one of the ULAs is seconded into the Scottish Government later in 2011; starting a process of closer working institutional links between the cities-network and the Scottish Government. The formal announcement of the SCA in December 2011 would end the identification stage and existing cities-network structure.

Network Management

Aside from the purpose and structural institutional nature of the collaboration process, the administrative institutional nature of the management of the cities network is a further important consideration in determining what form ULAC takes at this stage. The SCDI managed the Scottish cities' network on behalf of the six cities during identification stage, with a remit to lobby for national recognition of the need for a cities policy. The perception of SCDI's facilitation role at the start of the process was viewed as neutral and largely helping to provide much needed coordination and resources to support the process:

'we, kind of, spotted an opportunity to work together. [SCDI] brought additional resources to it...so we began an informal alliance of working with...SCDI and XX had a press background which helped because we had a Comms plan alongside the lobbying activities so XX in [SCDI] was very well placed to help with that'

Respondent (I1)

'our role was strategic because SCDI wasn't to deliver, nor did the cities need any external organisations to help them to deliver...it was also relatively informal when it started, there was a lot of common understanding and agreement in the group...it was more an understanding that – there was actually partnership agreements that we signed that were quite clear, but they were quite simple, they were really quite simple, and it was all about just sort of working in partnership to drive strategies, to share a common agenda, it was all about economic growth...a broad range of objectives. And infrastructure as well, it was making sure that there would be synergies and value'

Respondent (I18)

‘it needed leadership and a commitment, both from a political level and from an executive officer level...it needed an independent body to be able to provide that facilitation role and to act as the glue to hold it all together.’

Respondent (I20)

‘it was an opportunity for cities to work together, and SCDI brought additional resources and people to support it’

Respondent (I1)

‘it required people who were willing to give up a fair amount of their time to help set things up and it didn’t happen overnight, it took a lot of effort’

Respondent (I22)

‘SCDI facilitating the process made it a very ‘sit back and do’ process. A key output was the development of the ‘Six Cities Vision’ at an away day with only the cities’

Respondent (I20)

SCDI’s role was perceived as providing an independent coordination role that was able to provide people resources to bring the cities together, given the perceived time and effort required by the process. Having a national independent agency fulfill that role was viewed helpful in the absence of any formal budget, helping to pull it all together and help produce the first strategic statement from the group in the form of ‘Six Cities Vision’:

‘we got those leaders together in a room, I think it was in Glasgow, and we started talking about the things that we thought were important to the economy of Scotland and the economy of cities. And we started discussing could there be some sort of shared agreement or shared document that the cities would kind of agree to...almost all those leaders coming to life and saying, we want to work together because we know that we can have strong economies and be more resilient by working together. So they agreed to do this, they agreed that SCDI should be the neutral broker in the middle that could pull this together. We came away from that meeting and created and drew up the shared commitment [Six Cities Vision document] and a statement of intent, it was saying that we want to work together’

Respondent (I22)

It is apparent that the management of the cities network in the early stages resulted in the development of the ‘Cities Vision’, which secured a commitment from Scotland’s six cities to work in partnership to lobby the Scottish Government for increased recognition. SCDI’s role was mainly to help bring the group together with minimum resources at this stage. The perception of the

management process was indicative of a passive, unfunded, largely non-strategic planning forum. The network links with the Scottish Government at this stage are outside of the cities network, until an officer is seconded into the Scottish Government's team to help support the development of a city strategy. The end of the process results in the Scottish Government's announcement of the SCA in December 2011. The key events shaping the cities group between 2010 and December 2011 are summarized in Table 13.

Table 13: Key events leading to the SCA 'Network Identification' stage

NETWORK IDENTIFICATION	STRUCTURAL EVENT	INTERPRETATION
June 2010	Scottish cities attend 'league of Scottish Cities': Lobbying Event	Cities respond to the collapse of 'Glasgow-Edinburgh' collaboration initiative and lack of national recognition and link between cities in Scotland
January 2011	SCDI appoint a 'cities' programme manager	SCDI provide a resource to help support the informal facilitation and coordination/collaboration between Scotland's cities
July 2011	Scottish Government Cities Team established	Scottish Government create a team to work with cities and an officer from one of the cities is seconded into the Scottish Government to support the cities network
December 2011	SCA announcement by Scottish Government	Scottish Government create a formal 'SCA' policy to focus on national inclusive growth

6.3.3 What ULAC looks like at 'Network Identification' Stage

Consistent with the idea that collaboration between cities should be considered an alternative model (or 'third way', see Amin and Thrift, 1994; Stoker and Young, 1993) of urban policy, the perceptions on the purpose of the network among members is broadly consistent with the strategic view that collaboration, as well as competition, can serve wider sustainable economic growth at both a city and regional level.

The structure of ULAC between Scotland's ULAs as an informal voluntary arrangement is akin to what Hulst and van Montfort (2012) call 'planning forums for socio-economic development agendas', typically reflecting the need for 'regulation of externalities of local policies and the distribution of scarce resources in a way that is rational from a supra-local perspective' (Hulst and van Montfort, 2012: 123). Davies (2003) describes this type of collaboration as an 'urban regime' (p254) involving autonomous and informal networks.

According to Hulst and van Montfort (2012) conceptualization of the different types of IMC, the structure of different collaboration arrangements will depend on 'the tasks involved...the degree of

institutionalisation and the extent of decision-making powers' (p127). The cities network at the identification stage involves collaboration between ULAs and other agencies (i.e. SCDI) for the purposes of strategic policy coordination. Consistent with an informal institutional structure, the cities-network is defined by a concordat arrangement between senior city representatives from six of Scotland's cities. The SCDI are a national organization and their hierarchical role within the network is neutral and on the same level as the city members at this stage.

Table 14 summarises what the 'network identification' stage looked like relative to the three functional domains: purpose, management and configuration, which can be described as a:

'planning forum...a loosely coupled network of municipalities and other public or private actors that engage in the coordination and planning of their respective policies or activities. Their institutional integration is low: participants maintain more or less stable relations and they interact on a regular basis. There is no standing organization with formal decision-making authority'

Hulst and van Montfort (2012: 127)

Table 14: Key Characteristics of 'Network Identification' stage

PURPOSE	CONFIGURATION	MANAGEMENT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote economic importance of cities and city collaboration • Lobby Scottish Government to increase national profile of cities 	Planning Forum (cities network): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Six ULAs • SCDI Chief Executive and Programme Manager 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic Partnership-Concordat (Six Cities Vision) • No Budget • Informal Facilitation

6.4 Network Implementation (T2) - (January 2012 – December 2013):

The 'Network Implementation' phase sees the cities network moving from an informal coordination structure, into a formalization process that changes the 'cities network' into the Scottish Cities Alliance (SCA) in January 2012. The SCA implementation phase represents a widening of the network membership to include all seven cities, the Scottish Government and SCDI as chair of the network. As the network adjusts to a more formalized structure, a number of key strategic events reveal a process of strategic, structural and management change during the SCA network implementation. The implementation stage ends with the appointment of a new Chief Executive of SCDI, resulting in the appointment of a new Strategic Programme Director at the start of 2014, who would lead a review of the SCA into a new 'growth phase'.

6.4.1 Strategic Rationale

Following the Scottish Government's 'Agenda for Cities' announcement in December 2011, the 'Network Implementation' stage would begin with the initial formalization of SCA network, replacing the cities network. The informal cities network would be replaced by a more formal SCA group, including a widening membership and formalization of governance arrangements, and the implementation of structural arrangements to facilitate the development of strategic plans and administration of core funding including a £7million 'Cities Investment Fund' from the Scottish Government over a three year period:

'Following the launch of Six Cities: Delivering For Scotland in December 2011, it has been identified that in order to support the ongoing development of the shared agenda between the Six Cities and the Scottish Government, there is a requirement for a structure and process to be developed to ensure delivery of the shared objectives of the Scottish Cities Alliance (SCA)...The paper proposes an outline structure to resource the ongoing work which will develop and build upon the joint work identified...SCDI seeks a 'three-year in-principle' funding commitment from each city and the Scottish Government, to enable the SCA to commence recruitment and implementation of formal processes supporting the SCA'

'Outline Structure and Support of Cities Engagement Strategy' (SCDI, December 2011).

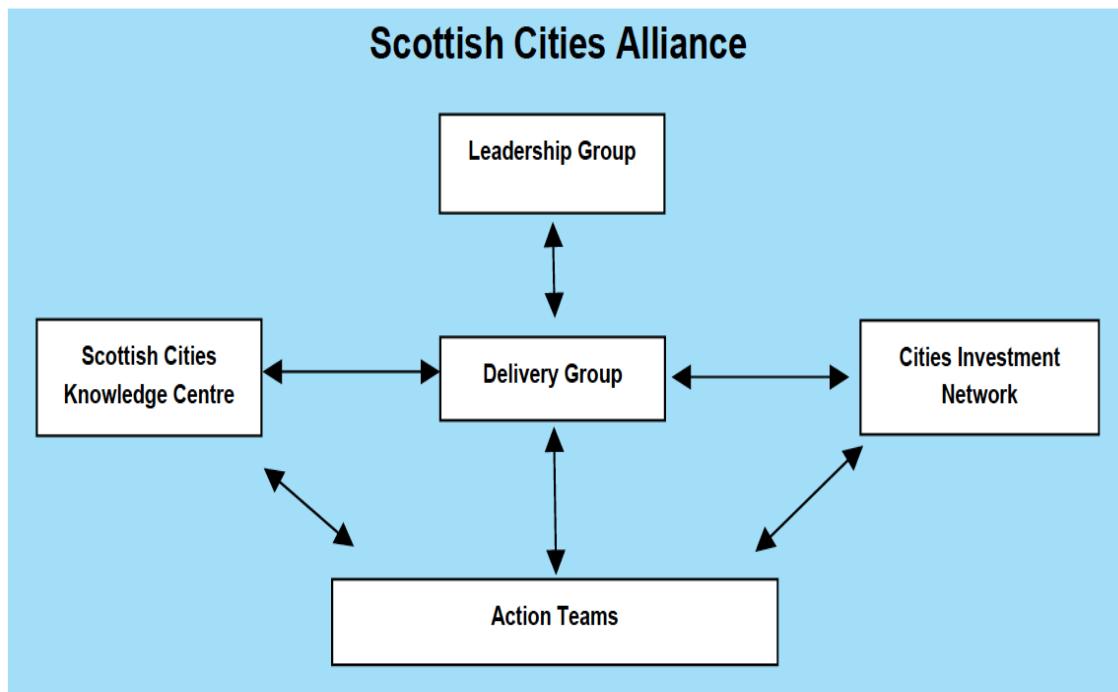
The introduction and proposal for formal structures to support the implementation of the SCA would provide a budget of around £150k per annum for the next three years, comprised of Scottish Government funding and match funding from the six cities (i.e. £45k three 3 largest cities; £30k from 3 smaller cities; £75k from the Scottish Government).

Consistent with that stated in the 'Agenda for Cities' document, the SCA 'will be independently facilitated by the SCDI, continuing the role they have previously carried out for the six cities' (2011: 11). The SCDI (2011) paper also set out the proposed outline structures, stating that 'the SCDI would provide the platform and mechanisms to ensure the delivery of the programme' (SCDI, 2011), including budget administration, including:

- Strategic facilitation of a Cities Leadership Group to provide direction for the work programme of the Delivery Group and Action Teams
- Support and facilitate the work of the Action Teams and the Delivery Group to deliver their objectives as agreed by the Leadership Group

The new structures were clearly set out in the 'Agenda for Cities' and introduced by the SCDI at the start of 2012 (Figure 20):

Figure 20: SCA Governance at ‘Network Implementation’ stage



Source: ‘Agenda’ for Cities (Scottish Government, 2011)

The SCA Leadership Group’s main role was to oversee the co-ordination of a cities policy by ‘agreeing priorities for the SCA and provide strategic direction for the work programme of the Delivery Group and Action Teams’ (Scottish Government, 2011: 11), including delegated decision-making power and management of financial resources on behalf of its members.

In March 2012, the first meeting of the ‘Leadership Group’ would mark the implementation of the SCA as policy, chaired by the Chief Executive of the SCDI and comprised of the Political Leaders of all seven cities, senior officers from the seven local authorities and the Deputy First Minister (as Minister for Cities) (Nicola Sturgeon).

A note of the first SCA meeting highlights that agreement on governance arrangements were still largely ‘to be clarified...with the need for a further level of oversight by the Leadership Group and the governance roles of the Leadership and Delivery groups still unclear.’ (Leadership Group, March 2012).

There was now the existence of two documents: The ‘Six Cities Vision’ document produced by the six cities during the identification stags, and the Scottish Government’s ‘Agenda for Cities’. On comparing the ‘Six Cities Vision’ and ‘Agenda for Cities’ strategic priorities, a clear focus on sustainable infrastructure investment is common to both documents. A comparison of the language

used to articulate the strategic objectives set out in the two existing documents that the SCA were working to are summarised in Figure 21 below:

Figure 21: Comparison between ‘Six Cities Vision’ and ‘Agenda for Cities’ (emphasis added in bold)

‘Cities Vision’ Objectives:	‘Agenda for Cities’ Objectives
<p><i>We recognize the role our six cities play in creating and delivering a successful economic future.</i></p> <p><i>Our cities need:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - infrastructure that delivers economic impact...and a sustainable Scotland - innovative finance and investment models - creative centres of productivity, knowledge and innovation - inclusive partnerships with people, regions and government - international gateway to Scotland 	<p><i>A Scotland where our cities and their regions power Scotland’s economy for the benefit for all.</i></p> <p><i>A collaborative and collective city-regions approach should therefore focus on:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ← → investment prospectus for sustainable economic growth; ← → aligning public investment to support and maximises private sector investment; ← → delivering high impact projects...support sustainable economic growth ambitions; ← → UK and international city-focused collaborations

It is apparent from Figure 21 that both the original ‘Six Cities Vision’ document compared to the SCA ‘Agenda for Cities’ document both largely focus on similar strategic priorities: sustainable infrastructure investment; innovative public and private sector investment; productivity, sustainability and internationalisation and sustainable economic growth. The key difference in the use and focus of language between the two documents relates to: ‘Cities Vision’ emphasizing a ‘city’ focus, and the ‘Agenda for Cities’ including a ‘city-regions’, Scottish economy and international focus.

During the first year of the SCA implementation and as part of the evolving strategic direction, a Strategic Implementation Plan was developed ‘to structure the Alliance work programme over the next three years’, focused on: Attracting Investment; Creating the Conditions for Economic Growth; and Research and Best Practice (SCA Annual Progress Report 2012-13).

An update on the ‘Cities Investment Programme’ at a meeting of the Leadership Group in April (2013) notes the desire to widen its focus to include the city-region, for example:

‘Cllr Burns [Political Leader of Edinburgh City Council] noted that the wider city regions should be included in the investment activities where appropriate...Cllr Matheson noted the City Deals being progressed by some English cities and suggested that similar schemes

could be considered here [by the SCA]...Cllr Matheson suggested a city deals presentation for a future meeting'

Leadership Group meeting (SCA, April 2013)

As part of the SCA member's interest in city-region investment, an update on the 'Cities Investment Programme' at the Leadership Group in September 2013 notes the increasing interest in city-region investment models, including City Deals:

'Cllr Boyd [Political Leader of Stirling Council] provided a summary of the discussion that had taken place amongst the Leaders and the Minister for Local Government and Planning, the previous evening. It was noted that there was a shared desire to explore the opportunities arising from city deals for Scotland's cities similar to those being developed for English cities.'

Leadership Group meeting (SCA, September 2013)

There followed a presentation by Glasgow City Council (GCC) titled: 'A New Deal for Scotland's Cities', highlighting learning on the direction of cities policy elsewhere in the UK (England):

'We believe that transferring powers from government to cities will make it easier for cities to achieve economic growth...In order to legislate for this, the Localism Act 2011 introduced the Core Cities Amendment. This allows local councils to make the case for being given new powers to promote economic growth and set their own distinct policies. The main way this is being delivered is through City Deals.'

The paper proposes...

'that the Scottish Government and the 7 cities develop a new Urban Policy for Scotland....it is proposed that the first part of this new policy should be the establishment of Scottish City Deals...It is recommended that the 7 cities enter into discussions with the Scottish Government as a matter of priority to agree a mechanism to devolve funding for skills and the economy to the local level...the establishment of Scottish city deals as the first step towards greater devolution for Scotland's cities. This should be considered to be a process rather than an event, with the Cities Alliance [SCA] being given a new role to negotiate further devolution of powers'.

A New Deal for Scotland's Cities (GCC, September, 2013)

The paper highlights Glasgow's ambitions for a City Deal in Scotland, further requesting that the SCA 'Leadership Group' consider options for the strategic focus of the SCA to develop a new urban policy for greater devolution for Scotland's cities. The paper also notes that 'the UK Government's approach [to cities] is increasingly about encouraging competition, whilst the Scottish approach has been to foster greater collaboration between the seven cities' (SCA, 2013: 1).

A minute of the Leadership Group (SCA, 11th September 2013) would formally note the response to GCC's request for strategic support from the SCA. There followed a discussion on how the SCA could support the development of a strategic city devolution approach and agreed to expand the strategic focus of the SCA:

'to support, in principle, the City Deals Scoping Study Paper as part of the [SCA] Strategic Implementation [and] a shared desire to explore the opportunities arising from city deals for Scotland's cities similar to those being developed for English cities. There was an appetite to develop, for consideration by Leaders, an additional strand of SCA work looking at what further powers and budgets might usefully be devolved to cities and city regions. The range of existing powers available to cities will also be reviewed and consideration given to the opportunities to make best use of these.'

Leadership Group Meeting (SCA, September, 2013)

The meeting notes the SCA Leadership Group agreement to 'establish a workstream to focus specifically on empowerment of cities and consideration of powers to be devolved from Scottish Government to local authorities' (p8), supporting in principle, to a wider investment focus of the SCAs Strategic Implementation Plan.

The strategic focus of the implementation phase of the SCA reflects both the widening membership of the cities network to include the Scottish Government and the strategic ambitions of the 'Agenda for Cities', but also, the strategic focus of the SCA up until the end 2013 to include an evolving focus on 'a new role to negotiate further devolution of powers' for ULAs across Scotland.

6.4.2 Narrative on Network Implementation of ULAC (T2)

The following section describes the purpose, structure and management of SCA marked by key events between March 2012 and the end of 2013. Network members perceptions reveal an apparent mismatch between city members' perceptions of the purpose of the SCA and the Scottish Government's strategic ambitions. The range of personal statements elicited from individual network members regarding the implementation stage also reflects SCDIs attempt to realign the

cities network established at identification stage, with the Scottish Government's 'Agenda for Cities' as part of the formalization of the SCA process.

Network Purpose

As highlighted in section 6.4.1 (see Figure 21), the two strategic documents that the SCA and cities-network have produced to date include the 'Six Cities Vision' (published in May 2011) and the 'Agenda for Cities' (published in December 2011). The perception among the members of the network during early implementation reflects an evolving agenda that reflects both strategies:

'we got a strategic implementation plan agreed at the end of the first year. Which set out the broad intent...it was mainly about investment.'

Respondent (I20)

'rather than each city doing things individually, they could pool resources... there was aspiration that this could lead to collaborative procurement...in relation to the operational plan, attracting investment for infrastructure.'

Respondent (I21)

'the focus on the investment side, the publication of the cities investment plan was critical. Then we had a leadership group where we got commitment from the leaders to agree to a percentage spend around economic development activity to drive forward investment in cities'

Respondents (I1)

The purpose of the SCA during its first year of implementation is focussed on a cities investment programme as 'the overarching priority of the Scottish Cities Alliance...led by Edinburgh, who developed a detailed programme of collaboration on cities investment' (SCA Annual Report, 2012-13: 4). The 'Investment Programme' in 2012-13 focuses on: Infrastructure Investment Models; Sector Analysis; Investment Propositions and International Promotion.

Network members' perceptions of the purpose of the SCA also reflects SCDIs attempt to realign the strategic direction of the SCA between 2012 and 2013, in line with a national Scottish economy focus stated in the 'Agenda for Cities':

'there is a key subtle difference between the seven cities on the one hand and the alliance on the other, and I suppose...they [SCA] are still working to the operational plan of the previous SCA, which is much more narrowly focussed on infrastructure investment'

Respondent (I13)

‘what government want is collaboration and inward investment.’

Respondent (I18)

‘I think there’s been some move towards trying to tailor things towards the government’s agenda. I’m not sure it’s quite there yet...things have been totally focussed on infrastructure’

Respondent (I14)

‘it needs to focus on the significant investment plan for Scotland rather than a city focus only, so I think the strategy is developing.’

Respondent (I11)

It is apparent that the focus of the SCA group is on the development of the cities investment ‘Implementation Plan’ relating mainly to the intentions set out in the ‘Six Cities Vision’ focused on city infrastructure. Given the existence of two documents, on comparison, there is a clear distinction between the city and national focus, reflecting differing network members’ perceptions relative to cities ambitions and Scottish Government’s, for example, there is a perception that the SCA is about:

‘cities wanting to get to a place where the SCA is about the seven cities.’

Respondent (I13)

‘the Government see it as what's best for Scotland, whereas the cities see it as what's best for their city’

Respondent (I21)

Therefore, perceptions of the purpose of the SCA amongst members of the network during the implementation stage largely reflects the legacy of the cities group focus on cities investment, and the Scottish Government’s desired focus on national priorities, to include inward investment. The perceptions among members of the SCA during the implementation phase reflects the adjustment period during a process of formalization and realignment of the networks strategic purpose and structures in line with the ‘Agenda for Cities’.

Network Structure

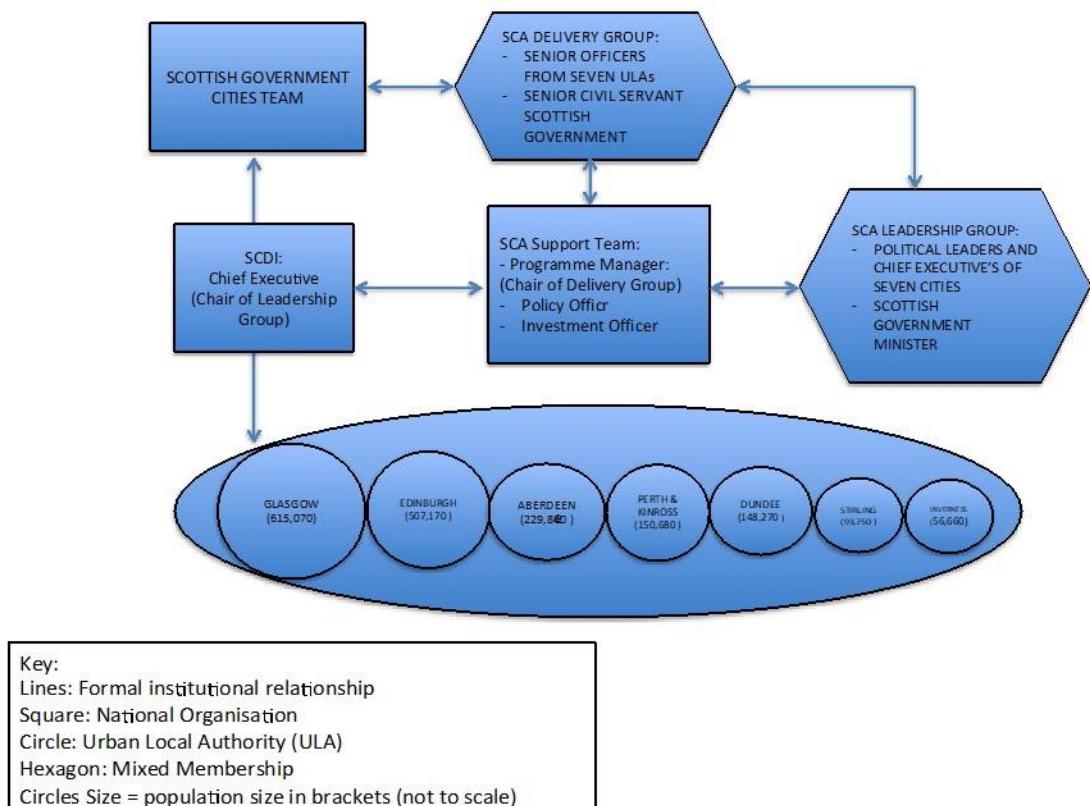
During the first year of SCA implementation the network increased its city membership to include Perth and Kinross, following its designated 7th city status on the 14th March 2012. Changes to the structure and membership of the group include the Scottish Government’s Minister for Cities, the Leaders and Senior Officers (Chief Executives) from Scotland’s seven ULAs (referred to as the

‘cities’), ‘drawing in the expertise of senior private sector representatives’ as required (Scottish Government, 2011: 11). The political membership of the SCA during 2012 also changed from the previous identification stage following a local government election during May 2012, meaning SNP would now lead Dundee and Perth and Kinross ULAs as members of the SCA.

Figure 22 shows that having the Scottish Government as a member of the network created an additional layer of formal governance complexity to the network structure comprised of both the Leadership Group and Delivery Group. The SCDI’s previous role as impartial facilitator would now take a more formal quasi-organisational structure, having to take a dual role of maintaining a focus on cities as well as formally supporting the implementation of the SCA national policy priorities on behalf of the Scottish Government.

The network structure diagram (Figure 22 below) during network implementation stage highlights the institutional-related structures. The SCDIs role as Chair and host of the SCA would create a larger SCA support team to help coordinate the Delivery Group and provide budget and programme management assistance.

Figure 22: SCA network structure during ‘Network Implementation’ stage



The SCA network member’s perceptions relating to the structure of collaboration during the implementation stage reveal the hierarchical nature of institutional network ties. The status and

structure of the original SCDI facilitated cities network changed following the SCA announcement, largely the result of Scottish Government inclusion and funding:

'It got more sophisticated. It got a wee bit more ambitious...and became more complex and given that financial commitments and funding started to flow towards it, there was a requirement to put in a much more formalised governance structure to make sure that the SCA was accountable. And we were very mindful that this would be public sector funds that we were spending. So once we finally started to get some money in it, we made some appointments'

Respondent (I18)

Following the formalisation process, various staff changes took place within SCDI to support the SCA network, including replacing the Programme Manager appointed during 2011 with a Programme Director in June 2012, supported by a policy officer to help manage the process.

Additional members of the SCA team included an Inward Investment Promotion Officer, seconded from the investment team in Edinburgh, to lead on the development of relationships with other city investment teams in other cities and to help create 'a virtual investment team to...work with the cities to develop an investment promotion strategy and programme of shared investment promotion activity' (SCA Annual Report, 2012-13):

'Glasgow City Council applied for funding from the City Investment Fund (the Scottish Cities Alliance pot of money), for a post that the dedicated purpose of which was to disseminate learning from Future City Glasgow to the Scottish Cities and help to develop a national strategy for Smart Cities or Future Cities.'

Respondent (I19)

As well as staff arrangements supporting the SCA changing, the nature of the political membership within the SCA during 2012 also changed:

'Nicola Sturgeon [Deputy First Minister] was quite heavily involved at the beginning. She didn't chair the leadership group but she participated in it'

Respondent (I10)

'Glasgow [City Council Political Leader] was the only city leader who spanned the 2011-2012 SCA and was the only one who was there from the start'

Respondent (I12)

The SCDI Chief Executive was involved in the SCA from the beginning and started to chair the group during 2012. However, the SCDI Chief Executive resigned during 2013, although continued to chair the SCA until the middle of 2013:

‘There was a very long gap between June and November 2013 without leadership for the board of SCDI.’

Respondent (I20)

A new SCDI Chief Executive was put in place at the end of the implementation stage in December 2013. Therefore, the various staff changes during 2013 meant that both the SCDI and SCA staff were without management or leadership for a period of time.

Network Management

The Scottish Government announcement on the SCA meant that the SCDI was now formally ‘hosting’ the SCA as a distinct and separate policy within their organization:

‘to the SNP’s credit, the result of the [cities] strategy was that the government gave us 7 million to get the SCA started’

Respondent (I7)

‘the SCA is a programme within SCDI, so that SCA-related staff were legally SCDI staff employed and managed, but funded through the government and cities strategy funding’

Respondent (I23)

The focus of the work at the start of the SCA was wide ranging and largely cities focussed and led, with a clear attempt thereafter, to realign the focus of the SCA with the Scottish Government’s agenda:

‘it never really got to the position of having a proper portfolio of work at the start and in fact... all of that was reviewed and the focus on inward investment was increased’

Respondent (I8)

Therefore, the strategic direction of the SCA changed during 2013 in an attempt to realign the SCA projects (developed by the earlier cities network team between 2011-2012), with the Scottish Government’s ‘Agenda for Cities’ as a post-hoc exercise:

‘we weren’t working directly to the *Agenda for Cities* strategy... members were picking projects to fit into each of the four key strategic headings of ‘Agenda for Cities’

Respondent (I21)

‘we were working to it [the Scottish Government’s ‘Agenda for Cities’] to an extent, but it was too high level’

Respondent (I20)

SCDI’s facilitation role of the SCA core team was perceived as providing support and secretariat functions for the SCA, to help deliver and provide the overall administration support for delivering the strategic agenda of the SCA:

‘We’ve been quite strict about saying, cities are leading on responsibility, so they need to provide the admin resource. We should facilitate, we can’t be used as a resource to help [cities] take things forward.’

Respondent (I20)

A series of key events shaping the network implementation stage (Table 15) reflect network members perceptions of what ULAC looked liked. It is apparent from both the network events and members perceptions that the management and structure of the SCA is going through a process of strategic realignment and clarification, as previous projects were largely selected to reflect individual city ambitions. The process involved SCA employing more support staff and making clear their facilitation role, and that the SCA should not be delivery focused, instead, strategic focused. It is apparent therefore, that there is an attempt during the implementation stage to align the SCA work to the Scottish Government’s strategy ‘Agenda for Cities’, although mainly perceived as still working to the cities objectives identified during the identification stage.

Table 15: Structural events leading to formal SCA ‘Network Implementation’ stage

NETWORK IMPLEMENTATION	STRUCTURAL EVENT	INTERPRETATION
March 2012	First Meeting of The SCA City Leadership	Formalisation of the SCA to include Perth and Scottish Government, and proposed new governance structures
June 2012	SCDI appoints a SCA Programme Director	Widening membership and new governance required a Programme Director and policy officer to help manage the process
September 2013	Glasgow presents a paper on devolving powers for Local Government at the Leadership Group meeting	An addition to the strategic direction of the SCA to consider LAs powers.
December 2013	SCDI Chief Executive resigns and new one appointed to chair the SCA	Further staff changes to the network and appointment of new Chair of the Leadership group.

6.4.3 What ULAC looks like at ‘Network Implementation’ Stage

The Scottish Government’s role is crucial in the implementation stages for securing funding and for cities achieving national policy recognition. The network member’s perceptions on the purpose of the network during this stage reflects its formalisation and introduction of governance structures, typical of urban planning in Scotland often believed to be ‘micro-managed...and over-governed’ (Turok, 2008: 80).

Different governance mechanisms, and in particular, the introduction of the Scottish Government as a member of the SCA, replaces the previous informal voluntary arrangement, reflective of:

‘the relative degree of power of the decision makers to overcome obstacles to action...challenging the assumption that voluntary membership networks create enough power to bring about publicly significant results...to solve problems and to achieve change in an increasingly complex and fragmented environment’

Ataov and Eraydin (2011: 88)

Therefore, through the introduction of the Scottish Government and more formal arrangements, the SCA structure is consistent with what Hulst and van Monfort (2012: 129) describe as a ‘quasi-regional government’ joint organisation with formal decision-making powers:

‘Quasi-regional government structures...are entrusted with formal decision-making power and financial resources. Generally, a council and an executive board, composed of delegates from the participating municipalities and accountable to the local councils, govern quasi-regional governments. As a rule, they are active on a number of policy fields and sometimes also involved in service delivery. Planning tasks frequently involve spatial planning and socio-economic development.’

Hulst and van Montfort (2012: 127)

Table 16 provides a summary of what the ‘network implementation’ stage looked like relative to the three functional domains. Davies (2003) would describe such formal structures as typical of UK ‘regeneration partnerships depending on an ideological commitment to collaboration within local authorities, involving bureaucratic structures under strong central government control’ (p254). Although the SCA isn’t governed by a ULA, instead, the SCDA takes the role as chair of the Leadership Group, reflective of their neutral organizational stance. Therefore, SCDA’s institutional relationship with the Scottish Government is more formalized, meaning they would be required to report on their administration and management role of the ‘Cities Investment Fund’.

