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Place-based policymaking after Brexit: In search of the missing link?

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"the great divide is not north versus south or cities versus towns or left versus right, or even working-class versus middle-class. It is between those communities that have found a way to thrive in the economic circumstances conscribing England today—a high-wage, Anglo-Saxon service economy on the edge of Europe—and those that have not been able or (debatably) willing to do so.

On the one side are places that have some combination of transport links, housing, natural resources, skills, international connections, open-mindedness, existing industrial clusters and political can-do... On the other side are those that have few of any of these. They are declining, in spirit as in population."

Jeremy Cliffe, Clacton vs. Cambridge, The Economist, September 2014

"Many of these areas combine bad educational outcomes for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds with weak labour markets which have a greater share of low skilled, low paid employment than elsewhere in the UK: there are very few areas among low performers on both the education and the adulthood [social mobility] measures that are neither old industrial towns nor seaside resorts."

Social Mobility & Child Poverty Commission 2016.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The Brexit vote revealed a divided country, reflecting the contrasting trajectories of economic development and politics taken by locations strongly connected to the global knowledge economy compared to those areas that are less well-integrated. While Brexit revealed deep cleavages it gave little indication of how policymakers should respond to them.

- This report explores the challenges facing policymakers in post-Brexit Britain based on two strands of research. The first considers differences in the outlook and policy demands of citizens living in highly connected urban areas, and those residing in two types of location on the economic periphery: coastal-regional areas and post-industrial towns.

- We establish that citizens in these types of areas tend to understand both their current circumstances and future priorities in distinctive ways. Citizens' orientations in different locations may not be polar opposites but they are sufficiently different to require a sensitive political and policy response.

- Place-based policy making provides one possible mechanism of responding and the second strand of our research identifies some of the scope and limitations of practice in this area.

- We explore how public officials are turning to place-based approaches and developing a mix of rationales and styles. Three types of place-based approach are identified:

  - Deciding – builds on ideas about the value of devolution and local decision-making in terms of local knowledge and accountability.

  - Coordinating – rests on the value of bringing together a combined effort from a variety of agencies to meet local needs.

  - Promoting – aiming to preserve community identities and cultures through asserting the virtues of a particular place.

- Notwithstanding these different rationales for place-based policymaking we find that there is a striking consistency in the content focus for place-based approaches, despite the varied economic and social profiles of areas. Moreover, the choice of policy content seems to express less strategic analysis about what might be appropriate and more a contingent dynamic relying on the personalities, relationships and outlook of the individuals. When combined with the analysis in the first part of the report, these findings lead us to argue that there is a fourth, missing rationale for place-based policy thinking.

  - Matching – rests on the view that we need place-based approaches that more strongly match policy responses to the circumstances and contexts of diverse places. Matching place-based policymaking will require input from both national, regional, and local decision-makers. The goal is to match policy responses on industry, welfare and culture to the circumstances and context of a place. It would start with an honest audit of where a locality stands in the new global order and the identification of bespoke policy responses.

- Place-based policy making needs to be lifted beyond contingent factors to embrace the more strategic, ambitious and forward-looking approach that a matching placed-based policymaking could deliver. In post-Brexit Britain it is needed to bring the right policies into play for the different needs and expectations of different places. It could be the missing link required, but to be delivered it will demand different actions from government at all levels and a final break from the "one-size-fits-all" policy philosophy that dominates in political and media circles.

INTRODUCTION

The Brexit vote revealed a divided country, reflecting the diverse trajectories of economic development and politics taken by locations strongly connected to the global knowledge economy compared to those less well integrated. Post-Brexit policy options need to address these divisions as citizens' expectations on Brexit outcomes and UK party politics and campaigning are, and will be, driven by these divergent trajectories. Moreover, effective industrial and welfare policy will need to provide conurbations, towns and rural areas facing distinct contexts with appropriately tailored policy solutions.

One of the clearest features of the Brexit vote was its extreme spatial clustering, and the policy responses required in post-Brexit Britain will require a commensurate spatial sensitivity – reflecting the needs and demands of particular regions and communities. The policy challenge we seek to frame is not about longstanding issues of the value of devolved decision-making but the pressing need, after Brexit, within decentralised units of various shapes and sizes (local governments, devolved administrations, or emerging pooled conurbation authorities) to construct effective, spatially sensitive policymaking. Place-based policymaking is a term that is widely used but not sufficiently understood in terms of the range and diversity of directions of travel that it might imply. We aim to shed some light on the choices that will need to be made under the banner of delivering place-based policymaking.

Our concern is captured by the idea that while Brexit revealed deep cleavages it but gave little indication of how policymakers should respond to them. A new cleavage is emerging that is fundamentally reshaping Britain in the early decades of the twenty-first century. The divide is between citizens whose lives are strongly connected to global growth and those whose lives are not. In geographical terms, it is between those from the densely populated cosmopolitan centres of the emerging knowledge and creative economy and those who live beyond that world in suburban communities, post-industrial towns, and coastal areas that have experienced relative decline in recent decades (see Jennings and Stoker 2016; 2017). More simply this is between the younger, more educated and diverse populations of cities versus the aging populations of towns and other less urban areas (Jennings et al. 2017).

The main report is organised in two parts. The first part – led by the University of Southampton – uses survey data to identify how outlooks and expectations of citizens

photo: Sarah Joy

differ by place. The second part – led by New Local Government Network – draws upon a series of interviews with senior officers in councils covering areas with a variety of economic profiles and two roundtable discussions involving senior council officers, academics, and policy specialists from the private sector and think tanks, to reflect on current understandings and debates of 'place-based' policymaking and its prospects as a solution to future challenges to UK society, economy and government.

A concluding section draws out our main findings to argue that there is missing link in place-based policymaking, one that would ensure the delivery of policies appropriate to the diverse needs of distinct locations. We call it matching place-based policymaking and contrast it with coordinating, promoting and deciding place-based policymaking practices. All four practices are of value but the matching place-based approach most directly addresses the rationale of place-based policymaking which rests on two underlying assumptions. The first is 'that geographical context really matters, where context is here understood in terms of its social