Table 16: What does ULAC look like at ‘Network Implementation’ Stage

PURPOSE	CONFIGURATION	MANAGEMENT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop City Infrastructure Investment Plans • Re-align the SCA work plan to National ‘Agenda for Cities’ priorities 	<p>Quasi-regional, regeneration partnership structure (SCDI Host SCA):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seven ULAs • SCDI CEO Chair of Leadership Group • SCA Programme Director Chair of Delivery Group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formal Governance Processes (Agenda for Cities) • City-focused Operational Plans (resourced) • £7 million Scottish Government Budget (match funded by ULAs)

6.5 Network Growth (T3) - (January 2014 – June 2016)

6.5.1 Strategic Rationale (T3)

The final stage of the SCA network during the observation period is ‘Network Growth’ begins in January 2014 followed by a period of further restructuring of governance arrangements and revised strategic policy documentation. In June 2014, the SCA would finalise its operational plan and agree three main work streams: infrastructure, low carbon and Smart Cities, aimed at attracting investment and development of the national economy by supporting urban economic growth.

Near to the end of 2014, the seven cities (excluding Scottish Government) produced a report proposing to reshape the future governance and strategic direction of the SCA:

‘The City Leaders felt that it would be helpful for them to have an informal meeting themselves to discuss collectively the issues, before bringing the consensus of that discussion back to the Leadership Group’

The note of the meeting sets out proposals for:

‘a revised governance framework for the Alliance in light of: the current political and legislative landscape; the strengthening consensus across all levels of government that cities have a significant role to play in driving economic growth; and that the Alliance’s proposition has developed to a stage that it is moving into delivery and is consequently attracting an enhanced profile... The view is that with new powers coming to Scotland as a result of the Smith Commission, there was an opportunity to use the Alliance as a forum to consider what might devolve further to cities.’

Note of Leadership Group Meeting (SCDI, December 2014: 3)

The private meeting between the seven cities and excluding the Scottish Government was to progress discussions for a ‘Review of City Networks’ and to agree a collective approach and update to the ‘Six Cities Vision’ paper originally signed in April 2011 by the then six cities. The December 2014 meeting would make clear:

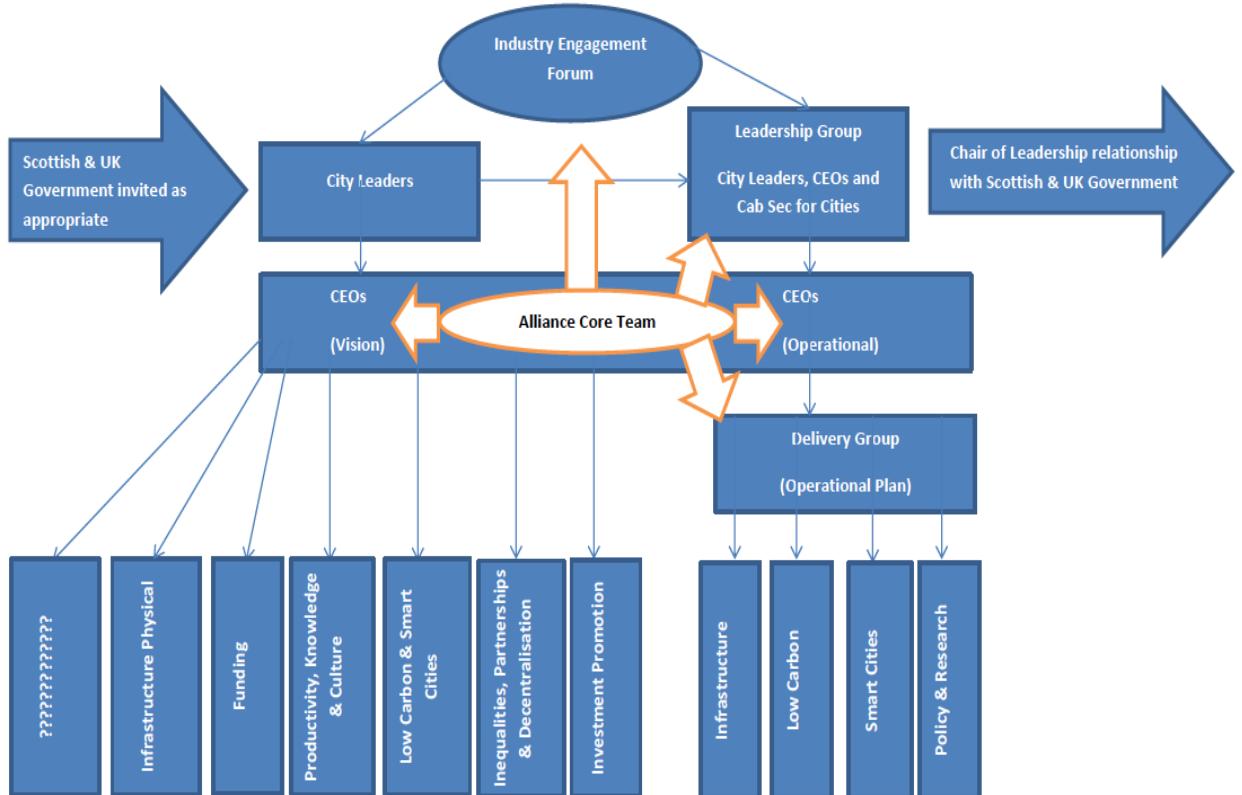
‘a general view amongst the [city political] Leaders that it would be appropriate for future Leadership Group meetings to be chaired by a Leader of a city’

Note of Leadership Group Meeting (SCDI, December 2014: 3)

The December 2014 SCA Leadership Group meeting marks a key phase for network growth as Scotland’s cities progress their own strategic ambitions for more direct control of the SCA Leadership Group and desired change to current SCA governance arrangements.

New SCA governance arrangements were introduced in March 2015, with the current Chair of the Leadership Group also being replaced by Cllr Burns (Political Leader of Edinburgh City Council) and including a new set of wider governance arrangements (see Figure 23).

Figure 23: SCA Governance Arrangements During ‘Network Growth’ Stage



Source: Revised Governance Protocol (SCA, March 2015)

The new SCA governance arrangements make clear the separation between strategic and operational focus of each group, including a new set of City Leadership groups (involving cities political leaders only) focused on setting the strategic Vision of the SCA:

- the Leadership Group continuing to meet three times per year;
- a City Leaders group meeting three times a year to take a portfolio responsibility for one of the six key areas detailed in the city leaders' Vision;
- Chief Executives (of ULAs) to take additional project sponsorship role to support operational delivery of the Cities Vision.

In January 2015 a cities discussion paper on 'a review of city networks' was discussed and noted in the March Leadership group meeting, stating the Scottish cities proposals for a refreshed 'Seven Cities Vision' statement to:

'build on the original document signed in 2011 and set out the city leaders' long-term vision to drive economic growth. It has been updated to include Perth, which joined the Alliance in 2012 and some new areas of focus around Smart Cities, the need to tackle inequality and play a lead role in taking forward the decentralising democracy agenda. The refreshed Vision continues to recognise the mutual benefits realised by all seven cities working together and in partnership with both the Scottish Government and UK Government.'

Leadership Group Meeting (SCA, March 2014)

Following the introduction of new governance arrangements, including a city Chief Executives group and City Leadership Group (which would exclude the Scottish Government), the period April and May 2015 would involve a series of key events leading to a change in the overall strategic direction of the SCA in addition to the new governance structures, including: the cities agreeing new 'Areas of Responsibility' at a Chief Executive meeting in April 2015, and a refreshed 'Seven Cities Vision' to include new areas of focus, including: Smart Cities; the need to tackle inequality; and the SCA's lead role in taking forward the cities decentralising democracy agenda.

The seven cities as members of the SCA published a revised 'Seven Cities Vision: Empowering Scotland's Cities' (2015) in May 2015, rearticulating cities desired relationship with the Scottish Government within the SCA:

'...to deliver, our cities require empowerment and strategic support from government to ensure they maximise their assets, infrastructure, skills and opportunities, for all of Scotland's people. They need the freedom to decide locally, to raise funds through taxes and invest to

create jobs and economic growth and to deliver services, which are tailored to cities and city regions'

'Seven Cities Vision' (SCA, May 2015)

A significant factor separating the refreshed 'Seven Cities Vision' (2015) from the Scottish Government's 'Agenda for Cities' (2011) is a departure from the 'partnership' terminology. The revised 'Seven Cities Vision' (2015) reflects a shift in the strategic relationship between the cities and the Scottish Government as members of the SCA, from one of equal 'partnership' working, to one that notes the hierarchical nature of the Scottish Government by 'requesting city empowerment' from the Scottish Government.

The Scottish Government's response to the 'Seven Cities Vision' makes clear a growing disagreement between the cities and the Scottish Government:

'whilst Scottish Government shares many of the ambitions contained within the city Leaders' Vision some elements do not align with current policy. The Scottish Government welcomed further discussion of these elements with the cities. Consequently, it was noted that the Vision has been developed by city Leaders and belongs to them and not the Scottish Government.'

Leadership Group meeting (April 2015: 3)

The Scottish Government would follow to hold a 'Cities Convention' in Perth on 13 November 2015 with the 'aim of bringing citizens and city leaders together to feed into a refreshed 2011 'Agenda for Cities', leading to the publication of a refreshed Scottish Government 'Agenda for Cities' (March, 2016), restating the 'Vision' and focus on: internationalisation; investment; innovation and inclusive growth.

The Scottish Government did not provide any formal response or support for Scotland's seven cities request for greater devolved taxation powers. However, the 'Agenda for Cities' does refer to Scotland's city regions as an important and appropriate scale at which resources can be pooled, and functional economies harnessed.

Finally, in May 2016 the seven cities as members of the SCA would commission a report, 'Empowering Scotland's Cities', which states:

'Scottish cities require a New Deal with the Scottish and UK Governments... A new partnership requires local government, central government, national agencies and key business stakeholders to work collaboratively to maximize the benefits from both local decision-making and joint working on prioritized national outcomes if Scottish cities are to reach their economic potential and meet the big challenges that lie ahead...'

‘…The cities also advocate utilising the Scottish Cities Alliance [SCA] as a facilitator and delivery vehicle for this work’

Empowering Scotland’s Cities (Ernst and Young, May 2016)

The Empowering Scotland’s Cities (2016) report was commissioned by the seven cities in January 2016, ‘to build on the framework above…and a primary role to act as a facilitator for discussions between the representatives of the city councils’ (p13) and makes clear that ‘the publication [of the earlier discussion paper – Empowering Scotland’s Cities] was outside the remit of the SCA and led by the seven cities themselves’ (p13).

The network growth stage is therefore characterised by a shifting strategic direction and divergent ambitions for the SCA between both city and Scottish Government as members of the network.

6.5.2 Narrative on Network Growth of ULAC (T3)

The network growth phase of the SCA sees a significant addition to the strategic ambitions of the seven cities as members of the SCA. As well as working with the Scottish Government in partnership as part of the ‘Agenda for Cities’ evolving work programme, the seven cities have developed an additional ambition to ‘lobby’ Government for greater devolution of powers between national and local government in Scotland, creating additional cities-only structures similar to that in the identification stage.

Network Purpose

As section 6.4 highlights, the strategic focus of the SCA during implementation was on establishing a strategic partnership between the Scottish Government and seven cities, towards achieving greater national growth in line with the ‘Agenda for Cities’. Given the existence of the two strategy documents, ‘Six Cities Vision’ and the ‘Agenda for Cities’ the perception among the members of the network during the growth stage reflects a gradual expansion of the networks strategic purpose and ambitions, particularly among the city members.

The perception of the purpose of the SCA at this stage is thought:

‘very different to the original rationale for the SCA’

Respondent (I23)

The purpose of the SCA among the city network members is that the SCA should be about:

‘shaping government policy...influencing what Transport Scotland do, things like increasing the funding available for vacant and derelict land. It would be things like tackling high concentrations of multiple deprivation. It would be increasing the degree to which cities are part of the Scottish policy landscape.’

Respondent (I13)

City perceptions of the purpose of the SCA during the network growth stage maintains a focus on influencing national policy for increased recognition of the importance of cities and urban policy in areas of planning, deprivation and funding, whilst recognizing the importance of establishing a stronger relationship with the Scottish Government:

‘taking into consideration the wider economic and social agenda...there’s been some move towards trying to tailor things towards the government’s agenda...I think things have been totally focussed probably on infrastructure.

Respondent (I14)

The infrastructure focus of the SCA throughout its development is still very much present, with some alignment with national priorities, although an increasing recognition of the SCAs role in evolving ‘City Deals’ in Scotland:

‘The objectives at one level are simple so far as it is to promote cities partnerships with the Scottish Government, to drive economic development and the way that it does more clearly than over the past year and a half, through the low carbon work streams and infrastructure and smart cities. What’s happening now is that the cities are taking on a broader role than originally set out over the period of transition of the SCA and how the cities fit into that.’

Respondent (I13)

‘The investment focus is still very much there, and I think that features in all of the City Deals that have been developed...And in many ways we’re just trying to ensure that, you know, because for all its faults, what the City Strategy is at least – at the very least – an initial recognition that cities are the drivers of the national economy and we need to invest in success. So we’re just trying to bolster that and push it forward and make sure that key drivers of the economy are invested in and that we don’t ignore them or undervalue them.’

‘the programme of infrastructure work streams include: Housing; Commercial and Business Space; Digital and Transport Infrastructure; but as we grow we realise that the tenants of transport and digital infrastructure work is slightly different from the housing and commercial which I should say, includes regeneration, so as you can see it is very wide ranging.’

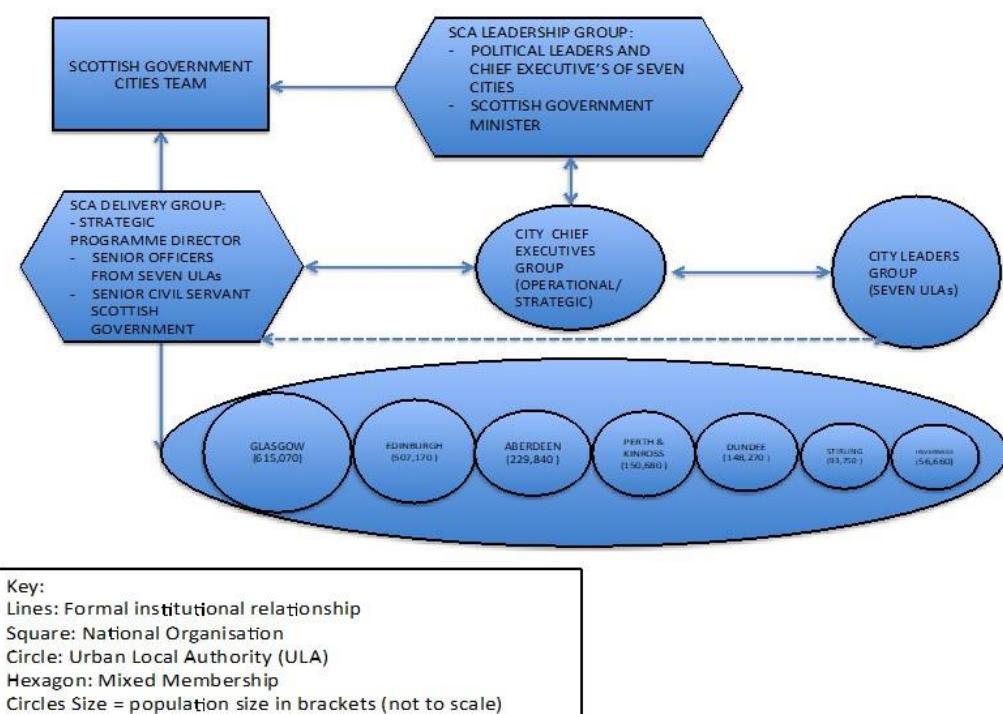
Therefore, the perceptions of the city infrastructure and delivery focus of the SCA are still apparent during the growth stages, alongside cities taking on ‘a broader role than originally set out’ (RI13).

Network Structure

During the first year of the SCA growth stage in 2014, various staff changes were made to increase the size of the SCA support team, including a new more senior Strategic Director and Programme Director, and a new Chief Executive within the SCDI. There were also some key changes to the Leadership Group in December 2014, including: the resignation of the previous SCDI Chief Executive as Chair of the SCA Leadership Group and replaced by a Political Leader from one of the ULAs, and Keith Brown MSP taking over from Depute Leader Nicola Sturgeon, as the Scottish Government’s political representative at the Leadership Group.

Figure 24 shows the institutional structure and nature of network ties resulting from the increased governance arrangements, with a further layer of informal governance complexity resulting from the addition of a cities-only group, with a more informal relationship with the rest of the groups.

Figure 24: SCA network structure during ‘Network Growth ‘stage



In January 2014 the new SCDI Chief Executive would recruit a new more senior SCA Director (part-time) seconded from one of the member cities (as Chief Executive Officer of Stirling City Council). The appointment of a more senior SCA Strategic Director was to act as a key link person between the Political Leaders and Chief Executives within the SCA group, aimed at providing a more senior strategic role, including:

‘getting more senior people in, we needed to get the right people in and they needed to have more, I guess, senior, more strategic input into what the cities were wanting together’

Respondent (I22)

The process of appointing a more senior SCA Strategic Director involved:

‘changing one of the SCA posts [Programme Director] to become a more senior post, and removing another post.’

Respondent (I23)

Nearer to the end of 2014 there was also a change in ministerial responsibilities, with Nicola Sturgeon stepping away from the SCA to be replaced by Keith Brown as The Cabinet Secretary for Infrastructure, Investment and Cities. Thereafter, the Strategic Director appointed in January 2014 was further replaced in January 2015, with the appointment of a new full-time Programme Director.

A key change to the chair position of the SCA was the appointment of a cities political leader as chair of the leadership group in March 2015:

‘the [Chief Executive of SCDI] chaired the cities group, but due to contractual relationships, that became unworkable.’

Respondent (I23)

‘within the confines of the SCA there was some confusion as to who should chair: whether it should be deputy first minister or someone from the cities, in terms of a political leader, as it is now. This has been resolved with the leader of the capital city now chairing but there is still a lack of clarity in terms of function and purpose.’

Respondent (I23)

The growth stages included the seven cities starting to meet outwith the formal SCA governance structures put in place during the ‘implementation phase’:

‘so basically what we did roughly [in 2014] was start a dialogue and a discussion, a process about trying to move the Alliance more towards being cities-led, and we basically organised

a couple of private meetings where the seven city leaders met without the minister or others present....everybody was in agreement that we should try and move it towards being more cities-led...I mean, there's been a bit of a compromise in the sense that it's not six meetings of just the city leaders, it's three meetings of just the city leaders and three meetings of the city leaders with the Cabinet Secretary...it's called the Leadership Group, and Keith Brown is present, the civil servants are present, and then every alternative meeting is just a leaders meeting, so it's just the seven leaders.'

Respondent (I12)

'a series of private meetings took place between the City Leader's...outside formal structures...and due to a previous lack of leadership...a new programme structure was put in place to resolve that and to get leadership committed'

Respondent (I13)

'we've tried to move it towards being more cities led, frankly, and not government led. And as part of that process there's no longer an independent or sort of quasi-independent chair anymore...it was chaired by this quasi-independent person, and there was no space, private or otherwise...'

Respondent (I18)

'So the cities now meet three times a year without the government there, and the government is there for the other three meetings, so this is the compromise and I think will see them through a transition point through whatever comes next.'

Respondent (I23)

The governance structures also considered where the SCA should sit, as being either within the SCDI or within a city. As one member of the SCA pointed out:

'as part of the new governance arrangements, it was agreed that it [SCA] could look to moving, being within a city. But I don't think that that would work..as we're going through this stage at the moment, we need to stay here'

Respondent (I21)

'i see the alliance as a fledgling bird beginning to fly, but not taken the leap yet. So as each step has been taken, whether the appointment of chair, staff, vision, strengthening of relationship between government and cities etc. are all steps to stand on its own that wouldn't need to sit within SCDI'

Respondent (I23)

Therefore, it is apparent that the growth stage experienced various staff changes, further revised governance structures and increasing city ambitions. The new structure of the SCA reflects cities ambitions for inclusion of an informal cities only group excluding the Scottish Government, and two CEO groups to deliver SCA operational activities (directed by the SCA Leadership Group) and city-leadership strategic functions (directed by the ULA political leaders).

Network Management

The appointment of a new Strategic Director at the start of January 2014 to lead the introduction of a new set of governance arrangements was largely perceived as a key milestone in the growth of the network:

‘XX coming in I think, really helped it, I think he gave it a bit more of a focus, I think, it is more deliverable now...XX has taken it in a different direction, making it a bit more deliverable, by trying to focus on things where collaboration can work.’

Respondent (I9)

The management role of the new, more senior Director of the SCA was largely perceived as providing a key role in improving: governance; leadership; strategic focus and collaborative direction, for example:

- ‘better governance rigor now’(RI11)
- ‘refocusing us down into the operational plan’ (RI21)
- ‘the organisation changed...trying to change the structure’ (RI10)
- ‘much more collaborative and focussed, more directive and collaborative than the team that was in before’ (RI15)
- ‘more aggressive towards Scottish Government and lobby it harder and push the cities more’(RI10)

Further to the new strategic appointment, a change to the chair of the SCA being a political leader was largely perceived as providing more collaborative management approach:

‘really good because I’ve been very impressed by him – he definitely gets the need for collaborative working and he’s got that ethos so I think that’s a good move.’

Respondent (I10)

The SCA’s management during the growth stages is thus perceived positively due to new leadership roles and the tightening of governance structures and strategic focus:

‘undoubtedly, you know, not just probably, it will undoubtedly move towards a type of more formalized outcome focused structure over the course of the next 24 months, I’m sure of it.’

Respondent (I12)

Therefore, the series of key events shaping the network growth stage (Table 17) reflects network members perceptions of what ULAC looked like. It is apparent that the changing governance structures reflect the cities steering and refocusing of the network towards being cities-led again. Although the formal SCA/Scottish Government structures are still in place, the perceptions of the strategic realignment and clarification of cities ambitions within the SCA during network growth stage, marks a significant milestone in the development of a distinct cities agenda (in addition to the Scottish Government’s Agenda for Cities) within the SCA between January 2014 and 2016.

Table 17: Structural events during ‘Network Growth’ stage

NETWORK GROWTH	STRUCTURAL EVENT	INTERPRETATION
January 2014	New SCA Programme Director Appointed (Chief Executive of Stirling City Council)	The SCDA appoints a new more senior Programme Director to progress formalisation of SCA arrangements
Summer 2014	Private City Leader’s Meetings	Duel structures start to evolve due to growing desire of the cities to work without the presence of the Scottish Government
May 2015	Leader of Edinburgh City council appointed as Leader and cities group created	The SCDA as chair was seen as no longer viable and to avoid any conflicts of interest. Leader of Edinburgh City Council takes on the role chairing the Leadership
March 2016	Refreshed Scottish Government <i>Agenda for Cities</i>	The need to update and refresh the Scottish Government’s commitment to national priorities following new duel governance arrangements
May 2016	Empowering Scotland’s Cities Report	Following the Scottish Government’s refresh, the cities follow with a statement to mark their ambitions and reformed structures similar to the original cities group.

6.5.3 What ULAC looks like at ‘Network Growth’ Stage

The cities role is key to the nature of the growth stage for establishing clearer structures that maintain cities involvement in the SCA, whilst providing structures to suit both city and national government aspirations. Having adjusted the SCA to a more formalized process during the implementation stage, stronger leadership and improved clarity of purpose (see Table 17), ensures that the mixed ambitions between the network members are formally reflected by the development of new structures to facilitate duel ambitions.

The SCA's journey towards the 'Empowering City Government' report (2016), marks a significant milestone in the growth of SCA and process of ULAC in Scotland. Approximately 4 years on from the initial SCA Leadership group meeting of the Cities and the Leaders and Chief Executives of the seven cities in March 2012, June 2016 represents a turning point for what the SCA looks like, reflecting 'cities wanting to take on more as a group of cities' (RI13).

The complex dual structures of the SCA during this stage also reflect an 'over-complicated, bureaucratic, cluttered' governance structure (Turok, 2008: 80), as an attempt to provide some separation between the informal and formal structures: 'authority, or leadership, in networks is often organic and informal in character...not granted automatically because of formal titles (Weber and Khademian, 2008: 342). Therefore, SCDI's formal role as chair is replaced by an evolving political leadership role that takes over as chair.

Table 18 provides a summary of what the 'network growth' looked like relative to the three functional domains. The SCA is now chaired by a political member from one of the ULAs, reflective of the cities increased steering of the SCAs direction. Alongside new governance arrangements are further staff changes and increasing resources from the members of the network, as well as leveraged funding from evolving projects.

Table 18: What does ULAC at 'Network Growth' Stage

PURPOSE	CONFIGURATION	MANAGEMENT
Duel Purpose: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cities-leading reforms for urban local government National Agenda for Cities focus on Inclusive Growth 	Quasi-regional structure and Planning Forum: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seven ULAs ULA Political Chair Senior SCA Strategic Director ULA Chief Executive Group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formal and Informal governance arrangements Increasing resources Refreshed City and Scottish Government Strategic Documents; Strategic and Operational/Delivery Plans

6.6 Summary of Findings

The strategic documentation and interview evidence presented in chapter six provides an indication of what ULAC looked like over the study period, in terms of its purpose, configuration and management across three key stages of the networks process (i.e. T1; T2; T3). The strategic events identify three key phases describing the evolving purpose and structure of the SCA: starting as a cities-led informal planning forum focussed on strategic city ambitions; followed by a national government-led quasi-regional structure focused on resource allocation and strategic planning; finally, evolving into a cities-led dual purpose network focussed on both strategic planning and operational delivery of projects.

Therefore, relative to the functional characteristics identified in Chapter Three (i.e. Part A of the conceptual framework: Table 8 in section 3.5), Table 19 below provides the first set of conceptual results of the functional characteristics of the SCA:

Table 19: Conceptualising Matrix: Functional Characteristics of the SCA:

NETWORK PHASE	NODE: URBAN LOCAL AUTHORITY FUNCTION: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT POLICY		
	PURPOSE	STRUCTURE	MANAGEMENT
T1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political Lobbying • Strategic Planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City-centric membership • Neutral Facilitation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informal Planning Structure • Informal Leadership/Governance
T2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Resource Allocation • Strategic Planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mixed/expanding membership • National Agency-led 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formal Quasi-Regional Structure • Formal Leadership/Governance
T3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Resource Allocation • Operational and Project Delivery • Strategic Policy Making • Political Lobbying 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mixed/expanding membership • City-led (Political) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formal Quasi-Regional Structures • Informal Planning Structures • Formal Political Leadership • Formal Strategic Leadership

Chapter Seven will progress the research findings by undertaking an institutional analysis of the SCA network, to identify the role of institutions to help provide causal explanation of ‘How’ the PV of the SCA network can be understood. Detailed explanation of network context and institutional influences assumed to have causal relevance to the network events are explained and the resultant relationship with SCA’s perceived PV.

Chapter Seven: ‘How’ does ULAC create Public Value (PV): *the role of institutional mechanisms?*

7.1 Introduction

Having identified what ULAC looks like in Chapter Six, Chapter Seven explains how ULAC and its functional domains create PV as a ‘value-creating’ process (Crosby et al. 2014: 448), through explication of institutional mechanisms that are ‘partly descriptive … and partly normative’ (Crosby et al. 2014: 448), to identify what is causally relevant to the network events identified previously (see Appendix 10).

When trying to understand the collaborative nature of ULAs ‘the variation both in the institutional context and in the policy making capacity’ (Hulst and van Montfort, 2007: 4) of local government is important to take into account. The aim of this chapter is to highlight the role of institutional mechanisms within the contextualised network setting, detailing the SCAs perceived PV to enhance the understanding of ULAC identified in Chapter Six. The institutional mechanisms are revealed through sense-making of analytical themes identified during the second round of analytical coding. The extent to which Scottish Government and ULAs institutional context can explain the PV of ULAC – as formal and informal institutional mechanisms - is revealed, including important power constellations and socio-cultural institutional dynamics.

The Chapter addresses the second of three research questions:

How can the perceived public value (PV) of ULAC be understood relative to institutional context?

7.1.1 Analytical Approach

Having split the network into three stages, each is discussed in turn highlighting the role of institutional mechanisms on the PV of ULAC. Using first order (descriptive) coding – through template analysis - to describe what ULAC looks like (Chapter Six), the data is refined into higher level analytical codes of emergent themes, revealing three main institutional mechanisms: *contextual, functional and relationship* mechanisms. Respondents’ perceptions of institutional mechanisms are analysed, to help understand their role on how PV is created from ULAC.

Analysing coded data and emerging themes to ensure explanation goes beyond mere description requires clarification of how these themes were derived. The analysis uses interview data/quotations to provide sense-making of aggregate dimensions (i.e. institutional mechanisms)

(Gioia et al. 1994), including: interpretive-descriptive functional characteristics and institution-related characteristics of network events and socio-cultural relationships. In line with an interpretive critical realist approach to the research, the themes are identified within their specific context, highlighting: ‘the role constructs play in a particular setting’ (Dyer and Wilkinson, 1991: 634). Thick descriptions of the supporting quotations are provided to describe the ‘rich’ (Dyer and Wilkinson, 1991: 634) social and institutional structures of ULAC.

The combination of key events and network structures identified in Chapter Six, combined with sense-making statements and thick descriptions in the following sections, provides an overall analytical representation of how the PV of ULAC can be understood relative to the role of institutional context. Table A10 in Appendix 10 summarises the main institutional mechanisms found to have causal relevance for the PV of ULAC relative to key events during each stage of the network process.

7.1.2 The Role of Institutions on the PV of ULAC

‘Institutions cannot be considered only as formal organizational structures; they are dynamic and historically embedded entities that sustain and disseminate complex formal and informal political systems of arrangements. These organizations function within an interdependent and complex set of relations in the process of urban governance.’

Ataov and Eraydin (2011: 95)

Having identified a series of key events describing ‘what’ the SCA looked like between 2010 and 2016, key points of strategic, structural and management change are apparent across three network stages. Thick descriptions of the perceived role of institutions relative to the network events, highlights the causal relevance of both formal and informal institutions for the PV of ULAC. Building on Williamson (2000) institutional framework identifying four levels of social analysis (first set out in Williamson, 1998) (see Figure 1 of Williamson 2000: 597), reveals a fully interconnected process.

The research approach taken here identifies institutional mechanisms that are consistent with levels one, two and three (L1: Embeddedness; L2: Institutional environment; and L3: Governance) of Williamson’s (2000) NIE conceptualization, referred to as: *functional; contextual and behavioural mechanisms* (Figure 25).

Figure 25: Three Path Dependant Levels of Institutional Mechanisms

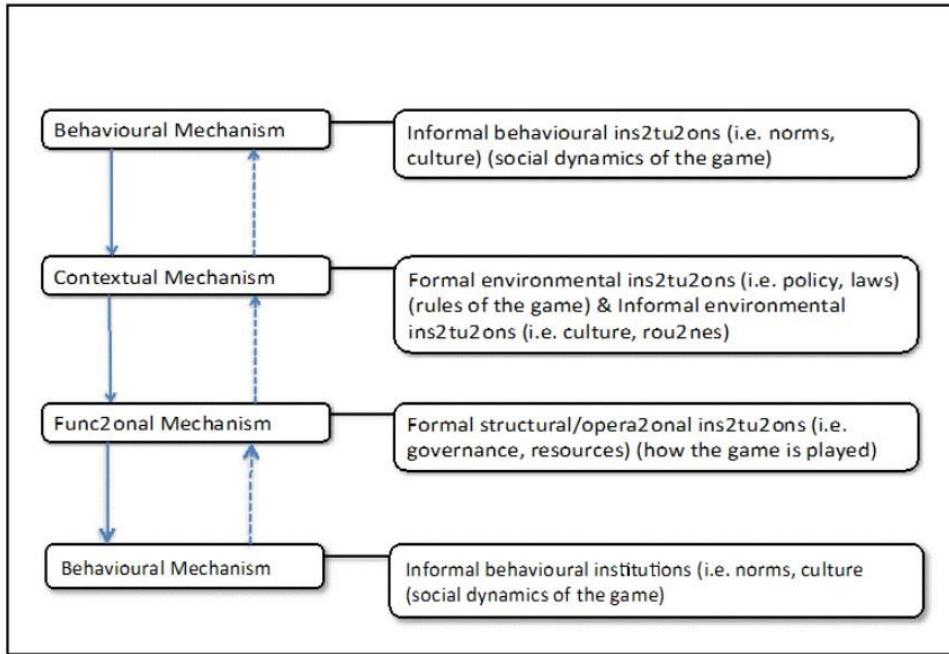


Figure 25 builds on Williamson's (2000) conceptualisation of different institutional mechanisms, although instead of assuming away behavioural mechanisms (i.e. Embeddedness in Williamson, 2000), the analysis here provides an empirical assessment of the role of all three institutional mechanisms to identify the combination of formal and informal institutions. In other words, behavioural mechanisms shaping the dynamics of how network members interact outwith and within the network, will be shaped by, and shape, both the contextual mechanisms of the rules of the network (e.g. available resources), in turn, affecting the functional mechanisms of how collaboration takes place (e.g. governance, strategies).

The solid arrows in Figure 25 connect the upper mechanism to the lower mechanism, to suggest that the higher mechanism contextualises and interacts with the lower level mechanism (e.g. history and culture – informal mechanisms - will influence the formal structures of national state – formal cultural mechanisms – in turn, influencing formal organisational structures at a sub national and local level – formal functional mechanisms). The dashed lines indicate feedback across the three mechanisms (e.g. formal functional mechanism at a lower local level will feedback up to the formal national state level, which will in turn, respond and react to lower level mechanisms...and so on), to reveal the overall path dependant nature of an institutional perspective of ULAC. The *contextual mechanisms* relate to external formal environmental institutions (i.e. policy, laws) that can be described as the ‘rules of the game’; the *functional mechanisms* are internal to the network and relate to formal structural and operational institutions (i.e. governance, resources) to influence ‘how

the game is played'; and finally, the *behavioural mechanisms* can be both internal and external to the network and relate to informal behavioural institutions (i.e. norms, customs, traditions, trust), that influence and shape the social dynamics of the game.

The institutional mechanisms interact across each stage of the network process, and across each of the different institutions. Further to the above categorisation of three main institutional mechanisms, Williamson's (2009: 373) conceptualisation of different combinations of formal and informal institutions are identified relative to their strength (i.e. as a constraint) of institutions as either weak (lack of constraint) or strong (well-developed constraint). Williamson (2009) uses a quantitative approach to categorising the strength of formal and informal institutions. However, the approach taken here is to classify the strength of all three types of institution from an interpretive critical realist perspective, categorising the strength of institutional mechanisms relative to network member's perceptions of the constraining effect of different combinations of the three main institutional mechanisms. For example, the perception that political mechanisms are constraining the network process indicates the role of strong formal institution, whereas, a lack of perceived constraints from political mechanisms indicates the role of weak formal institution. On the other hand, the perception that private socio-cultural rules are constraining network behaviour suggests the role of strong informal institution, whereas, the lack of perceived private socio-cultural rules constraining the network represents a weak informal institution.

The three main institutional mechanisms do not function in isolation of each other as they interact in an on-going, complex dynamic way throughout each stage of the network process. For example, functional mechanisms influencing the operation and structure of the network at the identification stage, interact and condition social relationships between network members in the subsequent stages of the network, and interact to affect other institutional mechanisms of the contextual environment.

Therefore, the role of institutions across each stage of the network events are described in sections 7.2, 7.3, and 7.4, through the use of sense-making tables, that summarise the role of institutions at each stage of the network, before summarising the overall combination of institutions across the SCA over the study period, in section 7.5

7.2 Network Identification (January 2010 – January 2012): the role of institutions

Process tracing in Chapter Six revealed what the identification stage of the SCA looked like (see Table 14), as an informal strategic planning network involving six of Scotland's cities lobbying for increased national recognition of their economic importance, facilitated by a neutral national organisation (i.e. SCDI). The identification stage ends with the Scottish Government's positioning for formal involvement in the cities-network, creating a Scottish 'Cities Investment Fund' via a

SCA policy: ‘Agenda for Cities’. Having identified what the ULAC network looks like at the identification stage, the following sections describe the role of institutional mechanisms for the PV of ULAC at this stage.

7.2.1 Contextual Mechanisms during Network Identification:

Strong formal institutions (national policy, history, economics):

Important national policy context affecting local government at the same time as network identification included, for example, the ‘Cities Growth Fund (CGF)’ being stopped in 2008 (a £90m fund), followed by various other policy changes affecting funding for local government more generally: including various funds being wrapped up into local government’s block grant; the development of Single Outcome Agreements (SOA) in 2009, as the Concordat signed by the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) (i.e. a national institution designed to represent the joint interests of Scotland’s LAs with the Scottish Government) and the Scottish Government in November 2007; and the requirement for LAs to develop a Single Outcome Agreements (SOAs).

The wider national policy context of austerity government affecting funding for cities and local government in recent years, is an important contextual mechanism perceived as influencing cities’ increasing desire to collaborate, including a perceived lack of national policy recognition of the economic importance of cities in Scotland, for example:

‘money is being spent away from cities and towards rural areas’

Respondent (I18)

‘the trouble is there aren’t great funds for cities...given current economic circumstances, it’s unlikely there is anything [funding] of scale available to cities’

Respondent (I1)

The Scottish Government’s role over local government is primarily to provide funding, having prescribed a council tax freeze (one of LAs main revenue raising powers) as part of the Concordat, coinciding with the network identification period. Some LAs (characterised by political diversity) viewed the *freeze* as a gradual creeping centralisation of local government, by failing to properly compensate LAs for maintaining the *freeze*. Thus, the national funding context of Scottish local government at this time is perceived by cities as representative of national government’s increasing centralisation and control of local government:

‘while I had partly lived in Scotland for many years, I didn’t really know how it worked and was amazed I had to write to the minister for permission on inward investment in our city -

someone in the English capital having to write to a minister in west minster for permission, well! I am intrigued by the level of control, we [cities] are very restricted.'

Respondent (I7)

The apparent perception of increasing centralisation of Scotland's cities at the same time as reduced funding mechanism for local government, is perceived as a strong formal national policy institutions affecting ULAs financial autonomy in Scotland and an important contextual mechanism shaping cities desire to lobby Scottish Government as well work closer together for sharing resources.

The policy context of local government and their complex relationship with national agencies in Scotland is far from straightforward. There is a perception that national agencies lack sufficient recognition of the important role of cities in Scotland, for example:

'COSLA considers that all councils are treated equally, when that's incorrect'

Respondent (I22)

'as an action-orientated think tank for national economic growth in Scotland, SCDI works closely with all LAs and cities to support and manage their relationship with COSLA...but there's this ownership issue that people don't necessarily want to give up, so that's why I think having a third party acting as that broker facilitator is perhaps easier to drive it forward, and they could stand outside the politics and the different agendas that we're maybe operating or were getting clouded by other things that were going on at the same time.'

Respondent (I18)

The perceived lack of recognition of cities by various national organisations in Scotland is a strong formal national institution, potentially constraining ULAs strategic importance and profile in Scotland and an important contextual mechanism shaping cities desire to seek alternative routes to increase their profile in Scotland, via their existing links with SCDI to support coordination of a cities network.

The economic, spatial and historical nature of cities in Scotland is perceived as strong formal context shaping the need for national policy recognition of the importance of city-city collaboration to help overcome the challenges that city economic geography presents:

'Scotland's cities are economically diverse, geographically diverse...probably a sense that Glasgow and Edinburgh have something in common. Dundee and Aberdeen at a push. But the rest of them quite different.'

Respondent (I8)

‘given the competitive nature of cities, and actually they don’t collaborate very well together historically, a whole host of reasons, it needed an independent body to be able to provide that facilitation role and to act as the glue to hold it all together.’

Respondent (I18)

During 2011 the political context of an impending Scottish Parliament election in May 2011 delivered the first majority (SNP-led) government since the opening of the Scottish Parliament at Holyrood, perceived as important political context shaping city collaboration in Scotland. The cities, working with SCDI, embraced the opportunity of an impending election by lobbying the politicians for greater recognition of cities:

‘to provide a real lobbying weight to help open doors in government that perhaps cities wouldn’t otherwise manage to open on their own’

Respondent (I1)

‘the aim was to create a coalition of cities that lobbied the government before the [2011] elections and for urban policy to be put into the manifestos of Scotland’s political parties’

Respondent: (I18)

Consistent with the stated ambitions in the ‘Six Cities Vision’ for ‘empowerment and strategic support from government’ (SCDI, 2011: 2), a key political mechanism is the impending election providing an opportunity for cities to jointly lobby for increased recognition in the run up to the impending Scottish Parliament election. The political parties in the lead up to the May 2011 formally recognised the national importance of Scottish cities in their political manifestos, perceived as ‘a political opportunity’ (RI23) leading to the Scottish Government’s announcement of the SCA in the ‘Agenda for Cities’.

Furthermore, the strength of institutional ties between SCDI and the Scottish Government can be seen to have facilitated the political and subsequent, national policy recognition of cities via the ‘Agenda for Cities’:

‘the different political parties put things in their manifestos around cities at the last election [2011]...SNP committed that they would appoint a cities minister’

Respondent (I22)

‘the idea was based on the notion of what was going to be called the ‘league of Scottish cities’ based on the California league...then the government in the run up to the 2011

elections saw a political opportunity, and decided they would be part of it...made it SCA, and gave it to SCDI and funded it with a deal done with the leader of SCDI'

Respondent (I23)

The role of economic, political and financial context of ULAs in Scotland are perceived to play a strong role in shaping cities perceived value of the strategic purpose of a cities network facilitated by the SCDI. Typically, a strong intermediate tier of government - with formal competencies, resources and willingness to co-ordinate regional policy – is found to reduce ‘the need for local government to provide regional co-ordination and planning through co-operation’ (Hulst and van Montfort, 2012:128). Therefore, the cities-network arguably reflects a response to the perceived role of: weak formal institutions (relationship with national agencies), strong formal institutions (austerity government; political opportunity), and strong informal institutions (urban economic geography and competitive culture of cities).

7.2.2 Functional mechanisms during Network Identification:

Weak formal institutions (governance, resources, strategies):

During the identification stage the development of the ‘Six Cities Vision’ was the only formal documentation representing the cities commitment and intent for closer collaborative working. The lack of formal strategic documentation or clear coordination or governance processes resulted in a general perception that communication of the purpose and focus of the network wasn’t clear, resulting in a lack of shared meaning or understanding of the overall purpose and value of the network:

‘it’s was like herding cats...what happened was that nothing got done...it was a bit of a talking shop, yes, a talking shop. It was pretty directionless’

Respondent (I9)

‘it wasn’t clear. I mean, I think it just seemed like different organisations, you know, doing their own things...the cities themselves were trying to understand how they could work, because they hadn’t worked together before’

Respondent (I14)

Although the cities network was purposefully structured as an informal lobbying network, by implication, the press and political focus on the networks activities resulted in an evolving work programme that lacked clear strategic purpose or focused direction:

'the reason the delivery element is there was...we needed something to do in between the policy lobbying, and because of press/political focus.'

Respondent (I7)

Although the SCDI appointed a programme manager to help resource the facilitation and coordination process, perceived weak formal functional mechanisms, including time/resource constraints and limited membership, limited the functional capacity of the network:

'The operational constraint [for cities] is finding some kind of the match funding because every council's discretionary budget has been reduced'

Respondent (I10)

'I think we didn't probably adequately resource the core team within the Cities Alliance, this is where it became grey. We made it quite clear that the network was not SCDI, but we were hands on, and it actually became almost like a full-time job. We were actually having to do all the work for the cities and write proposals and write their stuff, and that wasn't sustainable. So I think if I look back and if there were lessons that I learned, it was that we didn't adequately resource it - the cities themselves didn't recognise how much resource intense it would be. SCDI carried it for quite some time...we actually starved it! I think we needed to have the Scottish Government and people like Scottish Enterprise involved'

Respondent (I18)

The role of formal functional institutions during the identification stage can be perceived to be largely the result of: passive facilitation, no governance, lack of strategic direction; poor communication, all perceived to have played a key role in shaping cities perception of a lack of progress or functional impact value on the cities network. The PV of the cities network during identification stage due to the perceived role of functional mechanisms therefore relates mainly to the presence of weak formal institutions (i.e. lack of resources or leadership, poor governance or strategic direction).

7.2.3 Behavioural mechanisms during Network Identification:

Strong informal institutions (lack of trust, weak ties, competitive culture)

The culture of cities is recognised as a strong informal institution acting to constrain the social relationships between network members within the cities network, particularly given the national policy context that historically encourages cities to compete (as a contextual mechanism). As a result, the network ties between the larger cities is perceived as being loose, but also, the ties between the larger cities and the smaller cities are also loose, as larger cities tend not the value

working with the smaller cities. The result is that some of the cities are coming together for the first time, resulting in a perceived lack of trust and competitive culture between the cities.

The general attendance of network members during the network process was perceived as largely positive and indicative of a general sense of commitment among members to collaborative working:

‘the Chief Executives and some Leader’s wouldn’t attend, but by and large, well attended, although there was some concern at the start that these individuals had to be kept interested to ensure their attendance’.

Respondent (I20)

The development of the Scottish Government ‘Agenda for Cities’ was viewed as a very difficult and stressful time between the cities and the Scottish Government’s ambitions for being more formally involved:

‘XX left that team off sick for about six months, very shortly around the time that the SCA strategy was published, partly because, I think potentially largely caused, by the stress of putting together the strategy. So it was a tense time, I mean, this wasn’t a straightforward thing to do.’

Respondent (I22)

The tense relationship between the Scottish Government and cities network was also affecting the relationship with the SCDI as facilitator of the cities-network:

‘there was some tension that existed between SCDI wanting to do this neutral role and the Scottish Government which obviously had political objectives and that they were being given for the Alliance too. But we managed to get through that, and I think the most important thing that we managed to achieve, this is beyond my time, but we managed to get through the referendum without anybody pulling out of the Alliance’

Respondent (I22)

The role of behavioural mechanisms during the network identification stage was a common perception of LAs tense relationship with national agencies and other cities (i.e. member conflict), affecting the level of member involvement (i.e. member commitment), strength of relationships (i.e. membership ties), and a perceived inequality between network members, due largely to diverse range of network member characteristics (i.e. membership equality).

The six city LAs identification of a city-collaboration opportunity was driven mainly by the cities themselves. Membership commitment and participation at the start of the network process was viewed as being relatively easy and consistent (commitment mechanism), particularly whilst ‘lobbying’ for national policy recognition (agenda mechanism).

The continued and consistent involvement of all the cities throughout the identification stage was said to have varied, reflecting a perceived lack of shared commitment for the networks value. The lack of commitment was perceived as being partly due to the economic diversity of cities, but also, the existence of a historically weak relationship between some of the city network members:

‘there was a bit of a tension just in terms of a sense of, we’re Glasgow, why do we need this? ...what are we doing in a room with these much smaller places?’

Respondent (I18)

‘If you look at Perth and Stirling, they do provide a number of commuters and supply chain to the larger cities so they have a rightful place, but it did cause a little tensions with the bigger cites’

Respondent (I7)

The historical context of a difficult relationship between Edinburgh and Glasgow (strength of ties) was also reflective of previous failed attempts at city-city collaboration (i.e. the Glasgow-Edinburgh-City Collaboration Initiative). Therefore, both the historical and economic context of cities in Scotland can be viewed as strong external informal institutions influencing the behavioural mechanism within the cities-network:

With the SCDI having previously identified a lack of civil servants for ULAs to liaise with, the Scottish Government responded by creating a national ‘cities team’ during the SCA identification stage. However, the cities and SCDI would progress the cities collaboration process without formally including the Scottish Government’s cities team in all meetings, much to the civil servants’ dissatisfaction (tension mechanism), contributing towards ULAs already difficult relationship with the Scottish Government.

The cities then approached a formal strengthening of their relationship with other cities through the development of a partnership ‘statement of intent’ (commitment mechanism), via SCDI’s facilitation of cities signing of the *Six Cities Vision*. SCDI’s facilitation of the process reflects their already well-established informal relationship with LAs (strength of informal ties) at this stage.

Nearer to the end of the second year of the network identification stage (December 2011), the ‘political opportunity’ (RI23) from the Scottish Government’s announcement of an ‘Agenda for Cities’ during the May 2011, would by implication result in the formalization of the SCA and both

Scottish Government and SCDI's membership within the process. Although the strength of relationship ties between ULAs and the SCDI during the initial informal coordination stages of the cities network was perceived favorably, an emerging perception that SCDI had an 'alternative agenda' (RI14) was perceived as being not in the best interest of cities (weakening informal ties and trust). ULAs tense relationship and mistrust of other national agencies (i.e. Scottish Government, COSLA) and other cities (weak ties), was becoming increasingly apparent.

The strong formal political institutions contextualizing the city members of the network are also perceived as creating a perceived inequality between network members, further contributing towards a lack of trust and weak network ties.

'the relationship between Glasgow and Edinburgh wasn't collaborative, it was quite competitive'

Respondent (I12)

The political and economic diversity across ULAs is thus believed to have contributed towards a perceived inequality and lack of trust between some city members, particularly the perception that ULAs with shared political alignment to national government provided some network members with distinct advantage for their relationship with national government, resulting in a lack of trust and perceived inequality between some network members.

7.2.4 The Role of Institutions on How ULAC creates PV at 'Network Identification' Stage:

The role of institutions on the PV of ULAC relative to what the network looked like during the identification stage is provided in Table 20.

Table 20: Sense Making: The role of institutions during 'Network Identification'

PROCESS TRACING	ROLE OF INSTITUTIONS
<p><i>Purpose:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political Lobbying • Strategic Planning <p><i>Configuration</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City-centric membership • Neutral Facilitation <p><i>Management:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informal Planning Structure • Informal Leadership/Governance 	<p><i>Contextual Institutions*</i>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong formal institutions (COSLA; national policy; urban economics) <p><i>Functional Institutions:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weak formal institutions (no governance; weak strategy/leadership) <p><i>Behavioural institutions:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong informal institutions (lack of trust, weak ties, competitive culture)

*External contextual mechanisms were identified to have had a role across all stages of the network

The role of contextual institutional mechanisms makes apparent the complex relationship between ULAs and national agencies in Scotland, within a context of austerity government and perceived increasing centralisation and performance management of local government. Given LAs already complex relationship with national agencies (e.g. COSLA) between 2010 onwards, SCDI is initially viewed as an alternative for providing informal governance of ULAs relationship with the Scottish Government. Cities initial preference for informal links with the Scottish Government outwith other more formal routes (i.e. via COSLA), can thus be perceived as reflecting a potential inefficiency in existing formal governance institutions in Scotland.

Functional and relationship mechanisms during the identification stage therefore reflect an evolving shift in cities relationship and perceived value of SCDI's role as facilitator and manager of the SCA, due to their weak functional facilitation role. There is also an evolving perception among ULAs that SCDI is pursuing an 'alternative agenda', resulting in a lack of trust and weakening of the existing relationship between ULAs and SCDI. The context of a lack of strong ties between cities also contributes to an environment of mistrust in relationships, as well as the political and economic diversity among cities resulting in a perceived inequality and lack of commitment from some of the larger cities (i.e. Glasgow).

7.3 Network Implementation (January 2012 – January 2014): the role of institutions

ULAC during the network implementation stage can be described as a formal policy network of seven Scottish cities and the Scottish government, formally managed and hosted within the SCDI as a quasi-independent organisation, tasked with funding and supporting the development of city infrastructure investment plans aimed at contributing towards national economic growth priorities for Scotland.

Key events shaping the PV of the network process include: formalising SCA meetings to include all Scottish Cities and the Scottish Government's Minister for Infrastructure and Cities, followed by the SCDI's gradual implementation of new governance arrangements. The implementation stage ends with a significant strategic event following Glasgow's presentation of a paper at the September 2013 Leadership group, for the SCA to create an additional workstream on devolution and 'City Deals'. The appointment of a new SCDI Chief Executive also took over as chair of the Leadership group.

7.3.1 Contextual mechanisms during network implementation

Strong formal institutions (national politics/national agencies policy)

The changing external formal policy, political and economic context shaping the development of a new cities policy in Scotland is an important mechanism that marks the start of a significant shift in Scotland's focus on urban economic policy in Scotland at the start of 2012. Following the May 2011 election and creation of the SCA, the membership and political personalities involved in the earlier cities network at identification stages (2010 -2011), changed dramatically during the implementation stages (2012-2013). There was now an SNP-led Scottish Government who first introduced the formalisation of the SCA to mark the start of a dedicated cities policy for Scotland, including the creation of a dedicated Cities Minister in Scotland for the first time.

Up until the creation of the SCA post-2011, the recognition of cities had had little impact on Scottish policy, and Scottish Government policy largely non-spatially focussed. The Scottish Government's formalisation of the SCA through the 'Agenda for Cities' is the first formal policy recognition of the economic importance of cities by Scottish politicians and the Scottish Government civil service, which embraces the idea that cities can have an important contribution to national economic growth.

The political context of Scottish local government also changed during the course of the implementation stage, with a local election in May 2012 and SNP overtaking labour to win the highest share of the votes, retaining and strengthening its political position (also taking control of two LA areas, one being Dundee and a member of the SCA) and more local councillors overall in Scotland. Glasgow retained its majority of Glasgow City Council, and followed with a change to the appointment of its Leadership. The national policy and political institutions in Scotland during the implementation stage can be seen to change significantly (for example, the subsequent update of the National Performance Framework in December 2011), and affecting the SCA networks perceived PV among its members:

'I think there's a lot of politics at play, particularly in Scotland, because we went through quite a lot of election cycles from when Alliance first started to where we've got to now, I've lost count of the number of elections, including referendums.'

Respondent (I18)

'I think at the moment we're struggling from the fact that, you know, we've got different agendas and different...you know, Westminster are setting one set of rules and the Scottish Government are trying to impose a different set of rules. I think we're struggling from that, you know'

Respondent (I14)

The new national politics, the heterogeneous nature of cities and the increasing political diversity between SCA city members during the network implementation stage was highlighted as strong

formal contextual mechanisms of the network, that can be seen to affect the relationships between network members and further implications for the networks functional mechanisms.

In addition to the changing political context, there were also significant changes to the role of some national institutions in Scotland. The context of the restructuring of Scottish Enterprise can be seen to act as a significant strong national institution affecting their relationship with cities. For example, Scottish Enterprise's support for cities was perceived negatively:

'they [Scottish Enterprise] just recognised regions, and at that time they'd actually removed all the local enterprises. So they'd dismantled the structure that was there specifically to support cities...I'm not saying they went out to undermine [the SCA], but they didn't do anything to support it. (RI20).

Although Scottish Enterprise had already shifted from a spatial to a business focus in the 1990s, recent policy changes (including scrapping of Local Economic Forums in 2010) can be seen to further reduce the organisations focus on cities, reflected by their lack of support of willingness to be involved in the SCA at the identification stage and continuing into the implementation stage.

'it was recognising that everybody [national agencies in Scotland] has a bit of the jigsaw but nobody's got it all. So it's this recognition that you both have to work together'

Respondent (I18)

There has been increasing tension in local government relating to the delivery of key economic development functions, having not been fully prepared to receive new responsibilities from the restructuring of Scottish Enterprise, particularly in the South of Scotland, for example:

'we believe that the restructuring of Scottish Enterprise, and the centralising impetus behind that restructuring, has had a negative impact on the economic development and enterprise culture in the south of Scotland'

Scottish Affairs Committee (2015)

Therefore, although it is perceived among the SCA members that although not all national agencies have a clear role in working and supporting cities, it is thought that by working together within the SCA there would be an opportunity to draw on the parts where there is commonality and joint interests. However, the implementation stage can be seen to struggle to secure all the support of all those agencies thought important.

7.3.2 Functional mechanisms during network implementation:

Strong internal formal institutions:

The role of the SCDI as the chair of the SCA was perceived as an important functional mechanism that could help achieve effective impartial co-ordination of the inherent political nature of the SCA and varying agendas among both national and city members of the network:

‘there’s this ownership that people don’t necessarily want to give up, so that’s why I think having a third party acting as the broker facilitator is perhaps easier to drive it forward, and they could stand outside the politics and the different agendas that are maybe operating’

Respondent (I18)

‘if you look at the models that are emerging like core cities, I actually do think you need it to sit outside those structures, because people have their day job and that’s what they’re focused to do, that’s what they’re measured on, that’s what they’re accountable for. I think you need that independent thinking that can move at a pace and has no axe to grind.’

Respondent (I18)

The Scottish Government made clear that SCDI would take on a neutral facilitation role of the SCA in the ‘Agenda for Cities’, although there is an apparent perception of a hidden level of control of the SCA on Scottish Government’s behalf:

‘they wanted to be the ones who facilitated the cities’ collaboration. Like, they wanted to take a governance role really. It was clear that they were determining what happened and what didn’t happen. Soft power and influence if you like rather than rules. So you couldn’t point to a government structure, but it was absolutely clear that, you know, ministers want this to happen and don’t want that to happen.’

Respondent (II8)

However, SCDI’s role as chair of the SCA was now of a more formal nature (than was previously during the identification stage), albeit a hidden level of control from the Scottish Government. Furthermore, the perception of network member’s rationale for participating in a more formalised SCA structures is understood to be largely a reflection of Scottish Government’s contribution of resources through the creation of a ‘Cities Investment Fund’:

‘the perception was that the Cities Alliance was very much, you know, there was a pot of money which was government money’

Respondent (II8)

‘to be honest with you, I think if the funding wasn’t available, I think we [the cities] probably wouldn’t be at the table, you know…there has to be an incentive, you know. So, yeah, I think their funding is probably crucial actually to making sure that, you know, the whole process has a future.

Respondent (I12)

Although the new SCA structures brought with it policy funding, which was initially perceived as an attractive incentive to help cities stay involved in the network, the evolving strategic direction of the process is viewed to be confusing and without high value among the members, resulting in a gradual perception that the formal structures of the SCA are a major drawback from having more money from the Scottish Government. For example, the formalisation of the structures meant that the nature of the governance increased and now included all the lead politicians as well as Chief Executives from all the ULAS, as a result, the changing nature of governance wasn’t perceived positively:

‘The chief execs have struggled to find their role, really. They don’t really have, they don’t say anything, really, on the leadership groups.... they’ve kind of been given a portfolio responsibility, and they all meet themselves to discuss taking it forward. Whereas the chief execs in the core cities group, they have a role. They’re there to deliver’

Respondent (I21)

‘I think the danger is that what happens, is the kind of bureaucracy of the public sector then creeps in, and if anything we were trying to have it sit outside those frameworks...then it actually starts to creep, it creeps, and it then stops your organisation from moving at the pace that it needs to move.’

Respondent (I20)

Indeed, the governance processes involved a Leadership Group (made up of the city leaders) and a Delivery Group (made up of council officers), their role was perceived unclear as well as the strategic focus of the Agenda for Cities unwelcomed and thought too strategically high level and purely there for the purposes of the Scottish Government’s manoeuvre to be involved:

‘SCA governance arrangements weren’t clear. I mean it just seemed like different organisations were just doing their own things’

Respondent (I14)

‘The Scottish Government wanted to be at the table and they put money in to bring them to the table. And that’s where the *Agenda for Cities* fitted in. I think that also slowed the SCA progress for about a year’.

Respondent (I21)

‘The [Agenda for Cities] objectives were too high level’

Respondent (I20)

‘overarching aspirations are clear, but individual targets/milestones aren’t as clear. So there weren’t milestones for investment clear at the time. There was a clear action plan however, but no targets’

Respondent (I15)

Although the formalisation process brought with it funding, this meant having to also realign the cities-network evolving activity into a national strategic programme that better ‘fitted’ with the Scottish Government’s ‘Agenda for Cities’, as opposed to be city-centric. The process of realignment was perceived as unstrategic and in itself, unfocussed and limiting for the group:

‘There wasn’t any real analysis done before the projects were chosen...the cities just threw in things, like Green Deal, Digital Connectivity. But there was no understanding of what that meant, and what outcomes they were wanting to be achieved’

Respondent (I21)

Albeit strategic realignment towards a national focus was apparent, there is still a perceived underlying ‘delivery focus’ of the group that is thought to be undermining the strategic infrastructure focus of the SCA in the ‘Agenda for Cities’. For example, the refocusing of the group at this stage to be wider than a focus on infrastructure, was perceived as:

‘a missed opportunity’ in that ‘the cities team do not have, or are not allowed to have, a role that says, right, education. Get in here and explain what you do for cities. That was just not where they are contextually or organisationally’

Respondent (R18)

There is also an increasing perception that the delivery focus of the SCA is overshadowing the importance of the strategic role city members would prefer the SCA to focus on:

‘it is much more about getting project a and b done to politicians steer and without thinking about the medium or longer term agenda.’

Respondent (I7)

‘XX took a paper to them [SCA members], I think XX sprung it at a dinner out the back pocket and called for the abolition of Scottish Enterprise, instead of Development Scotland, asking for their functions to be transferred from central government to local government...it was September 2013...this is what the SCA should be doing, the cities should have control of all of this activity... XX was disappointed by the way it ended up. The government said, oh, we need to have a wee look, and it just dragged on and dragged on, and I think that gives you an example of the lack of dynamism in it.’

Respondent (I9)

The SCDI progressed to support the management of the cities collaboration process until the Scottish Government put in additional resources, and it became apparent that there was a perceived lack of skills among the team facilitating the SCA, that was restricting the SCA’s capacity to take the process forward effectively during implementation stages:

‘the programme management was maybe not the appointment I would have made...but it was the cities’ choice, and it was a bit more in desperation really than thinking through...we probably should have carried it rather than making the appointment we did.’

Respondent (I18)

‘I think the first director of the Alliance wasn’t an influence, or wasn’t a senior influence, and therefore the direction of travel and the content of the programme wasn’t visionary, ambitious, stretching’

Respondent (I8)

‘I guess the initial director maybe just found it quite difficult to look after...it was quite tricky for and also SCDI didn’t have a chief exec. I mean I always felt the strategic leadership role was missing; it was quite operational – organising meetings and things...more operational than strategic. Partly that was needed to get off on a sound footing and running the nuts and bolts but it wasn’t taking it in a particular direction and I also think but there was a bit of a flux in the SCDI: there wasn’t chief exec for one.’

Respondent (I10)

Therefore, alongside a lack of sufficient skills is the apparent lack of strategic direction or leadership of the SCA. Apart from appointing the wrong people to support the SCA at early implementation stage, there was a sense that individuals did not have the right mix of skills or experience either. Indeed, the various staff changes during 2013 meant that both the SCDI and SCA staff were without management or leadership for a period of time, resulting in a lack of focus and clarity of evolving governance arrangements:

'I didn't understand that there was a vision, which six of the city leaders had signed up to, in advance of the Agenda for Cities... It was all guesswork'

Respondent (I14)

There is a perception that the people resources supporting the SCA network lack sufficient knowledge or skills, perceived as an inefficient functional mechanism:

'a specific example is the publication of a piece of work, and the new team in SCA wanted changes which delayed things to the extent where we almost missed a deadline due to a lack of understanding about what was needed'

Respondent (I15)

The SCAs formal processes lacked authority or credibility among city members:

'my line of command and control is very clear for me which really relates to my own organisation..their command and control is limited, I can't take direction from the SCA Delivery group'

Respondent (I15)

It is apparent therefore, that the role of weak functional mechanisms during the implementation stage (poor strategic clarity; hidden agendas; lack of direct leadership, a lack of skilled staff, are all contributing towards a low perceived PV of the SCA network at this stage.

7.3.3 Behavioural mechanisms during network implementation:

Strong informal institutions:

The informal competitive nature and culture of city members is perceived as affecting the strength of network ties and level trust between the network members:

'politicians are always going to look for what their cities get out of it'

Respondent (I13)

There is also a perceived network tension between the various members of the network, due to varying ambitions for the role of the SCA. A perceived tension between the national members of the SCA network, relates to their lack of authority that the SCA has over its members, and in particular, a 'hidden' element of control being exerted on the behalf of the Scottish Government:

'Another concern has been the constant vying for control between the SCDI team and

Scottish Governments team'

Respondent (I7)

As well as an apparent tension between the national agencies in the SCA, there is also a perceived lack of trust between some members of the network due perceived hidden agendas:

'XX was pursing X career by keeping a hand in on this interesting project, continuing to chair it meanwhile not taking any concern over us the SCA staff'

Respondent (I20)

During network implementation, network members are developing their connections and relationships with other members of cities network in Scotland, via the development of projects and sharing of information and resources.

The role of underlying behavioural mechanisms during the implementation stage of the SCA can be seen to play a key role in shaping the perceived value and lack of strategic clarity during the SCAs management at this stage.

Cities relationship with the Scottish Government within the SCA in particular, is thought:

'their relationship with the government should not be embedded within the SCA'

Respondent (I13)

A clear difference between what the cities want the SCA to be and what the Scottish Government wants the SCA to be is a clear behavioural mechanism during the implementation stage, which is contributing towards a network tension and weakening relationship between ULAs and the Scottish Government.

Even although they were trying to steer it from the background, they didn't want to take lead role:

'It was seen as very much SCDI would play this trusted intermediary role in the sense that, you know, looking round the table none of the cities wanted to chair it. The government said they didn't want to lead it, so we had to find somebody who would.'

Respondent (I8)

Given that the Scottish Government were attempting to steer the direction of the group in a hidden way, could be seen to add to the tension and mistrust in their relationship. There was also a clear behavioural mechanism from an evolving agenda nearer to the end of the implementation stage, with Glasgow presenting a paper for a new cities policy focus, that by implication, triggered a new

work stream of the group to consider powers of LAs (different to that currently being pursued by the SCA ‘Agenda for Cities’), that also widened the relationship with government.

The paper provides a briefing to all SCA members, highlighting the need for cities to embark on a different relationship with the Scottish Government and a markedly different ‘strategic and political agenda’ to that set out in the ‘Agenda for Cities’. At this time, it was also apparent that some of the city members had varying agendas that can be seen to influence the strategic direction of the group:

‘at this same time, the leaders of the cities, were becoming more exposed to and involved in the Cities Alliance. And there was at times a, kind of, open questioning by the leadership in X City about why are we involved in this. Should we just bail out of this? This is not really our show’

Respondent (I8)

‘I noticed that when the cities stopped chairing it, the directors from the cities stop attending. That was a little worrying, and I wonder whether gradually, the thing that happens with these groups, the more it gets delegated downwards, if the centre isn’t strong and the cities not being fully involved, it will just be seen as a talking shop’

Respondent (I7)

‘The delivery group meetings started to not happen....that never happened before’

Respondent (I21)

Therefore, it is apparent that the functional mechanisms were poorly perceived as being weak, given their lack of strategic clarity, as well as different levels of commitment among its members. Indeed, the level of commitment that was first demonstrated at the identification stage is seen to be starting to fall amongst the members.

The culture of conflict among local government institutions is again apparent at this stage, and it is also a common feature when collaborating on policy and a key reason why quasi-regional government structures for collaboration ‘seldom arise spontaneously’ due to an unwillingness of local governments to develop ‘joint authorities with formal decision-making powers’ (Hulst van Monfort, 2012: 131). The observation of the role of institutional mechanisms during the implementation stage are therefore consistent with the perceived implications of the formalisation of the SCA as contributing towards a growing tension between network members.

7.3.4 The Role of Institutions on how ULAC creates PV at ‘Network Implementation’ stage:

Table 21: Sense-making of key events for the role of institutions on the PV of ULAC during ‘Network Implementation’

PROCESS TRACING	CAUSAL ROLE OF INSTITUTIONS
<p><i>Purpose:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Resource Allocation • Strategic Planning <p><i>Configuration:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mixed/expanding membership • National Agency-led <p><i>Management:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formal Quasi-Regional Structure • Formal Leadership/Governance 	<p><i>Contextual mechanism:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong formal institutions (national politics/policy) <p><i>Functional mechanism:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong formal institutions (governance, strategies) <p><i>Behavioural institutions:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong informal institutions (lack of trust; agendas)

The announcement of the ‘Agenda for Cities’ signals a policy formalisation of the SCA, contrary to cities preference for an informal relationship with national agencies. Furthermore, the creation of a cities team in the Scottish Government to support the implementation of the SCA and associated funding, by implication, will bring with a requirement for performance management and clearer governance, within an already tense context of creeping centralisation of national government’s approach to local government.

The new SCA governance structures introduced by the Scottish Government suggests their essential role in establishing formal structures to aid collaboration between Scotland’s cities, to support the variation in physical, social, economic and political homophily between the cities and help ensure a focus on national inclusive growth. With SCA governance arrangements still somewhat incomplete and evolving, the inclusion of the Scottish Government as a member of the network sees the membership dynamic change significantly and injecting a different level of political seniority to the group. The Scottish Government’s membership can be seen to undermine the SCDA’s role as chair. As a result, the SCDA’s role as chair can be seen as being passive and without significant influence on the networks effectiveness.

7.4 Network Growth (January 2014 – June 2016): the role of institutions

7.4.1 Contextual mechanisms during network growth

Strong formal institutions

There were two significant national political events during the growth stages of the SCA, seen to act as strong formal institutional mechanisms: A referendum on Scottish independence from the United Kingdom on 18 September 2014, followed by a 2016 Scottish Parliament election on Thursday 5 May 2016. Both events are perceived as important contextual mechanisms for the SCA.

The political significance of a Scottish referendum and newly elected SNP-led majority parliament for the first time since Holyrood's establishment, overlapped the growth stages of the SCA, and politically, can be seen to provide fresh momentum to a 'formerly moribund debate about the powers available to local authorities' (Lowndes and Garner, 2016: 6), with increasing calls for greater scrutiny of local government autonomy and demarcation of funding powers across local government in Scotland.

The apparent shifting strategic focus of the SCA coincides with the post-2015 referendum, reflected in Glasgow's increasing ambitions for city collaboration approach that is comparable to the 'English Core Cities'²². The UK national context of cities policy in the UK is a strong external mechanism affecting Scotland's cities increasing understanding of, and ambitions, for greater autonomy and devolution of powers for local government, and a key formal contextual mechanisms affecting cities strategic ambitions and political agenda for steering the SCA towards a more cities-led approach. For example, in August 2014, Glasgow joined the English Core Cities Group:

'[Glasgow] likes being part of the core cities, because there's a size and a scale to that. Edinburgh were invited along, came along, really liked the look of it and then took it back and said that they couldn't support it because they saw it as being, not anti-government, but potentially pushing the government on certain things...so the only city in Scotland that could come close to Glasgow in size and scale is still thinking, I don't want to rock the boat that much.... I'm not suggesting that Glasgow wants to rock the boat, but our position would always be that we're in it for Glasgow'

Respondent (I9)

In September 2014, the 'City Growth Commission' published a report on the outcome of a twelve-month inquiry that considered the 'significant power shift away from the centre and towards cities' in England, aimed at:

²² Scottish Enterprise is Scotland's main economic development agency, aimed at supporting the delivery of national economic growth in Scotland. On 1 April 2008, the skills function of Scottish Enterprise moved out of the organisation to the newly formed Skills Development Scotland.

‘influencing all political parties in the run up to the 2015 UK General Election, and make the case for cities to take a new role in our political economy....the UK economy is falling short of its potential as our cities, with their concentration of labour, capital and information flows, are stifled by the overt centralisation of policy decision-making... the UK’s default mode of centralisation which emerged over the last half century, still represents a significant hurdle’

Cities Growth Commission (September, 2014)

The UK City Growth Commission focus on city region devolution is taking place within a context of national power being tightly retained by the Scottish Government. Glasgow’s membership of the English Core Cities Group²³ is an important external contextual mechanism seen to affect the functional and behavioural mechanisms at this stage in the networks process.

‘going towards the election I think there will be significant changes on how the SCA works and it is under resourced, given its aspirations, so there has to be a reassessment of the SCA aspirations, and in particular, this will have a political challenge and the city deals are in opposite direction to collaboration and will really require competition between cities’

Respondent (I15)

‘UK cities are currently buoyed by greater local autonomy through city deals and devolution deals and are enjoying first mover advantage in setting conditions for success based on local circumstances and clearer joint working between local government, national government, agencies and the private sector...Current economic trends indicate that although Scotland’s cities remain drivers of the national economy, they risk falling behind UK counterparts in this highly competitive environment’

City Devolution paper (2015)

‘You’ve now got Glasgow and the Clyde Valley City Deal, we’re working on one in Midlothian and Edinburgh, but also Inverness and Aberdeen as well, so there’s a huge amount of very, very positive economic activity going on. I think Glasgow and the Clyde Valley one was driven very much by Glasgow and the Clyde Valley. I think although the Cities Alliance is now becoming supportive of the other local authorities pushing these City Deals, none of them have been delivered in Scotland beyond the Clyde Valley one just yet. But there’s no reluctance to support them, Keith Brown is the relevant minister who’s been very, very supportive of our own over here, Edinburgh and Midlothian. I don’t think you

²³ The Core Cities Group (also English Core Cities, UK) is a self-selected and self-financed collaborative advocacy group of large regional cities in the United Kingdom and outside Greater London. The group was formed in 1995 as a partnership of eight city councils: Birmingham, Bristol, Leeds, Liverpool, Manchester, Newcastle, Nottingham, and Sheffield. (Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Core_Cities_Group)

can claim that any have been delivered because of the Cities Alliance yet. Hopefully soon though.'

Respondent (I12)

How cities and city policy manifests in terms of the relationship between Holyrood and Scotland's major city-regions is fundamental context to the perceived strategic value and direction of the SCA during the growth stage. City Deals reflect tripartite negotiated settlements involving a coalition of local authorities, the Scottish Government and HM Government agreeing to a set of commitments over a 20 to 30 year period, focussed on infrastructure investments along with labour market and welfare policies in some instances. The tripartite nature of city deals. Therefore, the SCA can be seen to shift its political focus towards greater collaboration across Scotland's main ULAs focussed on lobbying, as well as 'asking', for a redistribution of policy and power across Scotland's ULAs, similar to the English 'core cities', and positioning for 'city deals 'across Scotland.

Indeed, coinciding with the network growth stages, a key contextual mechanism has been the precedent for city dealing that Glasgow set, with other cities lobbying for City Deals in Scotland thereafter. By implication, Glasgow's first move in securing a City Deal developed support from Westminster and Holyrood governments, which was announced prior to the Scottish independence referendum in September 2015, acting as a strong political institution.

It is apparent therefore, that the political context in Scotland and ULAs complex relationship with national agencies, in particular, the Scottish Government and COSLA, is far from straight forward, coinciding with the development of the SCA between 2010 and 2016. Indeed, during 2015, four LAs (i.e. Aberdeen City Council, Glasgow City Council, Renfrewshire Council and South Lanarkshire Council) also left COSLA to form a new organisation, the Scottish Local Government Partnership (SLGP). The four LAs who left COSLA were all labour-led LAs at the time, reflecting dissatisfaction with funding settlements from a newly elected SNP-led Scottish Government around this time:

'I think local government is going to go through a period of quite big change post May 2016 once the next Holyrood elections are out of the way because everybody knows the status quo is not tenable, and government ministers even say privately they know that the Council Tax freezes are unsustainable'

Respondent (I12)

7.4.2 Functional mechanisms during network growth:

Strong formal institutions (development of informal structures to counteract presence of strong formal institutions)

During the network growth stage, Government funding was not regarded as the most important factor for encouraging cities to work together, indeed, it was found to be a rather small amount in order to keep cities interest, as one city member states:

‘I mean, I think the alternative to the Scottish Governments’ funding support of the SCA is money from the cities and the potential of other external funds, whether it’s European or elsewhere. It’s £7m across seven cities in the whole of Scotland...I am not bemoaning it or saying that they’ll think I don’t want it, of course we’ll have it, but in the greater scheme of things it’s quite small’

Respondent (I12)

The incentive of Scottish Government funding appears to no longer be the main incentive to encourage the cities to work together, as was the case during the implementation stage. The indication is that the incentive of cities as members of the group are therefore changing. During this time, there is a significant change to proposed governance structures once again, although, driven mainly by the cities and without full buy-in or involvement of all members of the network:

‘There was no input from the Alliance core team, or the delivery group. It was very much drafted in isolation. And that is one aspect of it I find, which I don’t think is...it goes back again to how we approached things at the very beginning, about how they chose projects. The reason for choosing those projects was not informed. The reasons for the things being in the vision document, it’s not informed as well, in terms of what the Alliance was already doing.’

Respondent (I21)

The start of the development of a new strategic approach of the network during the growth stage is largely perceived as a ‘hidden’ approach, non-transparent, and not being delivered via the formal governance structures that are in place. In this sense, the formal governance can be seen as weak and to have a fundamental effect on the direction of the network towards a cities focussed agenda, as city members are seen to be developing their own approach to collaboration alongside, or indeed, outwith the formal SCA structures put in place previously. Although the SCA governance arrangements are being reviewed again, it is perceived as a difficult process for the network, possibly a reflection of the untransparent nature in which it is taking place:

‘within the confines of the SCA and as currently structured, raises some confusion as to who should chair: whether it should be deputy first minister or someone from the cities, in terms of a political leader, as it is now. This has been resolved with the leader of the capital city now chairing but there is still a lack of clarity in terms of function and purpose.’

Respondent (I23)

‘we’ve changed the structure, it’s been quite a journey to get there getting the government on board… the fact the a minister isn’t chairing things allows the cities to be a bit more reflective about prioritise…we basically organised a couple of private meetings where the seven city leaders met without the minister or others present. I mean, it’s important to say at that time a few of the cities were still SNP led, four Labour led, so there’s still a cross-party mix. And everybody was in agreement that we should try and move it towards being more cities-led. But there’s reluctance with a small r, on behalf of the Scottish Government, there was quite a lot just to go down this route of a political chair of the Cities Alliance and also a division away from all six meetings being with the minister. But over the course of the last few months we’ve kept them with us. there’s just been a bit of a reluctance to let go of those controls, and I think there is a political issue and it’s an irony, isn’t it, Scottish Government obviously testing more powers for Holyrood, but pushing them down to local councils is not one of their priorities…there is a very broad level of support both amongst the seven leaders and the seven chief execs for the direction of travel. The slight resistance has not been from those quarters, it’s more been from central Scottish Government. So there is strong sense that council leaders, to be fair, that’s all seven across the political spectrum and the chief executives are quite up for going down this route.’

Respondent (I12)

The lack of transparency in the development of the new SCA governance structures, to include a cities only-group and city-politician chairing the group is a strong response to create informal structures over and above the weak formal functional governance mechanisms can be seen to no longer act as a constraint on the networks PV. The strategic focus of the SCA during the growth stage thus changed significantly, as a new strategic director was appointed and put in place a new operational plan, which allocated new areas of responsibility across members of the group. The previous programme manager was replaced with a programme director who was a Chief Executive of one of the other councils. This was good for strengthening the city-city relationships with the director and helping to build trust between the other city members.

‘you’ve now got a chair who can resolve the issues, before they even happen!’

Respondent (I20)

‘…there was a negotiation to be had in terms of short term political aims of the SCA, and longer term stability, so a resolution was had by changing one of the SCA posts to become a more senior post, and removing another post.

Respondent (I23)

Importantly, the process was seen as keeping the cities on board given their falling commitment and value of the network during the previous stage of the networks formalisation:

‘by demonstrating to the leader's that we could actually deliver something, that was why the infrastructure work was important, because what it said to the leaders was ‘hang on a minute, these guys can work together and they can deliver something helpful for them as politicians.

Respondent (I13)

The perception of new revised SCA governance arrangements is their ability to provide stronger leadership that best suits the ambitions of city network members:

‘the governance is clear and a very clear hierarchy and lead city politicians etc., and a willingness to make this work. There is a general commitment and clear roles... at least now things can be taken back to the delivery group, which does feel a bit heavy handed’

Respondent (I15)

The influence of the new political chair is seen as a strong formal institutional mechanism:

‘I've noticed a big difference. Because he's able to do that reassurance. So I've noticed that, because he's able to step in, and do all that reassurance bit, that you kind of, that... I: That you needed. R: ...I needed. The team needed. So it didn't become a stepping on tiptoes trying to predict what everyone would think, all that’

Respondent (I20)

The changing nature of the SCA during the growth stage is thus perceived as a positive outcome for the value of the SCA among city members. The process has meant clarifying the focus for collaboration, largely on joint promotion of cities for the purposes of inward investment. Clearer focus for the group is useful in reducing areas of conflict.

7.4.3 Behavioural mechanisms during network growth:

Weak informal institutions (strengthening network ties, trust)

The previous stages of the network demonstrated the presence of strong informal mechanisms hindering the value of the network, including weak ties between the cities, and between the cities and national organisations. There was also the appearance of significant conflict between the Scottish Government and city members, as well as a general sense that the culture of competitiveness between cities was hindering the collaborative nature of relationships.

However, the changing functional nature of the SCA (as informal structures are introduced to work alongside the strong formal governance function of the SCA), during the growth stage can be seen to strengthen network relationships over time. In particular, the nature of ties between the larger cities and smaller cities is changing, as cities are starting to recognise the value from knowledge sharing on ‘city deals’ and what opportunities and value that presents to cities across Scotland:

‘I would definitely say that being part of the SCA has helped us with some of the thinking and some of the work on city deals...so back towards the end of last year we were working with Scottish futures trust. I was making the point that the city deals for Glasgow and the growth accelerator Edinburgh were developing was great but those were already quite purged dynamic places and we needed to show that this was bringing some value to other parts of Scotland. So Scottish futures trust said, well you guys seem to have quite a good clear strategy where you want to go – I’m paraphrasing a bit – but we would like to help you because we can see that the growth accelerator model could well be applicable for what you are trying to achieve and so we started to do some work with them just around the Christmas period last year (2014) and that’s really developed into some of the work we are doing for our city region deal.’

Respondent (I10)

‘I think there has been a significant amount of institutional learning which is intangible and difficult to measure, but I think the cities relationships have led to them learning from each other and I think that partnership will probably make for smoother working in the years ahead, the relationship building element has been a big success. In particular the smaller cities have been getting investment and promotional experience from the larger cities’

Respondent (I15)

‘For example, Perth was the only city who had a strategic investment fund of £million, and Glasgow didn't even have that, So there has been room to learn what each other was doing. So, we have learnt for each other.’

Respondent (I7)

There is a sense of an improved relationship between the cities, although city-city relationships appear to be strengthening, the relationship with the Scottish Government doesn’t appear to have changed in any significant positive direction so as to act to improve the relationship within the SCA:

‘I think the cities don't welcome them on the group, mainly due to local politics and competing priorities, and that the Scottish government don't understand what the cities contribute’

‘there’s no doubt having X in the chair, has changed the dynamic because you don’t have an independent person in your chair. So that has changed the dynamic, but then again...they’ve gone along with it, there’s been tension but so far so good.’

Respondent (I12)

Furthermore, although the Scottish Government reluctantly went along with the new SCA structures, the role of some of the larger cities is perceived as slightly unbalanced and potentially acting to hinder the overall relationship of cities with the Scottish Government. The relationship is being tested due to cities increasing desire for greater powers for local authorities:

‘Every decision Glasgow makes on the group is politically based, and this differs to the other cities, because it is the biggest city and has a larger profile and in reality if Glasgow wasn’t a member, then the SCA would be undermined, and Glasgow know they are important in that respect’

Respondent (I15)

‘there’s just been a bit of a reluctance to let go of those controls, and I think there is a political issue and it’s an irony, isn’t it, Scottish Government obviously testing more powers for Holyrood but pushing them down to local councils is not one of their priorities.’

Respondent (I12)

Therefore, although city ties have strengthened, largely a result of informal mechanisms, there is the apparent balance of power within the network more on the side of larger cities:

‘Glasgow didn’t play a role in the SCA from the outset...but they have now got to this point as a massive step forward.’

Respondent (I23)

‘I think a combination of Edinburgh and Glasgow, to be honest are the drivers behind it now.’

Respondent (I12)

If the network is to be successful and inclusive, however, the institutional structure must be seen to meet the diverse needs of all its members, including small cities, like Perth, and larger cities, like Glasgow and Edinburgh. SCA members are suggesting that the SCA was being used at this stage to lobby and push for city deals for the cities. Aspirations for ‘city-deals’ by city members of the

SCA can help explain preferences for the evolving plural governance structures and cities-only group, comparable to a English core-cities model, as highlighted by one members of the SCA:

‘The Core Cities Network is very much of the cities and by the cities. The secretariats are in Manchester City Council and they structure their meetings where they invite a government minister in, and then they kick them out again. They publish papers, they lobby, they talk to industry, it’s very pro-active’

Respondent (I13)

A second report to the SCA Leadership group during March 2015: ‘Glasgow and the Core Cities Network’, briefed the SCA members on Glasgow’s role as a member of the English Core Cities group. The paper highlights key points of relevance underlying the emerging structure of the SCA:

‘Core Cities describes itself as a unique and united local authority voice to promote the role of UK’s cities in driving economic growth...arguing for greater devolution of power and responsibility to cities and city-regions....Glasgow’s position is that there is a danger for the Scottish cities that it may appear that powers have been devolved, but as long as they remain at national parliament level, we could be left behind our English and Welsh counterparts’

‘Glasgow and the Core Cities Network’ (March 2015)

By implication, the paper suggests that city members’ of the SCA are steering the SCAs structure towards one comparable with the English Core Cities, and potentially explaining the resulting cities-only structure that emerged during the growth stages. Key relationship mechanisms help to explain members’ perceived value and desire for plural structures within the SCA, relative to ‘membership agendas’ for city-deal models and core-city structures.

Therefore, if the city relationships within the SCA continue to strengthen as suggested and the SCA structures continue to change, then as one interviewee points out there is even more potential for the SCA to mirror the English Core Cities model.

7.4.4 The Role of Institutions on how ULAC creates PV at ‘Network Growth’ Stage:

Table 22: Sense-making of key events for the role of institutions on the PV of ULAC during ‘Network Implementation ‘growth stage.

PROCESS TRACING	CAUSAL ROLE OF INSTITUTIONS
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<p><i>Purpose:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Resource Allocation • Operational and Project Delivery • Strategic Policy Making • Political Lobbying <p><i>Configuration:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mixed/expanding membership • City-led (Political) <p><i>Management:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formal Quasi-Regional Structures • Informal Planning Structures • Formal Political Leadership • Formal Strategic Leadership 	<p><i>Contextual Institutions:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong formal institutions (national politics/policy) <p><i>Functional Institutions:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong formal institutions (development of informal structures to counteract presence of strong inefficient formal institutions) <p><i>Behavioural institutions:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weak informal institutions (strengthening network ties, trust)
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The causal role of institutions on the PV of ULAC at the growth stage can be seen to contribute towards positive outcome and PV of the SCA from a cities perspective. The strengthening of relationships between the cities as a result of weaker informal mechanism acting to support the networks PV, albeit there is still the presence of a loose ties with national agencies. Furthermore, weak informal institutions appear to be having a more dominant and positive effect on the PV of the network, as they are seen to over ride the negative PV of strong formal governance (and development of informal structures), that act to create weak formal functional mechanisms overall.

However, the remaining loose ties between the cities and national agencies increases the possibility that the SCA may collapse in future, due to increasing hostility and strategic differences between cities and Scottish Government. This therefore implies that the further stages of the network would be either: further growth or network failure.

7.5 Conclusions: The Role of Institutions on the PV of ULAC

Chapter seven has revealed substantial differences in the typology of, positioning and power of key actors within the policy network. The findings highlight the key role of institutions, and more particularly institutional differences between network members and at different stage of the networks development.

Network Identification was focused on building recognition of the need for a coordinated cities policy in Scotland, to reveal a missing tier of governance between cities, and between cities and the Scottish Government. Network Implementation highlights the implications of creating and implementing formal governance structures through a nationally recognised city collaboration structure in Scotland, to reveal an underlying complexity of institutional distance across both national and subnational tiers of Government. Table 23 provides a summary of the perceived role of different institutional mechanisms across the three network stages, to reveal how they develop in a ‘contextual, path-dependent way’ (Bathult and Glucker, 2014: 342).

Table 23: Sense-Making: Conceptualising Matrix (PART A) - The Role of Institutions for the Public Value (PV) of the SCA

	Functional and institutional dimensions (sense-making statements) - institutions are either weak (lack of constraint) or strong (well-developed constraint)			
Network phase	Contextual mechanism (external to the network):	Functional mechanism (internal to the network):	Behavioural mechanisms (internal and external to the network):	Total combination of institutional mechanisms
T1	Strong formal institutions - Weak role of COSLA; - Weak impact of national policy (reduced public funding; role of cities); - The negative implication of urban economic diversity between cities; - Culture of city competitiveness.	Weak formal institutions: - No governance; - Unfocussed strategy; - Poor communication; - No resources.	Strong informal institutions: - Cities competitive culture; - Weak ties; - Lack of Trust.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formal contextual mechanism (strong) • Formal functional mechanism (weak) • Informal behavioural mechanism (strong)
T2	Strong formal institutions - Changing national politics; - Changing national policy (increasing centralisation of cities – SOAs); - Lack of national agency involvement (e.g. Scottish Enterprise).	Strong formal institutions: - Resources; - Two strategies; - Confused delivery and strategic focus; - Lack of skills; - Weak leadership from chair - Hidden leadership of Scottish government; - Fluctuating membership.	Strong informal institutions - Lack of trust; - Membership inequality; - Lack of commitment; - Hidden agendas; - Network tensions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formal contextual mechanism (strong) • Formal functional mechanism (strong) • Informal behavioural mechanism (strong)
T3	Strong formal institutions - Increased national recognition and input from other national agencies (Scottish futures trust; European funding) - Changing national and local politics; - Changing national policy context (English core city deals).	Strong formal institutions - Improved leadership and position of chair - Increasing resources/national membership involvement; - Clear structures to serve cities expectations; - Development of informal structures to counteract presence of strong weak formal institutions.	Weak informal institutions: - Strengthening city-city network ties; - Improving membership trust; - Network tensions with Scottish Government remains - Influencing role of larger cities agenda.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formal contextual mechanism (strong) • Formal functional mechanism (Strong) • Informal behavioural mechanism (weak)

7.5.1 The role of institutions:

By ‘telling a story’ (Smith, 2004: 68) about the role of institutions in the SCA case study it is possible to understand how they shape the PV of ULAC relative to the networks functional character, in terms of: purpose, configuration and management as an ‘input, process, output’ (Crosby et al. 2014: 449) pathway. Closer examination of network members’ perceptions of institutions reveals their relative strength for constraining the PV. Importantly, the research findings identify the role of different types of institutional mechanisms and different combinations (Table A10) cumulating and interacting across the network over time. In particular, the findings demonstrate how path dependant institutions in one stage, shape and influence those in the following stages of the network to produce an overall cumulative, aggregate network effect at the end of the observed network process (the growth stage).

Interaction of formal and informal institutions across the whole network:

Consistent with Miller-Stevens and Morris (2015), the role of institutions can be seen to affect how well the network functions, in terms of: communication; consensus; decision-making; stakeholder diversity; goals; leadership; shared resources; culture, trust.

The presence of both strong contextual mechanisms at each stage of the network suggests ‘history matters’ (Martin 2012: 399) for shaping the networks PV in a path dependent way: as contextual mechanisms are perceived as being carried forward from one stage to the next. For example, the presence of strong formal historical institutions of falling resources and increasing centralization of local government is a key contextual mechanism persisting throughout all stages of the networks development. Given the changing nature and strength of functional mechanisms at each stage of the network and their interaction with persistently strong formal contextual institutions, the strength of informal behavioural mechanisms (e.g. competitive culture of large cities) can be seen to weaken over time in subsequent stages of the networks development. In particular, the constraining role of strong informal institutions of cities (loose ties and competitive culture between large cities) are seen to weaken across the network over time.

The overall network effect of the role of institutions results in a cities-led outcome at the growth stage, perceived by cities representing a positive outcome. It is reasonable to suggest therefore, that historical contextual mechanisms will continue to shape the future behavioural and functional mechanisms throughout the SCA. The presence of strong national formal contextual mechanisms at the start of the network process, strongly influence the impact and role of additional formal and informal social-cultural behavioural mechanisms at the subnational level and across subsequent stages of the network.

Institutional effects over time (2010 – mid-2016):

- The presence of strong formal functional constraints (e.g. lack of network value, leadership or clarity of purpose) reducing over time at the subnational level, in the presence of persistently strong formal contextual mechanisms (increasing centralization of government) and weakening informal behavioural constraints (e.g. strengthening city-city network ties; trust), increases the likelihood of cities positive perception of the networks PV at the growth stage;
- The presence of strong formal contextual mechanisms (e.g. increasing centralization of government), persisting over time at the national level, in the presence of weakening formal functional constraints (e.g. dual structures) and weakening informal behavioural constraints (e.g. strengthening city-city network ties; trust), increases the likelihood of cities positive perception of the networks PV at the growth stage;
- The presence of weakening informal behavioural constraints (e.g. strengthening city-city network ties; trust), reducing over time at the subnational level, in the presence of persistently strong formal contextual constraints (e.g. increasing centralization of government), increases the likelihood of cities positive perception of the networks PV at the growth stage.

Therefore, the continuous presence of formal historical, economic and policy institutions at the national level, interacting with behavioural and functional mechanisms at the subnational level, create a cumulative whole network effect at the end of the observed network process. The PV of ULAC at a particular stage of the network will be affected by the changing nature and direction (either strong or weak) of different mechanisms within the process, interacting with mechanisms in the following stages. In this sense, the overall role of institutions will depend on the different combinations of intuitional effects, relative to their combined constraint role (i.e. as weak or strong) (Figure 26).

Figure 26: Combination of institutional mechanisms relative to their strength of constraint on the PV of ULAC

Formal Contextual Mechanism (Strong) Formal Functional Mechanism (Strong) Informal Behavioural Mechanism (Strong) NETWORK IMPLEMENTATION	Formal Contextual Mechanism (Weak) Formal Functional Mechanism (Strong) Informal Behavioural Mechanism (Strong)
Formal Contextual Mechanism (Strong) Formal Functional Mechanism (Strong) Informal Behavioural Mechanism (Weak) NETWORK GROWTH	Formal Contextual Mechanism (Weak) Formal Functional Mechanism (Weak) Informal Behavioural Mechanism (Strong)
Formal Contextual Mechanism (Strong) Formal Functional Mechanism (Weak)	Formal Contextual Mechanism (Weak) Formal Functional Mechanism (Weak)

Informal Behavioural Mechanism (Weak)	Informal Behavioural Mechanism (Weak)
Formal Contextual Mechanism (Strong) Formal Functional Mechanism (Weak) Informal Behavioural Mechanism (Strong)	Formal Contextual Mechanism (Weak) Formal Functional Mechanism (Strong) Informal Behavioural Mechanism (Weak)
NETWORK IDENTIFICATION	

The classification system for the constraining role of different intuitionial mechanisms ‘does not predict or imply anything specific about the resulting effects...or the frequency, use, or effectiveness of the institution’ (Williamson, 2009: 373), nor does it ‘essentialize any one scale but views economic development as an open-ended and contested process operating across different geographical scales’ Cumbers et al. (2003: 326). The identification and classification of different combinations of institutions merely provides a framework for grouping the different combination of institutions that is used to help analyze their impact in Chapter Eight.

Therefore, relative to the institutional characteristics identified in Chapter Four (i.e. Part B of the conceptual framework, see Figure 9 in section 4.2.2), Table 24 below provides the second set of conceptual results that identify the role of institutional characteristics for the PV of the SCA:

Table 24: Conceptualising Matrix (PART B): Path Dependent Institutional Dimensions of the SCA

NETWORK PHASE	NODE: URBAN LOCAL AUTHORITY FUNCTION: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT POLICY
T1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formal Contextual Mechanism (Strong) • Formal Functional Mechanism (Strong) • Informal Behavioural Mechanism (Strong)
T2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formal Contextual Mechanism (Strong) • Formal Functional Mechanism (Weak) • Informal Behavioural Mechanism (Strong)
T3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formal Contextual Mechanism (Strong) • Formal Functional Mechanism (Strong) • Informal Behavioural Mechanism (Weak)

Therefore, having identified ‘what’ ULAC looks like in (Chapter Six) and ‘how’ different combinations of institutions play a role in the process (Chapter Seven), it is important to further consider ‘why’ institutions matter for ‘getting the institutions right’ (Williamson, 2009: 271). The combined results from Chapter Six and Seven are therefore discussed in the content of theoretical observations from the literature review (Chapter Two, Three and Four), as a causal explanation of ‘why institutions matter’ relative to different institutional combinations to provide an overall conceptualisation of the PV of ULAC in Scotland in Chapter Eight.

Chapter Eight: ‘Why’ institutions matter for the Public Value (PV) of ULAC: *theoretical domains explaining the impact of institutional mechanisms?*

8.1 Introduction

Having identified what ULAC looks like (Chapter Six) and how it creates public value (PV), Chapter eight discusses the combined research findings to explain the impact of institutions on the PV of ULAC according to the causal impact of institutional characteristics identified in chapter six and seven. Gaining insight from institutional theory (i.e. spatial, economic and governance networks), the chapter aims to explain ‘why’ institutions matter for understanding the PV of ULAC as economic development policy.

The chapter provides a theoretical explanation of the impact of institutional mechanisms for shaping and contextualising network events, to help answer the third and final research question of the thesis:

Why does economic, spatial and governance institutional insights help to explain the PV of ULAC?

Chapter eight concludes the analysis of the SCA case study findings, providing an interpretive critical realist explanation of the PV of ULAC as economic development policy, before finally considering wider implications for economic development policy and urban local government in Scotland in chapter nine.

Section 8.2 provides a brief summary of the theoretical dimensions for explaining the impact of institutions on the PV of ULAC. 8.3, 8.4, and 8.5 summarises the research findings relative to the key stages of the ULAC process: Network Identification; Network Implementation and Network Growth, to explain the impact of causal mechanisms relative to three theoretical domains.

In line with the stated aim and methodological approach of the research, and based on the empirical findings in earlier chapters, Section 8.6 subsequently presents a discussion of the interpretive critical realist conceptualisation model of the PV of ULAC. The key features of the PV of ULAC are discussed relative to theoretical insights, identifying a number of cross-cutting themes that highlight the overall impact of contextual causal mechanisms on the process of ULAC. Summary sense-making statements are also provided to support and explicate elements of the causal explanation process, to highlighting causal mechanisms and contextual factors on the process of network development.

8.2 A theoretical explanation of the impact of institutions on the PV of ULAC

Table 2 in Chapter Three of the literature review identifies the key theoretical dimensions relative to each of the three theoretical domains. From an institutional perspective, the PV of ULAC depends on the ‘density or thickness’, quality, and mix of both formal and informal institutions in the process (Rodríguez-Pose, 2013: 1039).

The previous chapter helped to identify the role of institutions, using Williamson’s (2009) simple classification process of weak or strong formal and informal institutional arrangements.

Williamson’s (2000) approach ‘does not predict or imply anything specific about the resulting effects of these institutional arrangements’ (p373). Indeed, previous research has attempted, with limited success, to develop models illustrating the political, economic, and demographic factors affecting levels of collaboration between different local governments (LeRoux, 2006; Krueger, 2005; Post, 2002; Rawlings, 2003; Wood, 2004; Zeemering, 2007).

Therefore, the final part of the research provides an institutional analysis to complete the final stage of the conceptualisation of the PV of ULAC according to three main research questions: a) the interaction between the Functional Domains (i.e. What the network looks like) and b) the role of institutional mechanisms (i.e. How the network creates public value), to help explain c) the resultant impact of institutions according to three theoretical domains: spatial, economic, and governance dimensions (see Table 25).

Table 25: Theoretical Conceptualising Matrix

THEORETICAL DIMENSIONS	FUNCTIONAL DOMAINS (What ULAC looks like)			IMPACT OF INSTITUTIONS (Functional; Contextual; Behavioural)
	Purpose	Configuration	Management	
Spatial Theory	To achieve functional and complimentary coherence	Configured as a single, coherent, polycentric unit	Managed in a coherent way to improve spatial synergy by improving: uneven spatial development, functional Coherence and Complementarity.	Spatial Synergy: functional and complimentary coherence across the network
Economic Theory	To achieve transaction cost efficiency, opportunity cost and incentive alignment from the network	Configuring networked activities to create: knowledge sharing; innovation clusters; agglomeration economies; infrastructure improvements.	Managed to create efficient institutional economies, including: stronger ties; technical or productive efficiency: obtaining the greatest output for a fixed amount of resources, or by getting a given amount of output for a minimal amount of inputs); allocative efficiency: when output is allocated to where is most efficient.	Economic Efficiency: transaction cost efficiency, opportunity cost and incentive alignment from the network
Governance Theory	To achieve shared meaning, commitment and trust	Configured as formal or informal structure of different types (i.e. non-market/hierarchical structure).	Managed to create network synergy by improving: leadership; trust; communication, political conflict.	Network Embeddedness: shared meaning, commitment and trust across the network

The table is used to provide to an interpretive critical realist causal explanation of the PV of ULAC through the theoretical analysis of the role and impact of institutions relative to three PV effects: *economic efficiency*; *spatial synergy* and *network embedding*:

- *Economic efficiency*: transaction cost efficiency, opportunity cost, and incentive alignment from the network
- *Spatial synergy*: functional and complementary coherence across the network
- *Network embedding*: shared meaning and commitment across the network

Economic efficiency:

Much of existing research agrees on the importance of regional governance for solving collective problems (albeit disagree on the form that governance should take), for two types of efficiency: technical efficiency (or productive) and allocative efficiency. Economic institutions from a New Institutional Economic (NIE) perspective, recognises the role of both formal and informal institutions of the institutional environment and the institutions of governance, for achieving economic efficiency. According to Williamson (2000), the extent to which economic institutions affect networked policy, depends on the capacity for achieving efficiency gains (i.e. resource sharing, additional funding, reduced transaction costs), across four main effects: social embeddedness (norms, customs, traditions); the institutional environment (rules of the game); the governance (i.e. market versus hierarchy) structures (how to play the game); and production efficiency (incentive alignment) (Williamson, 2000).

Therefore, the importance of NIE for understanding the impact of institutions on the PV of ULAC concerns the extent to which environmental institutions ‘elicit shifts in the comparative costs of governance’ (Williamson, 2016: 287). The capacity for efficiency gains from reducing transactions costs (i.e. costs for running the network according to different governance structures, and incentivised behaviour (Blakey and Leigh, 2010) of a network, will therefore vary with structure (Williamson, 2016).

Spatial Synergy:

An institutional economic geography perspective provides a relational conception that recognises the more complex context of networked interaction, as a situation where ‘economic agents are thought to act according to economic and non-economic goals and strategies’ (Bathelt and Gluckler, 2013: 343). The importance of understanding the role of network synergy for the PV of ULAC, relates to the synergies and flows resulting from the structures and nature of institutional collaboration (Dühr, 2005: 235-236) defining the network. Both formal and informal spatial institutions defining ULAC can help to explain spatial synergies, through a greater appreciation of

the role of institutions in ‘geographers traditional spatial and network-based analysis’ (Farole et al, 2011: 64). For example, spatial proximity and networked relationships are thought to potentially provide a ‘functional equivalent in economic coordination’ (p64). An institutional spatial perspective concerns the role of ‘untraded interdependencies and relational assets’ and their ‘potential to add valuable insights into processes of economic adaptation, path dependence and cumulative causation (p64). Therefore, an institutional economic geography perspective considers the role of spatial institutions for the achievement of functional coherence and complementarities between the participating cities of the ULAC network, towards what could be defined a apolycentric urban region (PUR) (Meijers, 2005). PURs have the potential to generate agglomeration advantages (Turok, 2009; Paddison, 1983) and avoid duplication of services across different areas. For example, increasing complementarity within a network of cities as a result of increasing the range of services offered by a region, would require the development of network policies focussed on promoting a more balanced spatial distribution of economic activity and interaction between different cities (Burger et al. 2013).

Albeit the achievement of a PUR is not stated as a distinct objective of the ULAC in Scotland (as per section 6.3.1), the chapter considers how a spatial institutional perspective of ULAC can help explain any potential improvements in spatial synergy across the cities. The importance of an institutional economic geography perspective for understanding the impact of institutions on the PV of ULAC, thus concerns the extent to which the dynamic processes of economic, social, and cultural institutions provide the potential for ‘a creative field that stimulates entrepreneurship, learning, and innovation, [that] leads to positive spatial externalities, if concentrated in physical spaces such as regional agglomerations’ but also, ‘creativity and innovation may also emerge from non-localized institutions... not bound to territorial scales’ (Bathelt and Gluckler, 2013: 343). Therefore, the overall impact of institutions in this context will depend on the networks capacity for improving spatial synergy and strengthened city network ties across Scotland cities, for the whole system (i.e. the network effect) of cities within Scotland (Meijers, 2006a).

Network Embeddedness:

Urban regime theory involving ‘elected local government officials, that seek to coordinate resources and generate governing capacity’ (McCarthy, 2007: 20), provides insight into the difficulties for policy relating to the presence of both political and public interest, according to economic and political context. Network governance (i.e. as either markets or hierarchies) provides structural embeddedness (i.e. a networks level of centrality) relative to the networks trustworthiness, reputation, and influence over time, where the function and structure of governance supports the overall isomorphic effect for achieving efficiency and functional sustainability.

Therefore, the overall impact of governance institutions on the PV of ULAC will depend on their capacity for achieving network synergy and embeddedness and the level of direct and indirect involvement and commitment of members within the network.

The following sub sections discuss the three theoretical dimensions across the three network stages, explaining the impact of institutional mechanisms on the PV of ULAC in Scotland. The sub sections refer to the summary tables presented in Chapter Six and Seven.

8.3 Network Identification: the impact of institutions

Chapter six provides an indication of what ULAC looked like at the identification stage of the SCA in terms of:

- purpose of the network: political lobbying (e.g. stronger links with the Scottish Government) and strategic planning (e.g. knowledge/skills/resource sharing; to develop a cities strategy).
- structure of the network is relatively small: neutral facilitation; city-centric.
- managed of the network is: informal planning structures; passive leadership and lack of governance.

Chapter seven describes the role of institutions for creating value from the network, in terms of:

- strong formal institutions (contextual mechanism): the weak role of COSLA as a national institution; the impact on national policy (e.g. reduced public funding; role of cities); the negative implication of urban economic diversity between cities;
- weak formal institutions (functional mechanism): no governance; unfocussed strategy and a cities partnership; poor communication and no distinct budget;
- Strong informal institutions (behavioural) mechanism: cities competitive culture; lack of trust and weak ties.

The theoretical impact of the functional and institutional dimensions are discussed in the following sections.

8.3.1 Economic efficiencies:

The economic efficiency impact of institutional mechanisms for the PV of the SCA at the identification stage, relates to the potential value from changing the rules of the game (i.e. SCDI being used to strengthen cities relationship with the Scottish Government, as opposed to using COSLA), within an external context of falling local government resources and lack of recognition of cities by national institutions.

There is ‘relatively robust’ (Rodríguez-Pose, 2013: 1038) research evidence suggesting the absence of ‘basic formal institutions have a detrimental effect on economic development’ (p1038). The perceived inefficient role of the strong formal contextual institutions (i.e. COSLAs weak role) is replaced by SCDI in the shape of an informal network to help coordinate the cities, initially perceived as incurring low transaction costs (i.e. working with SCDI to coordinate the cities

network, without a budget or major resource input from cities), with the perceived potential to produce an economically efficient outcome for city members (e.g. leveraging resources with other cities, from the SCDI and the Scottish Government).

However, the resulting network efficiency relative to low transaction costs and leveraged resources, depends on the extent to which these gains can outweigh any resultant opportunity costs from replacing perceived inefficient external formal institutions with informal institutions; especially given that the impact of ‘informal institutions on economic activity and welfare [are believed] to be negligible’ (Rodríguez-Pose, 2013: 1038). The combination of weak formal functional mechanisms (SCDI’s weak facilitation) and strong informal behavioural mechanisms (loose network ties, low trust), can be seen to contribute towards a growing perception among the city network members that the collaboration process lacks productive efficiency (i.e. a lack of incentive alignment from SCDI’s weak governance). As a result, the cities network has the potential to produce high opportunity costs during this stage in the networks development.

Furthermore, the presence of already ‘loose ties’ between the cities (Orton, 1990) (i.e. strong informal institutions) are unlikely to strengthen without the presence of sufficiently strong functional mechanisms (e.g. leadership, accountability, transparency, good governance, resource incentives) to support network embedding or incentive alignment. In particular, the historical context and culture of conflict between the larger cities within the network (i.e. strong formal institutions), as well as a weakening perception of the SCDI’s hidden agenda (i.e. strong informal behavioural institutions), has the potential for reducing incentive alignment and productive efficiency of the network. The informal ‘voluntary’ nature of the cities network structure (and its weak formal institutions) thus has the potential to collapse over the longer term, particularly when having to ‘make difficult decisions’ (Begg and Docherty, 2002: 13).

Therefore, the economic implications of the nature of institutions during the identification stage of the network, is economically inefficient for the PV of ULAC, consistent with the view that:

‘informal institutions are second best to or incomplete substitutes for formal institutions and can only prove useful for economic development in either cases of a serious absence of or in the presence of inadequate formal institutions’

Rodríguez-Pose (2013: 1038)

8.3.2 Spatial synergies:

The spatial synergies relating to formal and informal institutional mechanisms for the PV of the SCA at the identification stage relates to the key role that the cities network has to play for achieving spatial synergy and capacity for effective governance across Scotland’s LAs, for the achievement of functional and complimentary coherence, regardless of LA spatial boundaries. The

existence of strong external environmental institutions in Scotland in terms of ‘strong natural, social and economic interdependencies’ (Hulst and van Montfort, 2012: 128) between Scotland’s cities was highlighted by various network members, as context to the rationale for ULAC. Interdependencies between Scotland’s cities implies that ‘local policy decisions have an impact beyond the local boundaries on the one hand and that [local authorities] depend on their neighbours to deal effectively with issues that manifest themselves within their jurisdiction on the other’ (Hulst and van Montfort, 2012: 128).

The difficulties associated with governing different tiers of government in Scotland are well documented, particularly those relating to the metropolitan scale, where high population densities are assumed to result in ‘complex, boundary-crossing policy issues’ (Hulst and van Montfort, 2012: 128). Indeed, academics and policy-makers have long been concerned that ‘metropolitan regions are chaotic and ungovernable places’ (Storper, 2013: 1). LA boundaries in Scotland are said not to reflect the reality at the system level, due to ‘a widely perceived disconnect between administrative boundaries and functional areas (i.e. weak formal external institutions) in Scotland (Second City Visions Leads meeting: 12 September 2014).

Given strong informal external economic institutions shaping the interdependencies between Scotland’s ULA areas, the cities network in the form of a planning forum during the identification stage, potentially reflects cities recognition of the need for ‘regulation of the externalities of local policy decisions and for the distribution and redistribution of scarce resources on a supra-municipal level, where some form of regional co-ordination and planning is required’ (Hulst and van Montfort, 2012: 128).

SCDI’s informal governance remit has the potential to act as a mechanism that better recognises the functional role of Scotland’s cities, regardless of administrative boundaries, and to act as ‘a strategy to cope with the need for regional planning’ (Hulst and van Montfort, 2012: 128), reflecting a lack of a sufficient intermediate tier of government in Scotland.

However, the network members’ perceptions of SCDI’s informal governance role suggests a weak informal institution, potentially ‘hampering the learning capacity and thus the potential for further agglomeration and clustering’ advantages (Rodríguez-Pose, 2013: 1039) that the ULAC has the potential to serve. Indeed, SCDIs informal governance role has the potential to hinder the capacity for network members to share learning and knowledge on efficient infrastructure development, that could otherwise reduce a duplication of ULAs services or improve complimentary or functional coherence of future infrastructure investments across Scotland cities.

Therefore, the spatial implications of weak informal internal institutions during the identification stage of the network are potentially inefficient for the PV of ULAC.

8.3.3 Network embedding:

The network embedding effect of institutional mechanisms for the PV of the SCA at the identification stage relates to the SCDI's weak governance remit in the absence of a strong intermediate tier of national governance (strong formal contextual institution), for maximizing cities economic development capacity (Hulst and van Monfort, 2012). The fact that Scotland's six cities first identified the city collaboration opportunity without government mandate or resources, suggests ULAs ambitions and agendas at a particular point in time are key to understanding the social value of different tiers and structures of governance institutions. Consistent with Kay (2009), the SCDI's role potentially reflects the perception that 'sub-national regions or cities in Scotland are natural units within which to analyse socioeconomic development and the policies to promote it' (Wilson, 2016: 11). In other words, Scotland's cities establishment of a cities network reflects the view that 'government competences should adapt to the scale that best suits specific policy challenges' (p11), and are reacting to the negative role of strong national contextual institutions. However, by attempting to replace strong contextual institutions with weak formal mechanisms (i.e. SCDI's informal facilitation) reflects poor leadership, lack of communication or clear network management.

The combination of weak internal network ties (strong behavioural institutional mechanism) between cities, weak formal functional institutions; strong formal national institutions in Scotland, and an increasing perception that the performance management of local government (strong formal contextual mechanism), suggests the weak functional governance structure of the network at identification stage was initially a reflection cities preference for 'maintaining autonomy and avoiding political conflict from complex formal processes' (Lee, 2016: 173):

- physical, political, socio-economic and geographical similarities play crucial roles when local jurisdictions select their partners who can minimise costs and maximise benefit from collective action
- actors who share similar characteristics are more likely to have similar preferences, and these preferences make the actors more inclined to work together
- structural and resource based aspects encourage cities to align incentives, but also, cultural and contextual aspect of social interaction thus social-organisational structure in which participating individuals are embedded.

However, the context of strong external economic interdependency across Scotland's cities (strong formal contextual mechanism) and the presence of 'loosely clustered network structures' (Feiock and Turnbull, 2012: 11), suggests a lack of monitoring potentially hinders the 'mutual reciprocity, trust, and conformance to the rules of the game' (p11), and overall network embedding.

Finally, successful collaboration is reliant on good communication on the behalf of the network manager for ‘boundary spanning’, in terms of improving the connectivity between members (Tushman and Scanlan 1981). SCDI’s facilitation role was described as lacking good communication, as such, it follows that SCDI’s facilitation is having a negative effect on network embedding.

Given the apparent existence of weak ties between the cities at the start of the network process (and their culture of competitiveness), it raises the question as to whether network members considered the implications of both having to compete, as well as collaborate, and whether they can clearly delineate those activities where they will collaborate, and those where they will compete. Cities commonly collaborate on activities that require a joined up approach, for example, joint procurement activities, or national bidding for cultural events. However, the lack of a clear strategic focus at this stage of the network suggest a lack of clarity around such important issues, thus negatively affecting the network embedding as such boundaries are somewhat unclear.

Table 26: Theoretical Explanation: The role and impact of institutions on the PV of ULAC during ‘Network Identification’ (T1)

PROCESS TRACING: FUNCTIONAL DOMAINS (WHAT)	SENSEMAKING: ROLE OF INSTITUTIONS (HOW)	THEORETICAL EXPLANATION: CAUSAL IMPACT OF INSTITUTIONS (WHY)
<p><i>Purpose:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political Lobbying • Strategic Planning <p><i>Configuration</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City-centric membership • Neutral Facilitation <p><i>Management:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informal Planning Structure • Informal Leadership/Governance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formal Contextual Mechanism (Strong) • Formal Functional Mechanism (Weak) • Informal Behavioural Mechanism (Strong) 	<p><i>Economic efficiency:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low transaction costs • Low productive efficiency <p><i>Spatial synergy:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No learning clusters • Reduced capacity for functional and complimentary coherence <p><i>Network embedding:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low trust • No incentive alignment

8.4 Network Implementation: the impact of institutions

Chapter six provides an indication of what ULAC looked like at the implementation stage of the SCA:

- The purpose of the network: allocate new resources (i.e. Cities Investment Fund) across national strategic planning objectives (i.e. in line with the Agenda for Cities).
- The structure of the network: expanding/mixed membership (i.e. Scottish Government Ministers; Chief Executive Groups; Delivery Groups;);
- The management of the network: a quasi-regional structure comprised of formal leadership and centralised governance structures; dual strategies.

Chapter seven describes the role of institutions for creating value from the network implementation stage in terms of:

- Strong formal institutions (contextual mechanism): Changing national politics; Changing national policy (increasing centralisation of cities); lack of national agency involvement (e.g. Scottish Enterprise);
- Strong formal institutions (functional): increased resources; two strategies; confused delivery and strategic focus; lack of skills; weak leadership from chair; hidden leadership of Scottish Government; fluctuating membership;
- Strong informal institutions (behavioural): Lack of trust; Membership inequality; Lack of commitment; Hidden agendas; loose network tensions.

The theoretical impact of the functional and institutional dimensions are discussed in the following sections.

8.4.1 Economic efficiencies:

The value and impact of economic institutional mechanisms for the PV of ULAC at the implementation stage relates to the implications from the formalization of the network and the ability of the network to internalize any associated increase in transactions costs from working within a more centralized governing network. The impact of formal governance mechanisms ‘depends upon the transaction costs faced by local authorities pursuing joint collective outcomes’ (Feiock, 2014: 9). Transaction costs are assumed to be high when formal institutions are present (e.g. having to record processes and deal with issues more transparently, by managing conflict etc.), although potentially offset by any observed improvement in allocative or productive efficiency.

The presence of strong functional mechanisms are perceived as having a negative impact on the network mainly due to a lack of strategic clarity, lack of skills from the facilitators and weak leadership role of the formal facilitation for allocating task and strategic projects effectively. For example, although the introduction of resources from the formalization process has the potential for improve incentive alignment, the lack of strategic clarity and the allocation of projects being undertaken in a relatively haphazard and unstrategic way, poses a risk for allocative efficiency, potentially outweighing any benefits to be had from stronger functional (i.e. formal structures, resources, governance) mechanisms. The mixture of both a ‘Six Cities Partnership’ and ‘Agenda for Cities’ means that there are potentially conflicting objective within the network. It isn’t also clear what strategic areas the cities should collaborate on, or where should compete. Indeed, the competitive culture of cities is still very much a strong informal mechanisms at this stage. As a result of a lack of clarity regarding where to compete, and where to collaborate, the potential for allocative efficiency towards the most efficient projects and outcomes, is a high risk.

Furthermore, Feiock (2001) suggests: ‘decentralized systems of governments enhances allocative efficiency if it produces a match between community preferences for quantities and qualities...and actual service choices and resource allocations’ (p303). The centralization of the network towards a realignment of evolving projects towards national priorities (as a post-hoc exercise), is perceived by cities as risking the ability to allocate projects and resources effectively given that they are perceived as being steered away from those cities thought to provide the largest gain.

The overall combined effect of stronger formal functional mechanisms (perceived negatively among network members) and strong informal behavioural mechanisms (i.e. already loose network ties, increasing levels of mistrust), can be seen to contribute towards a network tension between the cities and national agencies within the network, hence further reducing incentive alignment.

8.4.2 Spatial synergies:

During the network implementation stage, the network membership expanded to include both the Scottish Government and Perth, to include all seven of Scotland’s cities; all of varying structure and size. Feiock (2007) warn that network stability can be ‘undermined by heterogeneity among local governments’. Given the diverse and increasing nature of the membership of the SCA, the positive impact of any spatial institutions is their potential to help address any scale or equity issues relating to the heterogeneous nature of Scotland’s cities. The impact of spatial institutions on the PV of ULAC thus relates to the potential value from polycentric network synergies across ‘three synergy releasing mechanisms (i.e. co-operation, complementarity or externality)’ (Meijers, 2005: 767).

During the network implementation stage, a key strategic focus of the SCA was to achieve national economic growth via the potential for smaller cities to be included in the SCA (i.e. Perth was added), by exploiting any already well-established economic linkages. For example, to help achieve greater scale by ‘working more closely with cities in close proximity to help provide a greater critical mass of assets beyond administrative boundaries to improve economic diversity’ (Wight, 2005). Various network members referred to the size of their city and the gains from working with the larger cities in the SCA, referring in particular to knowledge sharing between the mid-sized cities (i.e. Glasgow, Edinburgh) and the smaller cities (Stirling and Perth) on infrastructure funding models (i.e. ‘city-deals’). Knowledge sharing relative to infrastructure investment models has the potential to improve structural, functional and complimentary investment decisions and thus, spatial synergy between Scotland’s cities.

Furthermore, the formalisation of the network at implementation stage involved a process of strategic clarification and realignment of the networks activity. However, at the same time, informal network connections and strategic discussions were strengthening between city-city

members within the network, resulting in shared learning on emerging infrastructure funding models across a number of Scotland's cities (i.e. city-deals) during this time. The shared learning on 'city-deals' between city members of the SCA and the potential impact of spatial institutions, suggests a potential causal mechanism resulting in an increase in the number of 'city-deal' funding models across Scotland, with future potential for: reducing the uneven character of development across Scotland; improving business connections; providing functional integration; improving complementarity (i.e. reduce uneven city characteristics). The strengthening of informal structures between the city members of the SCA and their facilitating of new and emerging models of infrastructure funding across Scotland, suggests potential improvements for functional integration and cohesions across Scotland's cities. However, any benefits from improving functional integration will depend on the nature of any counteractive spatial imbalances. Indeed, an added complexity from SCA being urban-centric is the potential for widening spatial imbalances between local and urban scales of government in Scotland.

8.4.3 Network embedding:

Provan and Kenis (2008) refer to the critical role of network governance for its ability to respond to three basic tensions: efficiency vs. inclusiveness, internal vs. external legitimacy, and flexibility vs. stability. The trade-off between these effects depends on the nature of governing, for example, in this instance, brokered by an external neutral agency (SCDI). The formal appointment of SCDI as the broker organisation and chair of the SCA is described as a Network Administrative Organisation (NAO) (Provan and Kenis, 2008), believed to enhance 'network legitimacy, dealing with unique and complex network-level problems and issues, and reducing the complexity of shared governance' (p236). However, such quasi-regional structures are thought 'atypical...seldom arising spontaneously' (p127) between local governments.

The impact of governance institutions relative to the structure of the SCA, the more formal facilitation role of the network manager (i.e. SCDI CEO) at the early stages of implementation, meant having to deal with an increasing number and range of tensions during implementation, and attempt to include all parties in joint decision making to ensure inclusiveness for efficiency. The increase in the size of the SCA network during this stage potentially explains its perceived lack of efficiency by many of the network members, as more participants being involved, especially Scottish Government members, led to observed increases in the timing and efficiency of the SCA's decision-making processes.

The structure of governance institutions typically depends on the function they are required to serve. The structure of the governance institutions during network implementation was largely voluntary, based on: financial incentives, resource and information sharing, and governments role in establishing a quasi-regional government form due to a missing tier of intermediate regional

government linking cities and national government effectively. Ansell and Gash (2007) suggest collaboration is likely to produce ‘intermediate process outcomes...when small wins are possible...particularly when prior antagonism is high and a long-term commitment to trust building is necessary’ (p561). Local government is largely ‘without general powers of competence and restricted in what they can do by Parliament...principally within a framework constructed by central government’s policy objectives and legislation and the political expediencies of the current governing political party’ (Kelly, 2007: 195). Given the political and administrative context shaping the power relationship between local and central government in Scotland, a network member tension was highlighted by several network members. Thus, the development of a cities development fund of £7 million to accompany the SCA had the potential to act as a compensation incentive to encourage cities to be involved in the SCA during the implementation stage.

The value and impact of governance institutions on the PV of ULAC at the implementation stage relates to the network’s capacity for integrating decision making between the network members. Indeed, ‘diverse values and perceptions about other jurisdictions shape behaviors and configuration’ (Feiock and Trunbull, 2012: 13). The nature of the SCA governance mechanism (i.e. centralized authority) will potentially, impact the overall network embeddedness and sustainability of the governance structure as a whole. The structural embeddedness in the network will also be affected by the level of centrality within the network, in terms of the networks capacity for generating ‘trustworthiness, reputation, and influence, as rated by other network members’ (Provan, et al. 2009: 873).

Given that increasing levels of mistrust were observed between the city and national government members during this stage, the sustainability of formal governance structures are causally related to the apparent lack of network embedding, increasing levels of political conflict and mistrust.

Therefore, although inter-governmental collaboration is understood to be typically supported by ‘centralizing authority...as inter-governmental fragmentation makes voluntary self-organizing solutions infeasible’ (Feiock and Turnbull 2012: 5), the desire for alternative, less centralised governance arrangements within the SCA were apparent. The lack of value of a centralising governance structure at this stage may well negatively impact on the network’s embeddedness.

The climate of trust is also weak, which is commonly associated with informal planning forums, typically reflecting ‘a zero-sum game or at best a mixed motive game, where the interests of the actors involve conflict’ (Hulst van Monfort, 2012: 131). Indeed, the potential to restrict the policy options of individual ULAs given the desire for formal collaboration arrangements ‘can result in an uneven distribution of resources and benefit’ (Hulst van Monfort, 2012: 131), in turn, affecting network members commitment for collaboration and ‘unwillingness not very willing to establish joint authorities with formal decision-making powers to co-ordinate local policies.

Davies (2003) describes the formal structures introduced into the SCA during its implementation stage as typical of a ‘regeneration partnership’ reflecting ‘bureaucratic structures under strong central government control...where collaboration is thought necessary for the production of shared governing outcomes’ (p254). Historically, regeneration partnerships in the UK are found not to have generated such shared governing outcomes (Davies 2003), which would depend upon:

‘small-scale partnership initiatives focused on delivery rather than policy and strategy are demonstrating a degree of collaborative synergy. In the long term these partnerships might be the basis for regime politics. Nevertheless, it seems unlikely in the context of a centralized UK government that they are the seed from which regime-like coalitions might grow’

Davies (2003: 254)

Although the SCA might be said to potentially represent a structure similar to a small-scale regeneration partnership with the potential to create ‘collaborative synergy’ Davies (2003: 254), the apparent dual focus of the SCA on both strategic and delivery outcomes during its implementation stage, is likely to result in a lack of synergy and network embedding.

Table 27: Theoretical explanation of the causal impact of institutions on the PV of ULAC during ‘Network Implementation’ (T2)

INTERPRETATION: PROCESS TRACING (WHAT)	SENSEMAKING: CAUSAL ROLE OF INSTITUTIONS (HOW)	THEORETICAL EXPLANATION: CAUSAL IMPACT OF INSTITUTIONS (WHY)
<p><i>Purpose:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Resource Allocation • Strategic Planning <p><i>Configuration:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mixed/expanding membership • National Agency-led <p><i>Management:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formal Quasi-Regional Structure • Formal Leadership/Governance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formal Contextual Mechanism (Strong) • Formal Functional Mechanism (Strong) • Informal Behavioural Mechanism (Strong) 	<p><i>Economic efficiency:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High transaction costs • Low allocative efficiency <p><i>Spatial synergy:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low learning clusters • Low capacity for functional and complimentary coherence <p><i>Network embedding:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low trust • Low incentive alignment

8.5 Network Growth: the impact of institutions

Chapter six provides an indication of what ULAC looked like at the implementation stage of the SCA:

- The purpose of the network for: Public Resource Allocation; Operational and Project Delivery; Strategic Policy Making; Political Lobbying;
- The structure of the network for: Mixed/expanding membership; Cities-led (Political);
- The management of the network in terms of: Formal Quasi-Regional Structures; Informal Planning Structures; Formal Political Leadership; Formal Strategic Leadership.

Chapter seven describes the role of institutions for creating value from the network implementation stage in terms of:

- Strong formal institutions (contextual): Increased national recognition and input from other national agencies (Scottish Futures Trust; European funding); Changing national and local politics; Changing national policy context (English core city deals);
- Strong formal institutions (functional): Improved leadership and position of chair; Increasing resources/national membership involvement; Clear structures to seven cities expectations; Development of informal structures to counteract presence of strong efficient formal institutions;
- Weak informal institutions (behavioural): Strengthening city-city network ties; Improving membership trust; Network tensions with Scottish Government remains; Influencing role of larger cities agenda.

The theoretical impact of the functional and institutional dimensions are discussed in the following sections.

8.5.1 Economic efficiencies:

Inter-organizational networks underpinning the flow of knowledge within and across cities and regions are assumed key capital inputs within regional growth processes (Huggins and Thompson, 2013). In this sense, the longer organisations have to develop relationships, the more chances there are of positive collaborative economic outcomes (Bingham and O’Leary, 2007), and potential to contribute towards longer-term regional growth. From an institutional perspective, collaboration can contribute towards productive and allocative efficiency if ‘it corrects market failures...through innovation and incentives.’ (Feiock and Turnbull, 2012: 3), but also ‘be destructive if it produces negative spillovers that undercut regional gains’ (p3). In other words, the role of institutions relate to the potential ‘mismatching’ of different combinations of institutions for economic development (Williamson, 2009: 379).

Economic institutions can be inefficient if they are associated with ‘rigid conditions that limit the perceptions and opportunities of economic actors’ (Bathelt and Gluckler, 2013: 343), to potentially influence network members reliance on ‘internal problem-solving and existing power hierarchies’ (p343). For example, considering the impact of the role of increasing formal institutional mechanisms during the growth stage, including added complexity of dual structures and strategies, can be potentially destabilising and inefficient for the network, consistent with what Williamson

(2009) suggests as ‘formalization of institutions can actually hurt economic performance (p372).

Furthermore, the dual structures can be seen as cities response to their dissatisfaction with strong formal governance, and indeed, a perception that there is a lack of cities focus from the evolving work of the SCA. As a result, cities can be said to be ‘voting with their feet’ as they take greater control of the SCA to ensure it meets their expectations. The economic idea behind ‘voting with their feet’ is that it was thought to lead to an economically efficient outcome. However, this view of allocative efficiency is thought naïve and rarely efficient in practice (see Brueckner, 1982), as is potentially the case here.

In the context of the SCA, the creation of the cities-only group during the growth stage can be seen to be a result of the increasing role of strong informal institutional mechanisms through the network process, potentially shaped by cities dislike of increasing formal institutions (governance structures including Scottish Government). However, the potential economic inefficiency of the network relates to larger cities being perceived as steering the group towards the development of dual structures. The cities-only group thus utilizes existing (and strengthening) informal power hierarchies between cities in Scotland, as larger cities are seen to steer the SCA towards the development of a cities group focused on ‘lobbying for devolution’.

Institutional hysteresis²⁴ is a risk at this stage, relating to the effect (or power) of institutions that persist to create potential problems over the long term for the economic efficiency of the SCA. Although not a lot is known about ‘how hysteresis manifests at the institutional level’ (Gherges, 2017: 2), a key risk within the SCA is the potential ‘persistence of inefficient institutions in supporting practices that are suboptimal, disruptive, or unsustainable’ (Bathelt and Gluckler, 2013: 348). The cities-only group in the SCA has the potential for influencing a disruptive sub-optimal economic situation, as institutional hysteresis risks larger cities continuing to steer the group towards a sub-optimal outcome over the longer term an inequitable distribution of power across the network. The inefficient outcome relates mainly to the fact that larger urban local authorities are steering urban policy, without the full inclusion of the wider local government sector within those discussions (a potentially high opportunity cost).

Therefore, the economic implication of the nature of institutions during the networks growth stage, is potentially economically inefficient for the PV of ULAC, consistent with the view that:

‘Institutions are dangerous when we have strong formal and weak informal institutions’

Williamson (2009: 379)

8.5.2 Spatial synergies:

²⁴ “Institutions play a critical role in economic interaction because they establish the basic conditions for information and knowledge exchange. Institutions can become a burden, however, if they are associated with rigid conditions that limit the perceptions and opportunities of economic actors” (Bathelt and Gluckler, 2013: 348)

A key change in the management of the SCA relates to the creation of a cities-only group to pursue aspirations for greater devolution of powers to urban local government in Scotland. The research findings suggest that Scotland's new city-only collaboration configuration is not serving to replace the SCA, but emerged alongside it to form a distinct 'urban-only' perspective. The structure is potentially morphological (Parente, and Pessoa, 2009), given the varying-sized cities and focus on functional activities, with weak formal governance due to the exclusion of the government as a member.

The literature suggests that 'city governments that are responsible for populations of similar size are more likely to share similar development needs and economic interests, which could ultimately decrease the transaction costs involved in collaborative economic development' Lee (2016: 174). Lee (2016) hypothesizes that 'local governments with similar population size are more likely to create network ties for collaborative economic development' (p174). Similarly, cities that are 'geographically close to each other and densely located with each other' (p176) tend to increase their level of interaction.

Indeed, previous research by Bailey and Turok (2001) raised some doubts as to whether links between two of Scotland's largest cities (Edinburgh and Glasgow) make up a polycentric system. However, the shifting motivations of city-members and strengthening relationships between the cities of the SCA during the growth stages, has the potential to influence the continued involvement of cities within the SCA, regardless of their varying size and geographical dispersion across Scotland. In other words, the perceived impact of the SCA for: leveraged funding, knowledge sharing; lobbying potential; sharing ideas on city deals, are all identified as contextual mechanisms maintaining the interest of all of Scotland's cities in the SCA. The extent to which the wider agenda and strategic focus of the SCA during the growth stages is being steered in the interests mainly of larger cities, is also plausible and potentially destabilising over the longer term.

Regardless, by implication, the efficient and effective delivery of the SCA during the growth stage, relates to its potential impact on the spatial allocation of policy focus and responsibility across different tiers of local government. First, given the wider context of increasing constitutional change in Scotland, a key challenge facing local government in Scotland will be 'their ability to show leadership within new systems of governance, without any formal authority to do so' and in such a way as 'to get others to cooperate out of self-interest, by encouraging coordination at the geographical scale that makes more economic sense than local authority boundaries' (Stewart and Stoker, 1995: 182).

The city-only SCA governance group shows potential for facilitating a new and emerging spatially devolved model of political-economic governance in Scotland, regardless of city boundaries, albeit

‘relatively ad hoc and piece-meal reform’ (Martin et al. 2015: 348), highly uneven, unequal, and potentially destabilising for promoting further spatial imbalances in Scotland.

Second, the SCA can be seen to have promoted the first set of ‘City Deals’ in Scotland. The SCA, with small catalytic funding, on the one hand, has emphasised the strategic priority of promoting connections and commonalities between the major urban areas in Scotland as well as the need to improve the competitiveness of their individual economic bases. The SCA can be seen to actively support City Deal initiatives across the seven cities. City Deals in Scotland potentially reflect a ‘spatial rebalancing’ of power between national and local government (Martin et al. 2015). Indeed, City Deals have the virtue of promoting change at the city-region or metropolitan scale.

The city region approach of city-deals is one that would have resonance for Scotland, given the role of the cities in Scotland’s economy (Glasgow alone contributes 32% of Scottish economic output, 35% of jobs and 36% of exports); however it cannot be the sole answer given the geographic distribution of Scotland’s population into smaller urban centres. The wider impact of spatial institutions during the growth stage of the SCA, is potentially increasing unequal spatial imbalances across Scotland’s local government sector, highlighting a lack of appropriately resourced, inclusive governance structures that equitably represents all tiers of local government in Scotland. For example, it is potentially an anomaly that a LA area like Falkirk (with a similar population to that of Perth and Inverness) is not represented within the SCA. Therefore, definitional ambiguities relating to cities and their functional boundaries (see chapter two for fuller discussion), and the fine line between definitional differences between small cities and large towns in Scotland, highlights a key contextual mechanism affecting the SCA’s potential for inclusive and efficient spatial synergetic effects.

8.5.3 Network embedding:

Strategic approaches to local government collaboration in empirical research in recent years highlights ‘difficulties for achieving political consensus’ resulting in ‘functional design being primarily aimed at service delivery as opposed to strategy development’ (OECD, 2015: 41). This potentially explains why the two key structures of the SCA demonstrate distinctly different focus: the wider-SCA group including Scottish Government was perceived by its members as ‘delivery focussed...to help smaller cities (RI7)’.

The cities-only group on the other hand appears more strategically focussed to include ambitions for lobbying the Scottish Government, consistent with the view that ULAC focussed on strategy development are typically used for ‘lobbying and advocacy’ providing ‘a context for leaders with broader vision to emerge’ (OECD, 2015:41). Within any nation state or devolved administration, the ability to tax, spend and regulate are distributed across different spatial levels. Therefore, the

lobbying for greater devolution of powers to cities or city regions has the potential to strengthen the choices for individual city policy.

Within the context of greater collaboration and devolution for English local authorities as ‘a restatement of the new public management’ (Loudes and Garner, 2016: 9), the Scottish Government’s continued participation in the SCA and gradual support for City Region Deals in Scotland, reflects a ‘holding onto political power, whilst decentralising operational responsibilities’ (Loudes and Garner, 2016: 12), with ‘limited gains for local democracy’ (p 12) from an apparent piecemeal approach to cities policy and urban local government reform. Consistent with existing empirical insights that suggest governments don’t typically ‘devolve substantial power to governance networks’ (Davies, 2011: 60), this explains why ‘informal, pluralistic decision making structures’ (Griffin, 2012: 210) evolved during the growth stage of the network, as cities pursue aspirations for greater devolution of decision making powers across urban local government in Scotland. The impact of strong formal governance institutions and the ‘increasing political nature’ (Peters and Pierre, 2000) of the SCA as a cities policy network, also explains cities creation of plural structures and lack of value for formal SCA governance institutions.

Provan and Milward (2001) suggest that a networks effectiveness over time (i.e. network legitimacy by satisfying the needs of clients and other community-interest) can also be determined through: the ebb and flow of agencies to and from the network; the strength of the relationships between and among network members; widening the web of network ties (2001: 418). The nature of network ties during growth stage strengthened between the city-city members, but weakened between cities and Scottish Government (weak in terms of the strength of a positive relationship). Furthermore, the networks members referred to a growing range of projects involving a number of additional external national agencies (e.g. Scottish Futures Trust, European Funding).

An apparent weakness of ‘loose ties’ (Orton, 1990) between cities and Scottish Government during identification stage was also identified, that can be partly explained by the SCA’s attempt at formalisation from the Scottish Government’s response to fixing the ‘fragmentation of the external environment’ (p207). Weak ties can also be a result of ‘incompatible expectations’ (Orton, 1990: 207), consistent with that observed during the growth stages of the SCA network, typically requiring ‘strong leadership’ or ‘compensation’ (p207) to resolve. In terms of leadership. Folke et al. (2005: 28) argue that co-operation requires leadership by ‘building trust, making sense, managing conflict, linking actors, initiating partnerships among actor groups, compiling and generating knowledge and mobilizing broad support for change’. The development of plural structures can thus be explained by weak ‘brokerage’ and leadership of the SCA during previous stages, reflected by the cities lack of value in the formalised SCA structures: possibly due to a lack of sufficient compensation within the SCA, as perceived resource gains from strengthening city-city relationships outwith the formal SCA structures, potentially hold greater value for cities

compared with formal ties between cities and government. Given the presence of political tensions within the network, ‘informal, cooperative or partnership arrangements are understood to be better for regional decision-making, due mainly to their ability to overcome political barriers’ (Wolfson and Frisken, 2000, p365).

By implication, the impact of governance institutions characterised by a lack of strong leadership or sufficient compensation, potentially explains the development of plural structures during the network growth stage. Consistent with Giest and Howlett (2014):

‘in order to create trust and reciprocity within a community, there needs to be a network leader, who operates within the system and complements it through directed management activities aimed at its membership. Such a leader enables communication among heterogeneous actors for building social capital and exchanging knowledge.... network leadership is different from direct government involvement or networking on the ground. Instead, it is an additional layer in the middle of a polycentric system, balancing hierarchical and horizontal dynamics requires a neutral leader in overcoming networking obstacles’

Giest and Howlett (2014: 38)

The nature of the management of the SCA changed from being chaired and brokered by a NAO (i.e. a Network Administrative Organisation – the SCA – hosted within SCDis organisation) (Provan and Kenis, 2008), to one still broker by a NAO (i.e. the SCA), but chaired by a ‘participant’: first, by the Leader of Stirling City Council, then later chaired by Edinburgh City Council. The idea that a separate administrative entity to govern the network, the role of the network broker is a key role in coordinating and sustaining the network. The NAO in this case not chaired by another member organization but by the members themselves (i.e. City Political Leader). Provan and Kenis (2008) suggest ‘shared network governance’ (p241) is potentially an effective governance structure for providing network-level effectiveness, for producing widely shared trust and consensus among participants.

The overall impact of governance institutions from SCDis weak neutral management of the SCA can be seen as a key causal mechanism explaining evolving plural SCA structures, alongside underlying contextual mechanisms and behavioural mechanisms. The result is the potential for the SCA to create unstable spatial imbalances across Scotland’s local government sector, due the emergence of a new spatially devolved model of political-economic governance of urban local government in Scotland.

Although local economic development is not a statutory responsibility of local government in Scotland, the findings are also consistent with shifting focus in recent years (albeit potentially inconsistent and uneven) towards a model of greater sub-regional autonomy (Lowndes and

Gardner, 2016), accelerated by the SCAs strategic focus on greater autonomy and shared learning around evolving City Deals across Scotland. The collective lobbying of the seven ULAs for city deals through the SCA also raises important questions about the definition of ULAC within the context of the SCA, as excluding other levels of local government (i.e. local authorities across other scales), and the implications this may present from the collective lobbying from ULAs on behalf of all local authorities in Scotland, in terms of an equitable distribution of power across Scotland's local government more generally.

The ICA framework suggests an actors' strategic action in a collaborative context depends on the extent of 'preference integration among actors in the composite network, with capacity for conflict when preferences diverge' (i.e. principal-agent problem) (Feiock, 2009: 358).

'Academics and policy-makers have long been concerned that 'metropolitan regions are chaotic and ungovernable places'

Storper (2013: 1)

There is therefore a tendency for city local authorities to compete for funding, rather than collaborate with neighbouring local authorities, due mainly to discrepancies in functional and legal boundary responsibilities and funding.

A recent Scottish Parliament 'Local Government and Regeneration Committee' inquiry into the Flexibility and Autonomy of Local Government (2014), suggest a key obstacle facing further decentralisation of local government in Scotland relates to the restrictions of LAs 'internal culture'. The apparent competitive culture between cities during the network growth stages appears to have struck a better balance. The growth stage of the network can be seen to make clearer delineation between the work elements that would require cities to collaborate on (e.g. jointly bidding for national inward investment opportunities). Therefore, the growth stage of the network can be seen to potentially clarify and eliminate those areas where collaboration is required, leading to strengthening network ties. However, the culture of conflict and difficult relationship with national agencies are still clearly apparent as a key institutional mechanism.

The key challenge for local government going forward will be their ability to continue to encourage better cooperation between cities within the new SCA arrangements and their ability to respond to new and evolving national policy institutions (e.g. new taxation measures from the impending Scottish Government elections). Questions will remain over devolved powers to Scotland's LAs and the adequacy of existing Scotland-wide governance and financing arrangements.

Table 28: Theoretical explanation of the causal impact of institutions on the PV of ULAC during ‘Network Growth’ (T3)

INTERPRETATION: PROCESS TRACING (WHAT)	SENSEMAKING: CAUSAL ROLE OF INSTITUTIONS (HOW)	THEORETICAL EXPLANATION: CAUSAL IMPACT OF INSTITUTIONS (WHY)
<p><i>Purpose:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Resource Allocation • Operational and Project Delivery • Strategic Policy Making • Political Lobbying <p><i>Configuration:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mixed/expanding membership • City-led (Political) <p><i>Management:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formal Quasi-Regional Structures • Informal Planning Structures • Formal Political Leadership • Formal Strategic Leadership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formal Contextual Mechanism (Strong) • Formal Functional Mechanism (Strong) • Informal Behavioural Mechanism (Weak) 	<p><i>Economic efficiency:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High transaction costs • Low allocative efficiency <p><i>Spatial synergy:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High learning clusters • Higher capacity for functional and complimentary coherence <p><i>Network embedding:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High trust • High incentive alignment

The conceptual framework of ULAC during the growth stage can be compared with Hulst and Van Montfort (2007) framework, where it is found that IMC in the UK is distinctly different in character when compared with the rest of Europe (where it is largely a non-mandated process established by municipalities themselves as circumstances require). Contemporary forms of IMC are thought less dependent on vertical arrangements (i.e. top-down direction from central government), and often replaced by horizontal modes (i.e. expansion of networks and partnership arrangements). The findings here therefore suggest ULAC in Scotland can be described as a mandated form of IMC as a new form of urban policy in Scotland.

The evidence also suggests that the Scottish Government continue to steer the ULAC (albeit in a hidden, way given that they do not chair the SCA in any transparent capacity), Therefore, according to Kelly (2007: 209):

‘Only substantial decentralisation would create conditions for a shift from vertical cooperative arrangements to cooperation between local councils. But for substantial decentralisation to occur, a vital condition seems to be missing: confidence in the quality of local government’.

Therefore, it is questionable as to whether in the case of Scotland's local government sector, that the shift from hierarchy to market is less differentiated, and transformation less complete in supporting an increasing localism agenda, than some literature suggests (Hulst and van Montfort, 2007).

8.6 Summary: Impact of Theoretical Dimensions on the PV of ULAC

The theoretical analysis in sections 8.3, 8.4 and 8.5 demonstrates the theoretical impact of institutions on the PV of ULAC in Scotland across three stages of the network: identification, implementation, and growth. Three theoretical dimensions help to explain the impact of behavioural, contextual and functional mechanisms, in the form of both formal and informal institutions, relative to the purpose, configuration and management of the network.

At the identification stage, institutional heterogeneity between network members, weak informal ties, combined with the desire for economic efficiencies and resources, were key explanatory factors in relation to the PV of ULAC at network creation. Initially, weak informal ties (between cities), formal institutional differences (between cities and government) and weak formal governance institutions (between cities, government, COSLA), limited cities capacity to connect with each other and the Scottish Government. The resultant impact of the explanatory institutions on the PV of ULAC at this stage of the network revealed a preference for a voluntary network, brokered by a neutral external organisation through informal institutional arrangement, leading to stronger informal ties between Scotland's cities.

Although weak ties are found to be less time-consuming and intense than strong ties, the institutionalisation of weak ties (both formal and informal) during SCA network implementation, presented key challenges for the networks governance and embeddedness. The centralizing process of the SCA, differences in formal institutions between cities and the Scottish Government, and the institutional environment, resulted in the network being compromised to reveal a lack of perceived economic efficiency, spatial synergy, and network embedding.

During the growth stages, the strengthening of informal institutions from behavioural mechanisms influencing network embedding between the city cluster of the SCA network - as opposed to formal institutions from centralising governance – proved to be the most influential for maintaining the cities interest and participation in the SCA network over time.

8.7 Causal Explanation of the PV of ULAC and the Impact of Institutions

The chapter summarises the process of ULAC and its PV according to the role and impact of institutions on the process. The network process is explained according to the three stages of the ULAC process: network implementation, network creation and network growth. The ULAC

process is further explained relative to three main institutional mechanism (formal and informal): contextual, functional and behavioural mechanisms, and their causal impact explained relative to theoretical insights.

The findings identify the role and impact of different combinations of institutions across different stages of the network, although it is apparent that following the formalisation process of the SCA, ‘the relationship between institutions and economic outcomes becomes much more complex, fuzzy and difficult to isolate’ (Rodrieguez-pose, 2013: 1038). Indeed, throughout the network development analysis, but particularly during the growth stages, is the apparent role and impact of social mechanisms on the network embedding, in terms of diverging ambitions, political tensions and emerging agendas. The size and balance of efficiency gains from improved city-city network ties, in relation to increasing tensions with the Scottish Government (as well as any opportunity costs from larger cities steering of the network), will ultimately determine the overall network effect and outcome over the longer –term.

The integrative conceptual framework for each stage of the network (Table 29), provides a causal explanation of the role and impact of different institutions for the PV of the SCA as economic development policy, bringing together all the different elements of the research from chapter six: functional dimensions of ULAC (Part A); Chapter seven: the role of institutional mechanisms (Part B), and chapter eight: the theoretical impact of institutional mechanisms explaining the PV of ULAC (Part C).

Table 29: Integrative Conceptualisation Framework: Causal Explanation of the impact of Institutions on the PV of the SCA as Economic Development Policy

NETWORK STAGES	FUNCTIONAL DOMAINS (PART A)			INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS (PART B)	INSTITUTIONAL IMPACTS (PART C):
	Purpose	Configuration	Management	Functional; Contextual; Behavioural	Economic; Spatial; Governance
T1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political Lobbying • Strategic Planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City-centric membership • Neutral Facilitation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informal Planning Structure • Informal Leadership/Governance 	<p>Strong formal institutions (Contextual)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Weak role of COSLA; - Weak impact of national policy (reduced public funding; role of cities); - The negative implication of urban economic diversity between cities; Culture of city competitiveness. <p>Weak formal institutions (functional):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No governance; - Unfocussed strategy; - Poor communication; - No resources. <p>Strong informal institutions (behavioural):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cities competitive culture; - Weak ties; - Lack of Trust. 	<p><i>Economic efficiency:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low transaction costs • Low productive efficiency <p><i>Spatial synergy:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No learning clusters • Reduced capacity for functional and complimentary coherence <p><i>Network embedding:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low trust • No incentive alignment

NETWORK STAGES	FUNCTIONAL DOMAINS (PART A)			INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS (PART B)	INSTITUTIONAL IMPACTS (PART C):
	Purpose	Configuration	Management	Functional; Contextual; Behavioural	Economic; Spatial; Governance
T2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Resource Allocation • Strategic Planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mixed/expanding membership • National Agency-led 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formal Quasi-Regional Structure • Formal Leadership/Governance 	<p>Strong formal institutions (contextual):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Changing national politics; - Changing national policy (increasing centralisation of cities – SOAs); - Lack of national agency involvement (e.g. Scottish Enterprise). <p>Strong formal institutions (functional):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Resources; - Two strategies; - Confused delivery and strategic focus; - Lack of skills; - Weak leadership from chair; - Hidden leadership of Scottish Government; - Fluctuating membership. <p>Strong informal institutions (behavioural):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of trust; - Membership inequality; - Lack of commitment; - Hidden agendas; - Network tensions. 	<p><i>Economic efficiency:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High transaction costs • Low allocative efficiency <p><i>Spatial synergy:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low learning clusters • Low capacity for functional and complimentary coherence <p><i>Network embedding:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low trust • Low incentive alignment

NETWORK STAGES	FUNCTIONAL DOMAINS (PART A)			INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS (PART B)	INSTITUTIONAL IMPACTS (PART C):
	Purpose	Configuration	Management	Functional; Contextual; Behavioural	Economic; Spatial; Governance
T3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Resource Allocation • Operational Project Delivery • Strategic Policy Making • Political Lobbying 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mixed/expanding membership • Cities-led (Political) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formal Quasi-Regional Structures • Informal Planning Structures • Formal Political Leadership • Formal Strategic Leadership 	<p>Strong formal institutions (contextual):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increased national recognition and input from other national agencies (Scottish Futures Trust; European funding)' - Changing national and local politics; Changing national policy context (English core city deals). <p>Strong formal institutions (functional):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improved leadership and position of chair - Increasing resources/national membership involvement; - Clear structures to seven cities expectations; - Development of informal structures to counteract presence of strong weak formal institutions. <p>Weak informal institutions (behavioural):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strengthening city-city network ties; - Improving membership trust; - Network tensions with Scottish Government remains - Influencing role of larger cities agenda. 	<p><i>Economic efficiency:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High transaction costs • Low allocative efficiency <p><i>Spatial synergy:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High learning clusters • Higher capacity for functional and complimentary coherence <p><i>Network embedding:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High trust • High incentive alignment

Causal explanation model:

There is currently a lack of evidence demonstrating a positive link between informal institutions and economic development, due mainly to: a lack of ‘proxies for different types of institutions’; different institutional arrangements in different geographical contexts demonstrating similar outcomes; or that ‘beyond a certain threshold of formal institutions, the role of institutions may be relatively limited’ (Rodriuez-pose, 2013: 1038). In the context of current empirical weaknesses, the value and contribution of the integrative conceptual framework (Table 29) presented here, is through the causal explanation of the role and impact of different institutions for the PV of the SCA as economic development policy. In particular, the role of informal behaviour mechanisms (and more generally, strengthening informal ties within the network) at different stages of the network. The framework therefore demonstrates an important causal link between different combinations of institutional mechanisms for the PV of ULAC as economic development policy relative to:

- The identification and role and impact of different types of institutional mechanisms (and the various combinations possible across the network), over time;
- A description of how different institutional mechanisms in a specific contextual geographical context, may produce similar (or different) outcomes in different settings, due to the important distinction required between network stages, to help clarify the important role of institutions for economic development policy;
- An analysis and explanation of why different institutional mechanisms matter relative to context, in that their effect will differ according to the theoretical dimensions, and how they interact across the networks contextual functional characteristics over time

The causal explanation model underlines the important role of different institutional mechanisms (i.e. of which, there are estimated to be eight possible different combinations at any given stage of the network) for the PV of ULAC relative to: different stages of the network, different institutional mechanisms; different theoretical impacts.

Explanation statements (Table 30) of the theoretical and functional domains are provided, to help understand the causal explanation process model presented in Table (25).

Table 30: Explanation Statements Supporting the Causal Explanation Model of the PV of the SCA

NETWORK STAGE	EXPLANATION STATEMENTS: ROLE OF INSTITUTIONS	EXPLANATION STATEMENTS: THEORETICAL IMPACT OF INSTITUTIONS
Network Identification	The presence of inefficient strong national governance institutions increases the likelihood of cities preference to collaborate using weak formal institutions.	The combined presence of strong inefficient formal institutions, weak ineffective formal functional institutions, and strong inefficient informal behavioural institutions within a small network of urban local authorities, increases the likelihood of economic inefficiencies, lack of spatial synergy or network embedding from ULAC. 1
Network Implementation	The presence of inefficient strong national governance institutions and inefficient weak functional institutions (from the previous stage) increases cities willingness to collaborate using strong formal institutions. 2	The combined presence of strong inefficient formal institutions, strong ineffective formal functional institutions, and strong inefficient informal behavioural institutions within a diverse network of urban and national organisation, increases the likelihood of economic inefficiencies, lack of spatial synergy and low network embedding from ULAC. 3
Network Growth	The presence of inefficient strong national governance institutions, inefficient strong functional institutions (from the previous stage), reduces cities willingness to collaborate using strong formal institutions, and increases the likelihood of cities preference to collaborate using weak formal institutions. 4	The combined presence of strong inefficient formal institutions, strong ineffective formal functional institutions, and weakening inefficient informal behavioural institutions within a diverse network of urban and national organisation, increases the likelihood of economic inefficiencies, although, potential for improved spatial synergies and higher levels of network embedding from ULAC. 5 n

The research findings demonstrate the important role that both formal and informal institutions play in the ULAC process, and in particular, the role that informal institutions (i.e. culture of urban local government) in the context of the SCA. The direction of the SCA during the latter stages of the identification phase through to the growth stage was steered strongly in the direction of ULAs ambitions, regardless of formal governance institutions being in place. The ULAC process is thus dynamic over time, to reveal an on going cumulative effect from the role of institutional mechanisms in one stage, shaping and conditioning of the resultant institutions in the further stages.

Key to the conceptualisation of the PV of ULAC is therefore understanding the role of formal and informal institutions and how they differ at different stages and levels of the policy network process, and how they interact in a non-linear way. For example, as indicated by the arrows on Table 30, the interaction of institutions act to contextualise subsequent network stages and the nature of institutional mechanisms, to create a dynamic, cumulative effect from stages 1 of the network to stages 5, up to a possible n times. Hence, the non-linear nature of the process also relates to the feedback effect from institutional mechanisms also. Therefore, the growth of the

SCA reflect over three stages reflects the observation period, and is possible that further observations over time would reflect additional contextual mechanisms and different types of stages (e.g. collapse; stagnation). The research provides an analysis of the role of different types (i.e. formal and informal) and different combinations of institutions over three distinct network stages of the SCA process over time. It is apparent that key to understanding the role of these institutions is the ability to assess and measure their economic role, the role of geography, and institutional governance structures over time.

Furthermore, the findings make clear that identifying the right mix; density (or thickness), and quality of institutions is key also to understanding their role in the policy development process for achieving PV for economic development. However, transforming institutional insights from the empirical research, into clear policy guidelines is complex, due to the difficulties inherent in isolating and measuring the specific magnitude and relative importance of different formal and informal institutions, in terms of their operationalization (see Rodríguez-Pose, 2013, Williamson, 2009), summarised as follows:

- ***Economic efficiency and institutions:*** the absence or presence of efficient institutions is difficult to isolate and measure, especially in terms of the overall size and effect. The conceptual framework provides an analytical framework that helps to map the process towards identifying the role and impact of different types of institutional mechanisms. Therefore, having identified the role of different types of institutions, in order to improve those that are potentially inefficient remains challenging.
- ***Governance and institutions:*** formal institutional governance structures are seen to present key challenges for creating network value through the generation of network capital, particularly in the presence of inefficient strong formal governance that is being replaced by inefficient strong informal institutions.
- ***Geography and institutions:*** informal institutions are context and geography specific. Geography exerts a significant effect on the type and quality of institutions. Moderate changes in [region- and] country-specific circumstances (policies and institutional arrangements), often interacting with the external environment, can produce discontinuous changes in economic performances, which in turn set off virtuous or vicious cycles.
- ***Time and institutions:*** key to the conceptual framework is the recognition that institutions change over time and what are good institutions in one stage of the network, may no longer have the same effect in a different stage of the network (due to the dynamic interaction process and contextualising process at each stage). Future research would benefit from testing different

combinations of networks in different settings, to better understand the role that time plays on supporting or hinder the networks sustainability.

The analysis of the impact of institutions on the PV of ULAC as economic development suggest their important role ‘in ensuring the efficient functioning of markets... and presence of solid and efficient institutions has become a must, a prerequisite for those dealing with economic growth and development’ (Rodriguez-pose, 2013: 1036). Therefore, consistent with North (2009), the role and impact of institutions on the PV of ULAC according to this thesis, relates to their important role as an:

‘underlying determinant of the long-run performance of economies’

North (2009: 107)

Chapter Nine: Thesis Conclusions, Contributions, and Limitations

9.1 Introduction

The thesis aims to understand and explain the PV of ULAC through an interpretive (Stake, 2005) explanation of the role of institutional and theoretical dimensions on the network process. While qualitative research can be guided by pre-set conceptual frameworks and existing extant academic knowledge, emerging themes associated with the inductive approach taken to the research, helped to reveal additional insights into the role and impact of formal and informal institutions on the PV of ULAC.

The final chapter concludes the thesis by bringing together both the research gaps identified from the earlier literature review (Chapter two, three and four) alongside the research findings (Chapter six, seven and eight), highlighting the thesis contribution. Implications for academic research and public policy practice and are also discussed, along with the limitations of the current research approach, suggesting implications for future research.

9.2 Empirical Findings: Contribution to Theory the PV of ULAC as economic development policy

The case study findings on the role of institutions on the PV of ULAC relative to the SCA context, demonstrates how they interact within the policy process in a convoluted and complex way. The assessment of ULAC and its PV is revealed according to the networks functional dimensions, in terms of: their purpose; management and configuration (What); the role of institutions (How), and the impact of institutions as an explanation of the networks PV (Why), according to economic, political and geographical institutional perspectives.

The research findings demonstrate ‘how’ and ‘why’ institutions matter for the PV of ULAC as economic development policy, highlighting the particular multi-scalar role of institutions (relative to inter-organisational working involving both national and urban organisations) and the cumulative, dynamic effect of different types of institutional mechanisms (i.e. contextual, function, behavioural mechanisms), across various stages of the network process.

9.2.1 Conceptual and theoretical contribution:

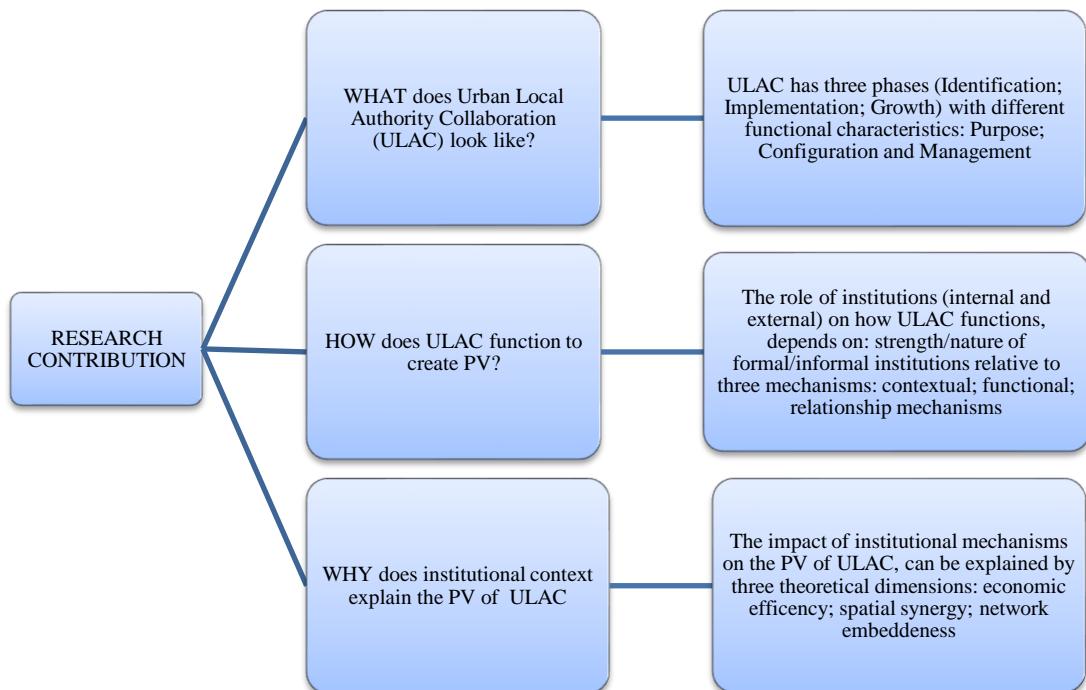
The thesis research question was to: Conceptualise the public value (PV) of urban local authority collaboration (ULAC) through the role of institutions. The thesis integrates an understanding and

description of ULAC with institutional theory to demonstrate, through interpretive particularisation (Stake, 2005), the role and impact of institutions for the PV of collaboration in situations of constant change over time. Given the interpretive ontological nature of the research approach, the research objectives were broad and initially organised around the exploration of three separate aspects in order to conceptualize the PV of ULAC in a particular geographical setting, to help:

- describe the functional nature of ULAC according to its: purpose, configuration and management;
- analyse the multi-dimensional nature of the role and impact of different institutional mechanisms from a multi-disciplinary theoretical perspective in terms of: economic, spatial and governance effects;
- conceptualise the PV of ULAC from an interpretive critical realist perspective to provide a causal explanation of the impact of institutions on economic development policy.

Figure 27 provides an overview of the key research gaps.

Figure 27: Contribution to research gaps on the PV of ULAC



To research gaps were filled according to the three main research questions as follows:

What does Urban Local Authority Collaboration (ULAC) look like?

ULAC was analysed relative to three stages of the network (these are not exhaustive) in terms of (Identification; Implementation; Growth) according to a description of their different functional characteristics: Purpose; Configuration and Management. Process tracing and sense-making identified a set of strategic events describing the evolving functional nature of ULAC across three network stages.

How does ULAC function to create PV?

The role of institutions (internal and external) on how ULAC functions, depends on the strength and nature of both formal/informal institutions via three institutional mechanisms: contextual; functional; behavioural mechanisms, to reveal substantial differences in the typology of, positioning and power of key actors within the policy network, highlight the key role of institutions, and more particularly institutional differences between network members and at different stages of the networks development. Network Identification was focused on building recognition of the need for a coordinated cities policy in Scotland, to reveal a missing tier of governance between cities, and between cities and the Scottish Government. Network Implementation highlights the implications of creating and implementing formal governance structures through a nationally recognised city collaboration structure in Scotland, to reveal an underlying complexity of institutional distance across both national and subnational tiers of Government.

Why does institutional context explain the PV of ULAC?

An interpretive critical realist causal explanation of the PV of ULAC is provided through a theoretical analysis of the role and impact of institutions relative to three PV effects: *economic efficiency; spatial synergy* and *network embedding*.

The integrative conceptual framework (Table 29) set out in chapter eight provides a causal explanation of the role and impact of different institutions for the PV of the SCA as economic development policy, bringing together all the different elements of the research:

- chapter six helps to identify what the functional dimensions of ULAC are (Part A of the conceptual framework);
- chapter seven helps to identify the role of institutional mechanisms for creating PV from ULAC (Part B of the conceptual framework), and finally;
- chapter eight integrates the findings to provide a theoretical explanation of the impact of institutional mechanisms on the PV of ULAC (Part C of the conceptual framework).

Therefore, the thesis contributes towards an understanding of: *what constitutes urban collaboration and its relationship with policy outcomes*, through the development of a conceptual understanding of the PV of ULAC as economic development policy, relative to three theoretical domains in the literature: *economic collaboration; spatial collaboration and governance collaboration*.

Theoretically, the institutions matter for the conceptualisation of the PV of ULAC a distinct conceptual dimension connecting the theoretical literature, helping to bridge scholarly boundaries across compatible ontological insights (Bathelt and Gluckler, 2003; and Hay, 2011). Therefore, an explication of the empirical findings relative to the research questions and objectives are further discussed in the following sections.

9.2.2 Empirical findings on the delivery of local government in Scotland:

Given the lack of empirical studies on the role of scale (i.e. in terms of urban scale of local government) as a key institutional characteristic of the network actor, and its role in affecting collaboration outcomes (Ha et al. 2016), the role of both the ‘urban’ and ‘national’ context of the SCA are found to be key institutional characteristics affecting the overall PV of ULAC in Scotland.

The governance and development of urban economic development policy at the city and regional scale is critical to the overall nature and achievement of policy outcomes. The background of increasing academic focus and policy rhetoric, concerning the perceived benefits from partnership working and collaboration across the public sector, have focused attention on urban local authority collaboration (ULAC) as a new form of urban policy and delivery mechanism in Scotland. The context of austerity government and constitutional flux in Scotland have reinforced the Scottish Government’s rationale for greater collaborative working, to maximise resource sharing, reduce duplication, and maintain an element of national government policy control and oversight. City authorities and local agencies embraced the opportunity to work together, supporting an evolving range of strategies with an infrastructure focus, including new infrastructure funding mechanisms alongside new institutional and governance arrangements.

The research analyses the urban policy context, emergent ULAC strategies, policy outcomes and practices, to reveal the PV of the ULAC network. The experience of the SCA raises critical questions about the emergent relationships, leadership and governance across the cities and the nature of national-urban relationships in the austerity state. In particular, the case study research demonstrate how urban local government context and the role of both formal and informal institutions, are key characteristics influencing the overall purpose, structure, management and PV of ULAC for economic development in Scotland:

The PV of ULAC in Scotland was found to be largely shaped by:

- the structure and nature of effective management of policy network governance;
- the nature of power and informal institutional relationships between national and sub-national urban government, and between urban local government;
- the policy networks capacity for meeting the diverse needs of its members shaped by conflicting and often, diverging, institutional agendas, hindering the networks ability to create value;
- the importance role of formal contextual mechanisms and the shifting nature of devolved power emerging across Scotland's local government.

The research evidence illustrates how the governance and management of urban local authority collaboration (ULAC) for economic development in Scotland, has been largely shaped by the shifting nature of national government's relationship with local authorities and the desire for greater devolution of power from national government, shaping the overall nature of the policy network and outcome processes, to reveal a new form of urban policy in Scotland.

Therefore, the implications of the PV of ULAC for local government in Scotland relate mainly to the following:

- *Increasing localism:* the SCAs cities-only group focus on lobbying for greater devolution of powers to LAs, has the potential for bringing decision-making closer to where decisions take effect (i.e. localism), and for improving the responsiveness of decision making to local circumstances. Few would argue against the principle of localism, although, there are key questions in terms of the adequacy of local capacity and resource to deliver increased devolution of powers to local government in Scotland.
- *Geographic redistribution of power:* ULAs push for greater autonomy through the SCA raises questions about the equitable nature of a redistribution of powers across different tiers of local government in Scotland. The current centralised system of transfer payments from central to local government is aimed at reducing potential geographic inequalities resulting from the economic diversity and tax raising capacity of different local authority areas. Cities of different size and structure have vital economic roles to play in supporting the economy, for example, through supply chains, commuting, migration, and cultural or environmental importance. The shifting balance of a redistribution of financial power from central to local government raises key questions about the equitability of changing central government's redistribution role. Furthermore, given that city local authorities represent the SCA only, this raises key questions with regards to wider implications on the governance, structure and future direction of all tiers of local government in Scotland. An apparent shifting balance of devolved power between urban and central government also raises questions concerning the democratic accountability of existing governance arrangements for local government in Scotland.

- *Geographic scale of governance:* cities are not self-contained economies, drawing on wide regional hinterlands for suppliers, commuters, migrants and consumers, raising key questions concerning the appropriate level of governance of urban LAs. They have many connections further afield, both domestically and internationally (as, indeed, do many rural areas). Is it necessary or acceptable for cities or city-regions to have more autonomy than other areas? One rationale might be that city-regions form relatively self-contained functional economic systems that therefore make sense to manage at city-regional level. Another might be that the scale of city-regions is such that the financial risks of fiscal autonomy are ameliorated. Sub-national devolution needs to be looked at in the context of the local history, culture, tradition and political structure, all of which vary between LA areas. Therefore, the SCAs development of a level of governance across urban LAs in Scotland raises key questions concerning the most effective and efficient scale of governance systems for the future delivery of economic development policy in Scotland.

Overall, the research findings support the development of the theoretical model conceptualizing the PV of ULAC from an institutional critical realist perspective, further explained in section 9.3

9.3 Methodological contributions: Theory, Practice and Public Policy

The research draws upon the findings and initial analysis of Scotland's SCA programme. 23 semi-structured interviews were conducted with senior national and local officials who were responsible for negotiating and implementing the SCA, supplemented by analysis of relevant government and other policy documents.

The research describes how the Scottish Government invited the seven cities to participate in the SCA, leading to increasing tensions between national and urban government. Within the Scottish context of partnership policy emphasis and aspirational devolution, there are signs of national government's disagreement with some aspects of the ULAC networks aspirations for greater devolved powers to urban local authorities. The research reveals a growing power tension between urban and national government, largely predicated on the Scottish Government's desire for maintaining some level of centralised control and involvement in urban economic development policy.

9.3.1 Implications for practice and policy

Given the above conceptualisation, and in line with that suggested in a recent KPMG report (2015), the evidence here suggests the SCA as urban policy may be changing the relationships between spatial and investment planning in cities. Since 2011, the SCA can be seen as providing informed

impetus to the growth in infrastructure investment and enhance the connections between them. The research supports the argument that Scotland may now be on the edge of a new, very different period for city economic policies, by beginning to see a shift in nationally (UK and Scottish) determined ‘Cities Policy’, and a new era of more autonomous locally-driven City Policy.

However, a key policy implication is the need for the Scottish Government to reconsider the SCA and its role on influencing city deals in Scotland. In particular, there is a need to better include the role of major towns at much the same scale as the smaller cities, if to ensure a single coherent approach to urban politic through the SCA.

Besides the need for greater spatial economic balance within the policy machinery of Scottish government, there appears scope for further decentralizing of certain functions from Scottish Government to local government. and need for a transparent and coherent assess of the implications of increasing decentralization of powers across local government in Scotland. Moreover, the democratic and political accountability of emergent governance arrangements remains underdeveloped, suggesting ‘little seems to have been learned from the public rejection of the elected regional assemblies with their limited powers and resources’. (Ron Martin et al. 2015: 350).

Political ambitions and constitutional reform for local government:

The empirical evidence on the SCA raises important questions about the impact of political ambitions on the implicit role of the SCA as a Scotland-wide policy mechanism, that can both: *coordinate* public policy and investment decisions on behalf of cities, as well as *activate and control* these decisions at a regional level.

If the Scottish Government’s ambition is to use the SCA to act as a vehicle for urban decision-making at the national level – through a dominant cities agenda – and shown to influence the overall policy outcomes of the SCA, urban regime theory would steer towards caution in acknowledging the potential dis-equilibrating effects of the political agenda of larger cities potentially generating coalitions of interest that can dominate the overall political agenda and priorities, by persuading other elected members to act mainly in the interest of larger cities (Stoker, 1995). An important point here is to understand to what extent the SCA agenda has been dominated by the larger city local authorities’ political ambitions, and by implication, questioning whether this is representative of the whole SCA network and all of Scotland’s local authorities. In this regard, the overall configuration and structure of the SCA will require further scrutiny in years to come.

Institutional dimensions/characteristics/PV:

The country studies undertaken by Hulst and van Monfort (2012) suggest that specific features of the national institutional context may service the establishment of collaboration due to specific external factors: the presence of strong natural, social and economic interdependencies in a region and the absence of a strong intermediate tier of government that can fulfil planning functions.

The findings in the thesis demonstrate how: a) the basic mechanisms and possible patterns of path-dependent institutional change in a formal institutional governance arrangement is comprised of both formal and informal network effects; b) specifying how these mechanisms and patterns vary according to the different types of institutions, conditioned by differences in the institutional environment (in particular with regard to government structure at the national level, and structures at the subnational level).

The role institutions are found mainly to be as follows:

- Informal institutional characteristics are found to play a key role in the SCA's development, in terms of trust that developed between ULA's resulting in a significant shift in the networks value during the growth stage, and for meeting the networks original objectives. This is contrary to much of existing economic research on informal institutions and their impact thought largely negligible (see Rodrigues, 2013: 1038). There is also lack of evidence on a positive link between informal institutions and economic development outcomes. Therefore, in the context of ULAC, informal institutions have played a key and important role in influencing the perceived value of ULAC network;
- Despite the absence of solid evidence linking informal institutions in the literature to regional economic development, there is a firm belief by institutionalists that informal institutions (e.g. such as culture, history, religion or identity), are indeed important, on the potential for economic activity (Rodrigues, 2013: 1038), including: 'smoothing the process of knowledge and innovation transfer' (North, 1990, 1995; V Ázquez-Barquero, 2002), and establishing an adequate balance between coordination and competition as a key condition for the institutional development process;

The conceptual framework and methodology across three levels of What, How and Why ULAC has PV for economic development, was used to provide a deep contextual insight of Scotland's ULAC experience. Scotland's establishment of ULAC as an economic development policy largely reflects the cities ambitions for greater devolution of power from the centre in Scotland, and reflective of a missing tier of government between national and subnational tiers of government in Scotland. The findings support the view that the PV of ULAC in Scotland for economic development, is largely reflective of (1) different priorities and inconsistency in the ambitions and strategic direction of local government in Scotland, (2) changing governance arrangements within the policy network over time (3) the nature of formal institutions of national government structure

in Scotland and lack of trust and tensions between network members within the network (4) the strength of weak, informal institutions and ties within the network between members from similar institutional contexts.

9.2.2 Implications for Theory

While there exist a range of policy network studies of local government collaboration from an institutional perspective (Ha et al. 2016; Hulst and Montfort, 2012), few provide a multi-disciplinary focus on the role of scale (e.g. urban scale of local government) as a key institutional characteristic affecting collaboration outcomes.

Although theoretical ideas about the collaboration policy-outcome relationship are vast, much of that work is ambiguous in character and unsystematic in sketching causal links between collaboration and performance. Bingham et al. (2003), for example, suggests evaluation of collaborative should be seen ‘as part of an extended, systematic, learning process’ that considers looking for patterns of outcomes across different situations over time. Therefore, the particular operationalization of the process–outcome relationship presented in this thesis is a contribution toward this learning process. Hence, it is unlikely we will ever arrive at a single approach to assess collaboration outcomes

In an effort to contribute to a multi-disciplinary perspective, an inductively developed model of the collaboration-outcome relationship is presented – a model constructed from the review of theoretical literature on collaboration ‘functional characteristics’ and consolidated through the findings of the interpretive particularization of case study findings according to the ULAC setting.

Consistent with a wider perspective of institutions according to Evenhues (2017) relative to path dependency, the findings here support the idea of a multi-scalar view of institutions, but also, that both formal and informal institutions across different scale are important in economic development networks, summarised as follows:

- The SCA can be regarded as a formal institutional network (i.e. formalized institution for the steering and coordination of initiatives pertaining to economic development in Scotland) comprised of both national and subnational (urban agencies);
- Institutional change at the subnational level (e.g. differing political views on city powers) is shown to be conditioned by structures at different levels of scale (i.e. particular the urban local scale), and how various local agents (i.e. those larger in size and with greater political influence and connections – Edinburgh and Glasgow) can be seen to drive institutional nature of the overall network, and hence, its PV;
- The regional institutional context can be seen to influence both the overall networks formal

instituted context, but importantly, the informal institutions within the network between national and local agencies, and contributed towards the whole network effect of going in a slightly different direction to that originally anticipated by the national government's intentions. Demonstrating the importance of informal institutions within the network at a subnational level, and their impact overall on the PV of ULAC

- A multi-scalar view of institutions can be seen to create a dynamic effect on the PV of ULAC due to both formal institutions at the national level, and informal institutions at the subnational level;
- To operate effectively, network members must act as a network, which means incurring organizing and transaction costs. However, the overall impact of increasing transactions costs on the networks value will depend on the balance of opportunity costs for network embedding and spatial efficiencies;
- There is the need for increasing recognition of the region as a cultural and political construction, as a prelude to institution building. Regional institutions 'come to exist and take on significance only in the context of their wider political and institutional settings' (Agnew, 2013: 12) and the outcome of territorially based politics.

The contribution of the thesis is demonstrating the value of institutional theory for understanding the value of networked policy at a subnational level for economic development, through its explanatory power of the contribution of the role of informal institutions for economic development and growth, reflecting the path dependent nature of subnational forms of networked policy.

The research observations of the lack of steering capacity of Scottish Government in the ULAC network, resonates with others (see: Kickert, Klijn and Koppenjan 1997; Rhodes, 1997), and underlines the point that 'complex social interventions act on complex social systems (Pawson et al. 2006: 21). Hence, underlining the thesis argument that policy needs to be viewed as the outcome of non-rational decision-making, by taking into account multi-actor and multi-level approaches in policy formulation (i.e. realism – See Pawson, 2006). Therefore, assessing policy processes from an institutional perspective recognises the need to consider the lack of steering capacity by government in the policy-making and implementation process, and government's inability to deal with societal problems in their original institutional context (see: Kickert, Klijn and Koppenjan 1997; Rhodes 1997).

9.4 Limitations and Future research

A major weakness of the research is the potential limited explanatory power of an ethnographic style single case study approach. Indeed, the conclusions concerning the links between different institutional mechanisms (i.e. functional, behavioural and contextual) can only be viewed as

indicative given the different combinations of mechanisms that are possible (as identified in Figure 26). Therefore, further research in different institutional settings and involving different types of actors, will inevitably change the pattern and hence, interaction of different mechanisms given that they are heavily context dependant.

A further limitation of the research relates to the public value approach adopted and the identification of the counterfactual from ULAC. The thesis assumes that measuring the counterfactual is a challenging measurement process, requiring a similar complex ontological approach to that adopted in establishing an approach to PV estimation of collaboration. For example, ‘whether counterfactual assessment should be considered a valid method of testing causal hypotheses is not clear’ (Fearon, 1996: 39). Therefore, measuring the counterfactual of the PV of ULAC is important for clarifying the value added from ULAC as an economic development policy.

Empirically, there is also a lack of evidence comparing whole network effects and counterfactual effects (i.e. particularly comparing the effectiveness of policy outcomes of individual network sub-actors). Indeed, if ULAC in Scotland is to continue, a clear understanding of its added value should become clearer over the longer term (i.e. to identify further stages in the network, a potential collapse). The conceptual framework here assumes that PV can be best understood as a product of both agency and structure, contextualised subject to the role of institutional mechanisms. The conceptual framework does however, demonstrate how the PV of ULAC can be achieved, therefore, a further counterfactual analysis would help to extend the conceptual model by measuring the extent to which the efficiency mechanisms identified (e.g. strengthening network ties; Scotland-wide city deal models etc) would otherwise be achieved if local authorities acted individually. An important question relates to findings linking the SCA to the evolution of Scotland-wide city-region models for infrastructure (city deals). Therefore, would these have happened without the SCA? The findings here suggest that the SCA has had a significant role in steering other cities interests in development city deal models from Glasgow’s first mover advantage. The findings suggest at a minimum, that informal network ties are improving between Scotland’s cities, and indeed, having a key role in influencing new emerging infrastructure planning models in Scotland.

Given the contextual single case study nature of the research as a potential limitation, their is also value from recognising the different stages of the network, and understanding how the role of institutions are cumulative, conditioned by institutions in earlier network stages, to reveal an on-going dynamic policy process over time. Further empirical research in other country contexts adopting ULAC would prove valuable for validating and refining the conceptual characteristics, and hence their theoretical value, as well as opportunities for more in depth investigation of the different types of institutions.

The approach taken here is also empirically valuable, as it relates to the need for understanding the Scottish case, rather than serving only to solve a conceptual problem from a single research case study design: where previous failed ULAC attempts between Edinburgh and Glasgow justified the single country case study selection. The fact that Scotland had previously failed in its attempts at ULAC between two of its LAs, called for a ‘privileged perspective’ (Huby, Harries, and Grant 2011) an immersion into a single case study of a generic type, to observe and unravel variables potentially overlooked or underestimated by previous research, particularly a multi-disciplinarily perspective of the impact of institutions.

There remains a challenge however, in gathering and analysing data from multiple sources, where the findings cannot be readily generalized to all types of collaboration policies, or indeed, public sector collaboration; however, it may be conceptually useful to the studied ‘type’, in terms of collaboration relating to network policies involving urban local authorities only. Therefore, systematic data would help to make the conceptual framework more accurate by gathering comparable evidence about other ULAC settings, rather than just the ones observed in Scotland.

Finally, a limitation of the interpretive critical realist ontology is based on people’s own perception and subjective understanding of events rather than an objective reality of the process of ULAC, thus dependant on an interpretive approach by both the researcher, and research participants. However, the conceptual strength of the framework’s findings acts to contribute towards a fuller, more holistic understanding of the PV of ULAC to help improve the validity and reliability of the research approach taken.

Areas for future research:

Areas for future research would include testing the functional domains in other ULAC contexts, to check the limits of their generalizability and ‘general applicability’, in order to provide invaluable insights around alternative functional components that might help better understand or strengthen ULAC policies and practice, possible through further research methods using more deductive research approaches to further ‘test’ the functional relationship with outcomes over a longer time period.

In terms of the strengthening of informal ties between the city members of the SCA and their facilitating of new and emerging models of infrastructure funding across Scotland, this suggests a new spatial planning model across is evolving across Scotland. The extent to which the new models of infrastructure planning across Scotland has the potential to improve functional integration and cohesion across Scotland’s cities, is a key area for future research. In particular, any benefits from improving functional integration will depend on the nature of any counteractive

spatial imbalances. Indeed, an added complexity from SCA being urban-centric is the potential for widening spatial imbalances between local and urban scales of government in Scotland.

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Appendix 1: Policy Network Definitions

An overview of the range of multi-disciplinary terms and their definitions are provided, mainly: ‘collaboration’; ‘policy network’; ‘network governance’; and ‘collaborative public management’. The table highlights a lack of agreement and consistency of terminology as well as confusion not only about what collaboration is, but also, what is its objective and purpose.

AUTHOR(S)	TITLE (YR)	CONCEPT	DEFINITIONS
Rhodes	Policy Network Analysis (2008)	Policy Network	Policy networks are sets of formal institutional and informal linkages between governmental and other actors structured around shared if endlessly negotiated beliefs and interests in public policy making and implementation. (p.426)
Mossberger, and Stoker	Urban Affairs Review The Challenge of Conceptualization (2001)	Policy network	The concept of policy networks is so broad as to include almost any type of cross-institutional collaboration (p.821)
Kickert, Klijn, Franciscus, Koppenjan	Managing Complex Networks: Strategies for the Public Sector (1997)	Policy networks	More or less stable patterns of social relations between interdependent actors, which take shape around policy problems and/or policy programmes (p.6).
Isett, Ines, Mergel, LeRoux, Mischen, and Rethemeyer.	Networks in Public Administration Scholarship: Understanding Where We Are and Where We Need to Go (2011)	Policy network	A set of public agencies, legislative offices, and private sector organizations (including interest groups, corporations, non-profits, etc.) that have an interest in public decisions within a particular area of policy because they are interdependent but have a shared fate (p.158)...The original conceptualization of policy networks concerned decision making about public resource allocation (p.158).
Isett, Ines, Mergel, LeRoux, Mischen, and Rethemeyer	Networks in Public Administration Scholarship: Understanding Where We Are and Where We Need to Go (2011)	Collaborative networks	Collections of government agencies, non-profits, and for-profits that work together to provide a public good, service, or “value” when a single public agency is unable to create the good or service on its own and/or the private sector is unable or unwilling to provide the goods or services in the desired quantities. Collaborative networks carry out activities on behalf of the public. They may be formal and orchestrated by a public manager or they may be emergent, self-organizing, and ad hoc, with many variants in between. (p.158)

Isett, Ines, Mergel, LeRoux, Mischen, and Rethemeyer.	Networks in Public Administration Scholarship: Understanding Where We Are and Where We Need to Go (2011)	Governance networks	Entities that fuse collaborative public goods and service provision with collective policymaking—for instance, business improvement districts or some environmental mitigation efforts (p.158)
Huxham	Creating collaborative advantage (1996)	Collaboration	Working in association with others for some form of mutual benefit (p.1).
Bardach	Getting agencies to work together (1998)	Collaboration	Any joint activity by two or more agencies working together that is intended to increase public value by their working together rather than separately (p.8).
Burger, van der Knaap, and Wall	Polycentricity and the Multiplexity of Urban Networks (2013)	Urban network	A multiplex phenomena to allow polycentricity and interdependencies to be studied by evaluating different types of functional linkage between cities and regions, for example, commuter trips (p.3)
Liu, X and Derudder, B.	Analysing urban networks through the lens of corporate networks (2013)	Urban networks	An organizing paradigm...from roughly the early 1990s onwards, we see a rising interest in describing urban systems through the analytical lens of flows between cities... emphasizing the bearing of external relations of cities ... (p. 430).
Rhodes and Marsh	New directions in the study of policy networks (1992)	Interurban networks	A new set of horizontal intergovernmental relations, where participants manoeuvre for advantage deploying their constitutional-legal, organisational, financial, political and informational resources to maximise their influence over outcomes (p.182).
Ansell and Gash	Collaborative Governance in Theory and Practice. (2008)	Collaborative governance	A governing arrangement where one or more public agencies directly engage non-state stakeholders in a collective decision-making process that is formal, consensus-oriented, and deliberative and that aims to make or implement public policy or manage public programs or assets (p.544)
Agranoff and McGuire	Collaborative public management: New strategies for local governments (2003)	Collaborative public management	To co-labour, to achieve common goals, often working across boundaries and in multi-sector and multi-actor relationships...based on the value of reciprocity and can include the public (...)
O'Leary and Bingham,	Conclusion: Conflict and Collaboration in Networks: Missing Questions, Missing Connections.	Collaborative public management	A concept that describes the process of facilitating and operating in multi-organizational arrangements to solve problems that cannot be solved or easily solved by single organizations. Collaborative means to co- labour, to co-operate to achieve common goals, working across boundaries in multi-sector relationships. Cooperation is based on the value of reciprocity (p.7)

Appendix 2: Scottish Settlements (Travel-to-Work-Areas) (2004-2014)

Travel to Work Area	Population 2004	Population 2014	Mean Annual Growth 2004-14	Population Share 2014
Glasgow	1,128,397	1,169,659	0.4%	21.9%
Edinburgh	610,228	671,149	1.0%	12.6%
Lanarkshire	483,297	498,599	0.3%	9.3%
Aberdeen	359,913	403,379	1.2%	7.5%
Ayr and Kilmarnock	228,388	231,230	0.1%	4.3%
Dundee	210,464	220,155	0.5%	4.1%
Falkirk	161,878	171,428	0.6%	3.2%
Livingston and Bathgate	155,271	168,787	0.9%	3.2%
Kirkcaldy and Glenrothes	160,265	165,137	0.3%	3.1%
Dunfermline	131,589	140,153	0.7%	2.6%
Stirling and Alloa	132,426	139,510	0.5%	2.6%
Irvine and Arran	137,412	137,103	0.0%	2.6%
Perth and Blairgowrie	122,902	133,869	0.9%	2.5%
Inverness and Dingwall	104,820	119,061	1.4%	2.2%
Moray	89,380	94,750	0.6%	1.8%
Dumfries and Annan	85,530	87,573	0.2%	1.6%
Greenock	84,777	82,049	-0.3%	1.5%
Dumbarton	73,753	72,164	-0.2%	1.3%
Forfar and Montrose	57,313	59,957	0.5%	1.1%
Galashiels and Peebles	54,221	57,631	0.6%	1.1%
St Andrews and Cupar	48,702	49,551	0.2%	0.9%
Peterhead	34,373	36,231	0.5%	0.7%
Berwick	28,856	30,931	0.7%	0.6%
Western Isles	26,650	27,250	0.2%	0.5%
Banff	26,425	27,065	0.2%	0.5%
Kirkcudbright	23,419	23,408	0.0%	0.4%
Shetland Islands	22,090	23,230	0.5%	0.4%
Fraserburgh	21,799	22,815	0.5%	0.4%
Invergordon	21,170	22,203	0.5%	0.4%
Orkney Islands	19,830	21,590	0.9%	0.4%
Dunoon and Bute	22,430	20,674	-0.8%	0.4%
Lochaber	19,043	19,763	0.4%	0.4%
Hawick	18,981	18,557	-0.2%	0.3%
Stranraer	18,317	17,833	-0.3%	0.3%
Oban	16,125	16,894	0.5%	0.3%
Kelso and Jedburgh	14,577	15,419	0.6%	0.3%
Thurso	15,192	15,315	0.1%	0.3%
Badenoch	12,225	13,672	1.2%	0.3%
Skye and Lochalsh	12,417	13,076	0.5%	0.2%
Pitlochry	12,210	12,542	0.3%	0.2%
Wick	11,794	11,936	0.1%	0.2%
Newton Stewart and Wigton	11,641	11,413	-0.2%	0.2%
Carlisle	10,446	10,301	-0.1%	0.2%
Dornoch and Lairg	9,507	9,781	0.3%	0.2%
Lochgilphead	9,694	9,408	-0.3%	0.2%
Ullapool and Gairloch	8,392	8,293	-0.1%	0.2%
Campbeltown	8,286	7,749	-0.6%	0.1%
Mull and Islay	7,485	7,357	-0.2%	0.1%
	2,669,150	2,856,782	0.7%	53%
	5,084,300	5,347,600	0.5%	100%

Mid-Year Population Estimates, NRS

Source: Scottish Government Statistics:<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Business/Publications/7Cities>

Appendix 3: Scotland's Cities: Key Facts

Scottish Cities	Key Facts
Aberdeen	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Europe's energy capital and one of top 5 energy cities in the world • 2nd highest business birth rate in UK • 2 world renowned universities • Home to 33 of Scotland's top 100 companies • Has over 1,000 businesses within the energy sector • 3.5m passengers through Aberdeen International Airport (14% of all passengers in Scottish airports)
Dundee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highest student population ratio in Scotland • Selected as one of the 7 most intelligent communities in the world by the Intelligent Community Forum • UK's first and only UNESCO City of Design • Home to the only V&A Museum outside London • Birthplace of Scotland's computer games industry and home to the world's first computer games degree • Scotland's sunniest city
Stirling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ranked best place in Scotland to start a business and 8th in the UK • The University of Stirling is one of the UK's top research universities and is 7th in the UK for graduate employability. • Highest % of employees who are managers, directors or senior officials in Scotland (13.4%) • Scotland's most entrepreneurial city with 100 more businesses per 1,000 population than the UK average. • Stirling is an international centre of excellence for Aquaculture, Dementia Care and Sport. • 33% of our workforce is educated to degree level or above.
Perth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Projected population growth of 25% over next 20 years • More places to eat and drink per head of population than any other Scottish city. • Largest concentration of food and drink businesses in Scotland worth £310m annually • 61.5% of residents qualified to graduate level

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One of UK's leading cities for digital connectivity (almost 100% of premises having access to superfast broadband and 89% to ultrafast broadband) • Home to largest University of Highlands and Islands Campus with over 9,000 students
Inverness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fastest growing city in Scotland • One of the best UK retail investment locations • Home to the UK's newest university • Home to Scotland's largest life science company – Lifescan Scotland • Largest multi-purpose arts venue in Scotland • Home to one of world's finest golf courses • Largest national park in UK - Cairngorms
Glasgow	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scotland's largest city, population of 600,000 • Scotland's economic powerhouse • Home to 130,000 students from more than 135 countries • One of National Geographic's top 20 locations for 2016 • 2nd largest shopping location in UK, £2.55bn spent each year • Rough Guide's Friendliest city in the world
Edinburgh	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Home to the world's largest Arts Festival (The Edinburgh Festival Fringe), a world Heritage Site and UNESCO's first City of Literature, and the city is 2nd most popular tourist destination in UK, over 4m visitors each year. • "Best Mid-Sized European City for Business Friendliness 2016/17" • More people with degree/degree equivalent qualifications than any UK city outside London (46% of working age residents) • Hotel occupancy rates amongst the highest in Europe • UK's largest tech hub out of London and home to 2 of the world's 152 unicorn start ups • Four Michelin starred restaurants, more than any UK city outside London

Source: Data sources for City Information take from Scotland's 'Agenda for Cities' 2016:
<http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2016/03/3178/3>

Appendix 4: Interviewee Characteristics

INTERVIEWEE CODE	GEOGRAPHICAL REPRESENTATION 1. NATIONAL (N) 2. URBAN (U)	GENDER: 1. MALE (M) 2. FEMALE (F)	PERSPECTIVE: 1. POLITICAL (P) 2. OFFICER (O)	INTERVIEW LENGTH (minutes)
I1	U	F	O	31
I2	U	F	O	32
I3	U	F	O	42
I4	U	F	P	35
I5	U	M	O	42
I6	U	M	O	53
I7	U	M	O	45
I8	U	M	O	48
I9	U	M	O	40
I10	U	M	O	62
I11	U	M	O	53
I12	U	M	P	42
I13	U	M	O	45
I14	U	M	P	38
I15	U	F	O	54
I16	N	F	O	34
I17	N	F	O	63
I18	N	F	O	38
I19	N	F	O	62
I20	N	M	O	70
I21	N	M	O	63
I22	N	M	O	53
I23	N	M	O	58

Appendix 5: Research Questions

Background information on your area of expertise and organisation

1. Name of organisation
2. Job title (optional) of person completing this survey
3. What is your role or primary responsibility in your organisation?
4. Your (interviewee) background and relationship and role with the **ULAC** in general.

CASE STUDY OF A URBAN LOCAL AUTHORITY COLLABORATION (ULAC):

THEME A: PURPOSE OF ULAC

1. How has your relationship with the **ULAC** developed since your involvement?
2. What do you perceive has been the key milestones (i.e. objectives) in the development of the **ULAC** initiative to date?
3. Do you think there have been any perceived unintended outcomes from the SCA network to date?
4. Do you think there have been any constraints surrounding the achievement of current **ULAC** milestones/objectives?
5. Can you say anything about **ULAC** contribution towards the achievement of:
 - pooled resources;
 - shared agendas;
 - leadership;
 - community engagement;
 - mutual learning;
 - accountability;
 - trusting relationships.

THEME B: MANAGEMENT OF ULAC

1. What do you perceive as the key successes of the **ULAC** to date?
2. Based on your involvement with the **ULAC**, what would you say are the key advantages (disadvantages) of being involved in the **ULAC**?
3. Are there any barriers (disadvantages) or facilitators (advantages) towards the achievement of successful economic development policy outcomes from being involved in a **ULAC**?

4. Is there anything you think the **ULAC** could do to be more effective for the achievement of economic development objectives?
5. Can you tell me more about how the **ULAC** is governed and managed?
6. What do you regard as the important aspects of the **ULAC** governance for urban collaboration?
7. What do you regard as the successful and unsuccessful aspects of the **ULAC** governance for urban collaboration?
8. Can you say anything about the effective (or ineffective) ways in which the **ULAC** governance functions?
9. What, in your opinion, are the key challenges faced by the **ULAC**?

THEME C: THE CONFIGURATION/STRUCTURE OF ULAC

1. Who are the key partners/agencies involved in the **ULAC** network and what is their respective role with the **ULAC**?
2. In your opinion, what is the role of individual cities within the **ULAC** – are there key members (or non-key members) of the **ULAC** network, who might they be and why?
3. Has your working relationship with the agencies currently involved in the **ULAC** changed due to your involvement with the **ULAC**, and if so, how has it changed?

Appendix 6: Non-participant Observation Proforma

NON-PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION:

Observations will be based around:

- The dynamics taking place within the case study/group being observed;
- Relationship between members;
- Decision-making processes, governance considerations, meeting standards, regulations, processes.

OBSERVATION AREAS:

A What is happening?

1. Setting:
 - describe the space;
 - who is involved;
 - what objects are involved/what are they doing/listening to presentations etc/making decision etc;
 - what are the goals/objectives of the event;
 - what is the mood of the event;
 - who was the chair etc;
 - using a chart to map who is involved/who they are etc;
2. Description of the event/what kind of event is it;
3. Ethnographic mapping (e.g. decision making).

B Why it is happening:

- looking for events that influence the groups behaviour;
- looking for patterns of behaviour;
- the typology of the event/classify the people involved: decision makers; participants; observers; leaders etc;

Appendix 7: Plain Language Statement



Plain Language Statement

1. Study title and Researcher Details

University: University of Glasgow, Adam Smith Business School, Management

Research Title: Urban Collaboration for Economic Development: a critical assessment of the relationship between Urban Local Authority Collaboration (ULAC) and policy in practice

Names of Researcher(s): Linda Christie, Doctoral Researcher

2. Invitation paragraph

You are being invited to take part in a doctoral research study. Before you decide to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish.

Please ask the researcher if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part.

Thank you in advance for reading this statement.

3. What is the purpose of the study?

The aim of this research is to clarify the conceptual understanding and importance of collaborative working for urban economic development, through an analysis of the nature of the relationship between Urban Local Authority Collaboration (ULAC) and policy outcomes. Urban Local Authority Collaboration (ULAC) in this research is used as an umbrella term to refer to economic development policy networks that involve collaborative working at the scale of the city, using the Scottish Cities Alliance (SCA) as a case study. The nature of inter-urban collaboration within the SCA is being studied via *policy network analysis*, by describing the SCA policy process to provide insight on the nature of the urban networked relationships for policy outcomes.

An exploration of the SCA will offer fresh insight on the collaborative relationship between Scotland's cities by expanding the empirical knowledge base. Research such as this is concerned with assessing the nature of collaborative policy-making within different institutional settings of urban governance, with a focus on the relative impact on the delivery of policy outcomes. The research also aims to validate

apparent criticisms of the role of governance in Urban Local Authority Collaboration (ULAC), by considering whether inter-urban collaboration does in fact, provide an effective economic development policy solution.

The data collection for this research is estimated to take approximately 6 months.

4. Why have I been chosen?

You have been chosen based on your involvement with the SCA and or related work experience and involvement in economic development policy of Scotland's cities.

5. Do I have to take part?

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you decide to take part you are still free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason. If you refuse to participate in the research, this will have no effect on your employment.

In addition, if you have decided to participate, all the data and information gathered from you will not be disclosed to your superiors and subordinates in order ensure the protection and anonymity of participation.

6. What will happen to me if I take part?

You will be involved in the data gathering process through interviews. Interviews will be conducted for approximately 30-40 minutes and data will be recorded, with your permission using audio recording.

7. Will my taking part in this study be kept confidential?

Information, which is collected about you during the course of the research, will be kept strictly confidential such as name, background etc. The organisation's name and role (position) of the participant within the organisation may be disclosed with permission only. If you do not like to disclose your role (position) of the organization, your information will be kept anonymous throughout the research. You will be identified under a fictitious name, and any information about you will have your name and address removed so that you cannot be recognised from it.

Data will be gathered in the form of field notes (during interviews) using real names and during writing up of the formal notes (second stage) you will be identified under a fictitious name. Data will be stored in the personal laptop or computers with access to be available by password only and field notes will be stored securely in personal locked filed cabinet during the data gathering period.

8. What will happen to the results of the research study?

The results of the research will be published in the form of a PhD thesis, and possibly, contribute towards the production of conference papers, journal articles and/or book chapters. You can obtain a copy of the published results from the researcher if you request it.

9. Who is organising and funding the research?

The Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) and Scottish Government are funding the PhD as part of a PhD scholarship with the Scottish Cities Knowledge Centre of the University of Glasgow.

10. Who has reviewed the study?

Project has been reviewed by the College of Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee.

11. Contact for Further Information

LINDA CHRISTIE

PhD Researcher (Scottish Cities Knowledge Centre)
University of Glasgow
12 Southpark Terrace
Glasgow G12 8LG
Tel: 0141 330 2014 (direct)
Mobile: +44 (0)7772767751
Email: l.christie.2@research.gla.ac.uk

If you have any concerns regarding the conduct of the research project, you can contact the College Ethics Officer by contacting: Dr Muir Houston, (email muir.houston@glasgow.ac.uk).

If you consent to being interviewed and understand the Plain Language Statement (PLS), please print and sign your name, and date the form, in the spaces provided, confirming that:

- I confirm that I have read and understand the Plain Language Statement for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions.
- I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason.
- I understand that my interview will be *audio-recorded and that copies of transcripts will be returned for participant verification. All information recorded will thereafter be transcribed (and the recordings destroyed) and participants to be referred to by pseudonym and identified by a pseudonym in all publications arising from the research.*
- I agree to take part in the above study.

Name of Participant	Date	Signature
Researcher	Date	Signature

Appendix 8: Consent for the Use of Data

DATA USE AND MANAGEMENT PLAN - CONSENT TO THE USE OF DATA

University of Glasgow, College of Social Science Research Ethics Committee

Title of Project: Public Value of Urban Local Authority Collaboration

I understand that **Linda Christie** is collecting data in the form of interviews for use in an academic research project at the University of Glasgow.

This research is funded entirely by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC).

I give my consent to the use of data for this purpose on the understanding that:

- All names and other material likely to identify individuals (or locations) will be anonymised (see Appendix 1 for illustrative purposes).
- Participants have the right to withdraw at any time.
- Data collected may be processed manually and with the aid of computer software.
- The material will be treated as confidential and kept in secure storage at all times.
- When all research outputs are complete, the material will be destroyed in accordance with the University of Glasgow's Data Protection Policy.
- A copy of your interview transcript will be provided, free of charge, on request.
- In line with ESRC data sharing rules, the interview data will be deposited (and anonymised) to the UK Data Service's ReShare data repository within three months of the end of the grant period (i.e. January 2017).

In order to comply with the ESRC's Data Sharing requirements please indicate, by ticking ONE of the boxes below, how you prefer selected texts to be quoted directly, in reports and publications arising from this research:

- I/my employer (delete which is not applicable) may be identified in reports made available outside the research teams and the ESRC, and in publications.
- Neither I, nor my employer, may be identified in reports made available outside the research teams and the ESRC, nor in any publications. My words may be quoted provided that they are anonymised.
- Neither I, nor my employer, may be identified in reports made available outside the research teams and the ESRC, nor in any publications. My words may not be quoted.

If you consent to the data gathered being processed as outlined below, please print and sign your name, and date the form, in the spaces provided:

- I confirm that I have read and understand the Data Management Plan and Consent Form for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions.
- I agree to take part in the above study.

Name of Participant	Date	Signature
Researcher	Date	Signature

Researcher's name and email contact: Linda Christie

Supervisor's name and email contact:
Professor Iain Docherty: iain.docherty@glasgow.ac.uk,

Department address: Adam Smith Business School, Main Building, and University of Glasgow,
G12 8QQ

Example anonymisation log

Interview and page number	Original	Changed to
Int1		
p1	Age 27	Age range 20-30
p1	Glasgow	City
p3	Glasgow City Council	Urban Local Authority (ULA)
p2	20th June	June
p2	Amy (real name)	RI1...R1x (pseudonym)
Int2		
p1	Francis	my colleague
p10	Head of Economic Development, Edinburgh	Senior Executive with a Scottish Local Authority

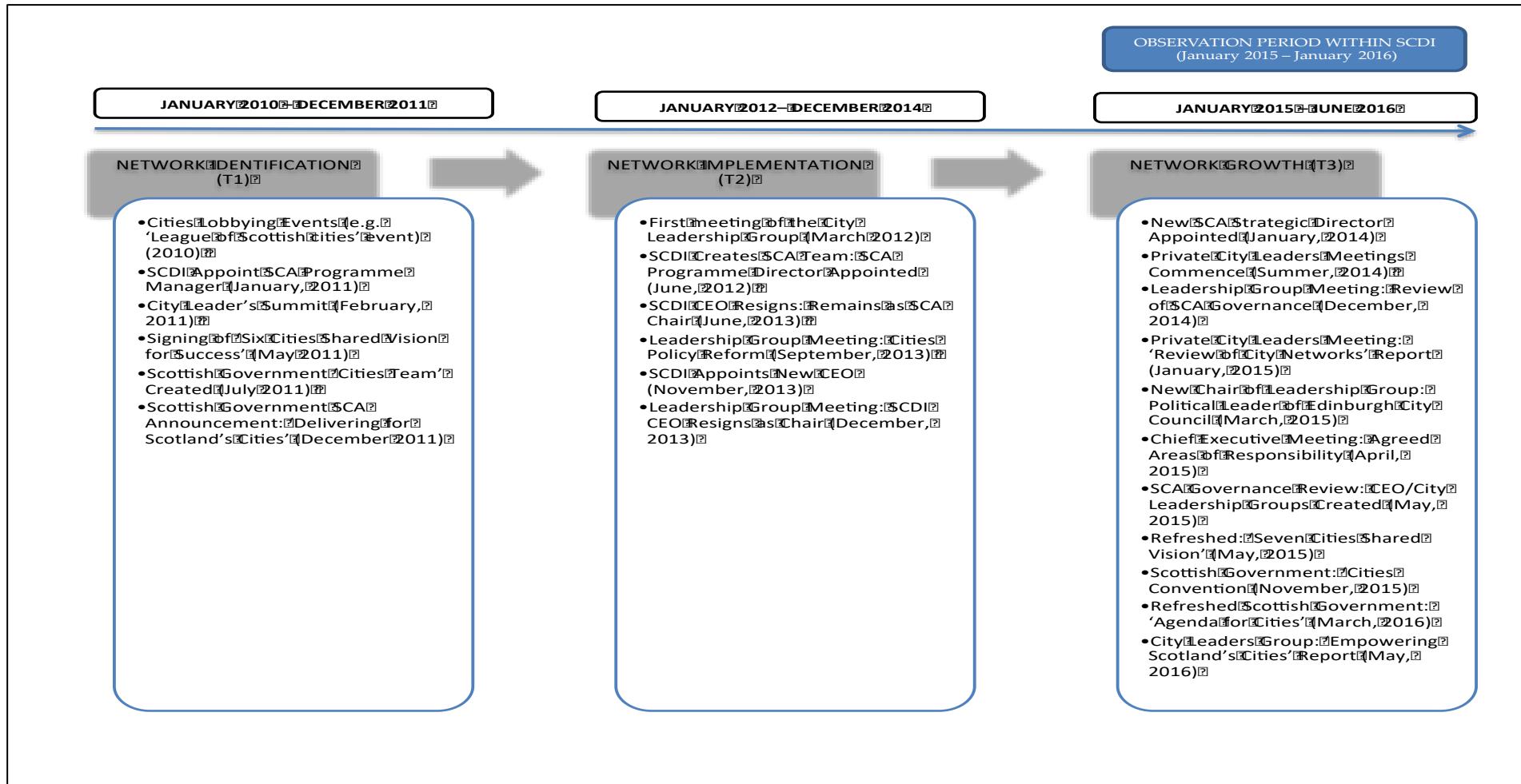
Transcript anonymisation example

In an interview transcript a person's name is replaced with a pseudonym or with a tag that typifies the person [i.e. council employee].

This is also done when reference is made to other identifiable people.

An exact geographical location may be replaced with a meaningful descriptive term that typifies the location [southern part of town, near the local river, a moorland farm, his native village].

Appendix 9: Network Timeline (January 2010 – June 2016)



Appendix 10: The role of institutional mechanisms on the PV of ULAC at each stage of the network (key quotes taken from interview transcripts during analysis)

Table A: Sense-making: Network Identification (T1)

INTERPRETATION OF THE NETWORK PROCESS:	CONTEXTUAL MECHANISM:	FUNCTIONAL MECHANISM:	BEHAVIOURAL MECHANISM:
<p>Purpose: Increase national profile of cities; Build a link with Scottish Government; Provide governance/coordination of cities in Scotland</p> <p>Configuration: Six Cities; SCDI as Chair</p> <p>Management: Passive facilitation; Lack of strategic focus; Informal/Voluntary coordination</p>	<p>Economic: ‘Local Government is very hard to get ideas...we are really a hundred miles away from the nearest comparable local authority’ (RI10) ‘as a small city...we don't have the capacity to do it all ourselves’ (RI11) ‘Scotland’s cities are...economically diverse, geographically diverse...Probably a sense that Glasgow and Edinburgh have something in common. Dundee and Aberdeen at a push. The rest of them quite different.’ (RI18) ‘The initial concept of the city-region was the start, and a carefully constructed narrative around the travel to work area’ (RI23)</p> <p>Political: ‘COSLA considers that all councils are treated equally, when that's incorrect’ (RI22). ‘the different political parties put things in their manifestos around cities at the last election [2011]...SNP committed</p>	<p>Impact: ‘it takes a lot of resources and energy to liaise with all the cities without a core team’ (RI17) ‘going back to the politics of it...it's like herding cats...what happened was nothing got done’ (RI9).</p> <p>Clarity of Purpose: ‘Well it wasn’t clear. I mean, I think it just seemed like different organisations, you know, doing their own things...the cities themselves were trying to understand how they could work, because they hadn’t worked together before’ (RI14)</p> <p>Communication: ‘communication wasn’t the strong point at the start, it was felt that that would all be done by the existing city PR people’ (RI10)</p>	<p>Conflict/tension: ‘We had an away day with only the cities, and the Scottish Government weren’t involved, and that rankled the Scottish Government.’ (RI20) ‘We wanted to cities to run it without government, but much to our annoyance the government created the combination at the heart of the SCA organisation’ (RI23) ‘the relationship between Glasgow and Edinburgh wasn’t collaborative, it was quite competitive’ (RI12)</p> <p>Commitment: ‘there was no particular problem bringing the cities round that table for early discussions.’ (RI1). ‘there was a bit of small p political tension just in terms of a sense of, we’re Glasgow, why do we need this? ...what are we doing in a room with these much smaller places?’ (RI18) ‘I think the scope and pressures Glasgow is facing are of a different to some other cities.’(RI2)</p>

	<p>that they would appoint a cities minister' (RI22)</p> <p>'the aim was to create a coalition of cities that lobbied the government before the [2011] elections and for urban policy to be put into the manifestos of Scotland's political parties'</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Respondent: (I18)</p> <p>'the notion of what was going to be called the 'league of Scottish cities' based on the California league...then government in the run up to the 2011 elections, saw a political opportunity, and decided they would be part of it...made it SCA, and gave it to SCDI and funded it with a deal done with the leader of SCDI (RI23)</p> <p>Historical: 'Edinburgh was really instrumental in lobbying...around 2010, and came out of the Glasgow-Edinburgh Collaboration Initiative' (RI1)</p> <p>'it's been a big step forward in my experience, since the Glasgow Edinburgh Collaboration' (RI12)</p> <p>'it all started in 2010 with two events with the six cities, and telling them about city-regions (RI23)</p> <p>Financial: 'the political agenda in Scotland was about nation building and that the shift in where money was spent,</p>	<p>Strength of ties: 'this was the first time ever that only the city leaders had got in a room together'(RI22)</p> <p>'cities had never actually been directly involved in [joint projects] with each other before' (RI21).</p> <p>'the degree to which cities felt a common bond, I think, was also a lot less than say, a [English Core Cities model' (RI13)</p> <p>'Scotland's cities are all politically diverse in their administrations...not really familiar with each other.' (RI8)</p> <p>Equality: 'If you're the same colour as Scottish government I think you would feel that you're in a better position' (RI6)</p> <p>'it's not really apparent sometimes to see how working with the smaller cities is to the larger cities' advantage, purely on a scale basis, so I was probably a little bit sceptical at the beginning' (RI12)</p> <p>Agendas: 'SCDI had its own agenda in relation to the Cities Alliance...working for their own interests...not in the interest of the Alliance' (RI14)</p>
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	what it was spent on, was away from cities and into either key rural areas or into sectoral interests that were not those of cities' (RI18)		
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Table B: Sense-making: Network Implementation (T2)

INTERPRETATION OF THE NETWORK PROCESS:	CONTEXTUAL MECHANISM:	FUNCTIONAL MECHANISM:	BEHAVIOURAL MECHANISM:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Purpose: Support cities contribution towards national economic growth; National focus on inclusive growth; - Configuration: Increasing membership; All seven cities membership; membership flux/change - Management: Passive leadership; Lack of strategic clarity; Formalising/aligning governance 	<p>Politics: 'Nicola Sturgeon was quite heavily involved at the beginning. She didn't chair the leadership group but she participated in it' (RI10);</p> <p>'Glasgow was the only city leader who spanned the 2011-2012 SCA...it changed dynamics, not just potentially politically, but in terms of personalities, totally transformed.'(RI12)</p> <p>'there was a negotiation to be had in terms of short term political aims of collectively, the SCA, and what i would see as the longer term stability of the SCA (RI23)</p> <p>'I guess the battle between labour who see the Scottish cities as more autonomous and then SNP who trying to build a country to appear unified under one central area.'(RI7)</p> <p>'The big P politics of it...quite quickly the events of 2011 and 12, the emergency coalition...a very different</p>	<p>Influence/Impact: 'by using the SCA to lobby the Scottish Government for more resource, I think you've got to be careful how you do that and it's better to do that with them round the table'(RI10)</p> <p>'the SCA didn't have legal status in 2013, it was a programme within SCDI' (RI23)</p> <p>'its not impartial enough...we had to have a debate about the role of SCDI within the structure' (RI13)</p> <p>'It helps us to open doors in government that perhaps we wouldn't manage to open on our own. Having Scottish government colleagues meet with us on a regular basis just' (RI1).</p> <p>'externally it's didn't have much of a profile... people were saying "well what does the SCA really do?"'(RI10)</p>	<p>Tensions:</p> <p>[Nicola Sturgeon] is a very astute politician who was good at understanding the different dynamics in the group between the more SNP led councils and the labour led councils (RI10)</p> <p>'there is also some recognition of real Goliaths in the SCA membership' (RI17)</p> <p>'Perth and Stirling, they do provide a number of commuters and supply chain to the larger cities so they have a rightful place [in the SCA], but it did cause a little tension with the bigger cites (RI7)</p> <p>'there was a tension between the cities wanting to take on more as a group of cities, and on the other hand, the government trying to figure out what that means to them' (RI13)</p> <p>'it would be crazy to say there haven't been difficulties, not least...when you come from a big city...pretty well resourced, it's easier...to take forward some of the work than it is for some of the smaller cities'(RI1)</p> <p>Commitment/motivation:</p>

	<p>political environment...and various other things (RI18)</p> <p>‘Gordon [Leader of GCC] was the only one who was there from the start.’ (RI12)</p> <p>‘I don’t understand what their [cities] objective being part of the SCA is at the moment.(Ri18)</p> <p>Power: ‘The Scottish Government had the resources; they were a helpful resource, because we didn’t have the resource ourselves. (RI14)</p> <p>‘the alliance...so having the Depute First Minister at the table I think was valuable because we could bring to the table different things that we [cities] were doing and got noticed’ (RI10);</p>	<p>Transparency: ‘there were discussions that took place...that didn’t come down to the core team, and we didn’t have an understanding of things (RI14)</p> <p>Accountability: ‘there was all this sort of stuff, that just went on, that we were told, we just had to do, without there being an assessment of whether it was in the interests of the Alliance’ (RI14)</p> <p>Clarity of Purpose: ‘I think if we had been slightly more focused on doing one or two things really, really well rather than opening up a number of fronts, I think we would potentially have been more successful’(RI22)</p> <p>‘there was a bit too much jumping in too quick. I think, too much change in the lead up to the publication of the <i>Agenda for Cities</i> (RI21)</p> <p>‘whatever progress, or lack of it, was being made, some of the cities were talking that something had to change’ (RI20)</p> <p>‘I think it would have been better to approach things differently, looking back...we took a while to establish how we worked into the <i>Agenda for Cities</i>. And I think that’s representative of the number of different strategies and plans we’ve had. I think a lot of</p>	<p>‘some of the civil servants involved lacked imagination. I think they were pursuing a fairly narrow agenda without much ambition. It was almost like something that had to be done.’(RI8)</p> <p>‘i think the key thing is to get buy in and i worry perhaps where we are going with it. we have taken on a lot of people in the centre of the SCA...i think we might lose something from the cities themselves and buy-in from each city’(RI7)</p> <p>‘Glasgow still has no big political buy in. It’s a side show. It doesn’t really matter politically....the leader is exposed to what is going on and isn’t particularly enamoured by it. So it’s more on his radar than it was before, but not in a good way necessarily’ (RI18)</p> <p>‘So I had to ask them, ‘you need to decide where the SCA fits’. There was always an undercurrent of at least two of the cities (Edinburgh and Glasgow) who were on the verge of leaving.’(RI13)</p> <p>‘Scottish Enterprise having to be brought to the table kicking and screaming, and then actually trying to undermine us. They didn’t recognise cities.’(RI20)</p> <p>‘the delivery group attendance started to fall’ (RI20)</p> <p>Consensus:</p>
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	<p>time has been taken in revising a lot of strategies and plans' (RI21)</p> <p>Impact: 'there were other people to share with and a professional network which existed and allowed the sharing and exchange of ideas on other things, and there was cost savings to that'(I21) 'The SCA has been a collaborative bed for securing European Structural funds. Although it's led, by Glasgow City Council, all the cities benefit from it. And it's access to a pot of money, a substantial pot of money, that they wouldn't have got on their own.' (RI21) 'the smaller cities have come up with some of the most interesting innovations for developing cities. For example, Perth was on the only city who had a strategic investment fund. So there has been room to learn what each other was doing' (RI7)</p> <p>Accountability: 'we were required to put in a much more formalised governance structure to make sure that we were accountable.' (RI18)</p> <p>Stability: 'it was the equivalent of the note left in the treasury...mandated by the city</p>	<p>'cities need to be able to advocate their own city positions individually of government' (I23).</p> <p>'there were definitely constraints. The civil servants came at it with an apparently fixed view of what the problem was' (RI18)</p> <p>Agendas: 'the cities were gonna work together anyway. The Scottish Government wanted to be at the table, they put money on the table to bring them to the table. And that's where the Agenda for Cities came from' (RI21)</p> <p>Equality: 'As a large city, I suppose on balance giving it, but not getting much back' (RI8) 'As a large city, knowledge sharing hasn't changed - No, I wouldn't say yet' (RI2) 'although there are some real wins for smaller cities, like Perth, Stirling, Inverness by their very nature have more to gain than Glasgow Edinburgh Aberdeen or Edinburgh' (RI17)</p>
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		<p>leadership. This wasn't a stable basis to start from' (RI23)</p> <p>'it's been a kind of nebulous concept to be honest with you, and frankly, I didn't really think the whole organisation was really going anywhere' (RI14)</p> <p>'it's been over admin heavy. But I think that's gonna change (RI21)</p> <p>'don't think the cities themselves ever stopped to take a breath and reflect on where things were going. It was moving at a pace and in a direction that, you know, wasn't really thought through. There wasn't an opportunity for the cities to get together and think it through.'(RI8)</p>	
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Table C: Sense-making Table: Network Growth (T3)

NETWORK PROCESS:	CONTEXTUAL MECHANISM:	FUNCTIONAL MECHANISM:	BEHAVIOURAL MECHANISM:
<p><i>Purpose:</i> Devolution for Urban Local Government in Scotland (cities gain); Scottish Government's Agenda for National Inclusive Growth (National Gain)</p> <p><i>Configuration:</i> informal cities-only Group; formal SCA group</p>	<p><i>Economic:</i> ‘the smaller cities are facing a sub set of the issues that we’re facing.’(RI8) ‘Glasgow is also a member of the Core Cities...that can be helpful...and ensure that is translated into the Scottish dimension’(RI2)</p> <p><i>Political:</i></p>	<p><i>Influence:</i> ‘I can see the benefits of a collective lobbying power, the seven of us are working together...pushing the government for something’ (RI12)</p> <p>the doors have opened slightly because of the 7 cities working together. The relationships with: UKTI; Scottish Development international;</p>	<p><i>Commitment:</i> ‘trying to move the Alliance more towards being cities led...it’s been quite a journey to getting the government on board’ (RI12)</p> <p>‘there is a strong political steer that Glasgow is committed [to the SCA] going</p>

<p>including all cities and Scottish Government</p> <p><i>Management:</i> Clarity of purpose; stronger strategic leadership/direction;</p>	<p>'I think it's quite hard to show the impact. One of the questions is, well so why are working with all these other people what's the impact? Well politicians want to see impact' (RI10)</p> <p>'I think there's an increasing willingness from central Scottish Government to let go of the levers of control, but it's a slow process, and if that process reverses or doesn't keep going after May 2016, I think that'll be a major barrier (RI12)</p> <p>a few of the cities were still SNP led, four Labour led, so there's still a cross-party mix. And everybody was in agreement that we should try and move it towards being more cities led.(RI12)</p> <p><i>Historical:</i></p> <p>Following the referendum, the SCA could have either imploded or gained momentum, and i think it gained momentum in the safe space, and could have fallen apart if the outcome of the referendum had been different' (RI17)</p> <p><i>Power:</i></p> <p>'the cabinet minister needs to let the SCA deliver and not be overly concerned with the governance at that group and they should be</p>	<p>Scottish Enterprise...so the national agency conversation has become much easier, particularly for smaller cities' (RI3)</p> <p>'you can't underestimate the access to senior ministers that that SCA provides (RI10)</p> <p><i>Clarity of purpose:</i></p> <p>'the political lobbying, the pressing for governmental input both politically and financially, and I think that's improved with the change to the structure and focus on [council] leaders meetings'(I12)</p> <p>'there is better governance rigour'(RI11)</p> <p>'I think there's been some move towards trying to tailor things towards the government's agenda. I'm not sure it's quite there yet'(RI14)</p> <p><i>Impact:</i></p> <p>'There needs to be tangible, you know, evidence of things we've actually achieved. And I don't think there is at the moment, you know' (I14)</p> <p>'a significant amount of institutional learning which is intangible and difficult to measure, ...cities relationships. In particular the smaller cities have been getting investment and promotional experience from the larger cities'(RI15)</p> <p>'City Deal' work has massively enhanced learning and good practice amongst all the authorities...across and between the other cities as well.' (RI12).</p>	<p>forward and that it is aligned with their role in the core cities'(RI2)</p> <p>'Glasgow was in a much better place...the fact that City Deals then came out at a national level, I think Glasgow was in a much stronger position to have learned some lessons...in terms of how you would construct those relationships that were maybe different from the way we'd approached it in the Alliance.(RI20)</p> <p>'the executive leads for regeneration or development started regularly attending and sitting together talking about a common agenda.' (RI20)</p> <p><i>Tension:</i></p> <p>'there's definitely a tension there, there's no question about it...there's quite a reluctance with a small r on behalf of the Scottish Government, to go down the route of a political chair and a division away from all six meetings being with the minister to just three of them, and three being leaders only...there is a very broad level of support both amongst the seven leaders and the seven chief execs for the direction of travel. The slight resistance has not been from those quarters, it's more been from central government, from Scottish Government' (RI12)</p> <p><i>Agendas:</i></p> <p>'I think there are stresses there that, you know, are...frankly all tied up in the</p>
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	<p>focusing on the strategic elements,'(RI13)</p> <p>'Dundee particularly might not be recognised as an investment opportunity on its own.' (RI14)</p> <p>'most of the cities are taking forward city deals now, and they're trying to understand how they go through the process, because it's not, like, there's a set process for this' (RI21)</p> <p>'looking at city deal models for cities was quite useful in exposing us to how other cities were looking strategically at city development and investment' (RI13)</p> <p>'the SCA has a much higher profile now than it did a year ago and now quoted as being influential'(RI13)</p> <p><i>Communication:</i></p> <p>'we've put more resource into that, more resource into communication and I think that's starting to make a bit of difference and raised the profile outside.' (RI10)</p> <p><i>Stability:</i></p> <p>'I think the inevitable political changes in May 2017, will be a bit of a barrier because given the nature of local political system... we're almost certain to see quite a tumble in terms of the membership in terms of leaders.'(RI12)</p>	<p>ambitions of certain council leaders.'</p> <p>(RI14)</p> <p>'I think the alternative [to the Scottish Governments' funding support of the SCA] is money from the cities. But that's easy for me to say coming from a large city' (RI12)</p> <p>'we are pushing quite strongly and politically to get a city region deal for [our] city'(RI10)</p> <p>'Glasgow and the Clyde Valley City Deal was driven very much by Glasgow and the Clyde Valley. But I think the Cities Alliance is now supportive of the other local authorities pushing for City Deals'</p> <p>(RI12)</p> <p>'cities are more confident now that there are certain things that can be delivered from within the local authority other than a central position, for example Scottish Enterprise, Scottish International Development, International Visit Scotland, Skills Development Scotland...that might be better delivered for local people in a slightly different way rather than it being national' (RI3)</p> <p><i>Strength of ties:</i></p> <p>'opportunities, from the inward investment side of things...the cities, on their own, are not big enough...so they're pairing up'(RI21)</p> <p>'Now, I wouldn't hesitate to pick up the phone to any of them'(RI12)</p>
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Appendix 11: Membership of the Scottish Cities Alliance (SCA)²⁵

The Scottish Government

The Scottish Government is Scotland's devolved government established in 1999 as the Scottish Executive under section 44(1) of the Scotland Act 1998, which created a devolved administration for Scotland in line with the result of the 1997 referendum on Scottish devolution. It was formally renamed in 2012 to the Scottish Government by section 12(1) of the Scotland Act 2012.

The Scottish Government	
Established	1 July 1999; 18 years ago
Polity	Scotland
Leader	First Minister
Appointed by	First Minister approved by parliament and ceremonially appointed by the monarch.
Main organ	Scottish Cabinet
Responsible to	Parliament
Annual budget	£37.2 billion (2016–17)
Headquarters	St Andrew's House Edinburgh

²⁵ The Information was taken mainly from: wikipedia.org: <https://www.wikipedia.org/> (and accurate as at November 2017); The Scottish Cities Alliance website: <https://www.scottishcities.org.uk/> and The *Adenda for Cities* (2016):

The Scottish Council for Development and Industry (SCDI)

The Scottish Council for Development and Industry (SCDI) was founded in 1931 as a non-governmental, membership organisation. The SCDI's aim is to: strengthen Scotland's economic competitiveness through influencing government and key stakeholders to create sustainable economic prosperity for Scotland. SCDI has approximately 1,200 members primarily made up of Scotland's private, public and social economy sectors.

Abbreviation	SCDI
Formation	1931
Legal status	Non-profit organisation
Purpose	Scottish Economic Development
Location	Glasgow (headquarters) Aberdeen Inverness
Region served	Scotland
Membership	1,200 organisations
President Chairman Chief Executive	Lady Susan Rice Brendan Dick Mark Bevan
Main organ	SCDI Board and Policy Committee

Scotland's Urban Local Authorities

There are currently 32 unitary authorities in Scotland. Each council elects a Convener and Depute Convener to chair meetings of the Council. In four city councils in Scotland - Glasgow, Edinburgh, Aberdeen and Dundee - the Convener is called a Lord Provost, whilst in other councils the council may choose the title given to the Convener. Most councils use the term 'Provost'. The office of Provost or Convener's traditional roles are ceremonial, although may have the additional duty of acting as Lord Lieutenant for their respective city.

The Leader of the Council is elected as the leader of the largest political grouping of councillors. The Leader of the Council has no executive or administrative powers designated by statute, but the position is salaried. There is also a Depute Leader of the Council.

Each political group within the council typically appoints a leader, with the largest grouping's leader becoming 'Leader of the Council', and being the central figure of de facto political authority.

There are currently seven Urban Local Authorities (ULAs) (i.e. City Council's) in Scotland, each members of the Scottish Cities Alliance (SCA), including:

- Glasgow City Council
- Edinburgh Council
- Dundee City Council
- Aberdeen Council
- Inverness Council
- Stirling Council
- Perth and Kinross Council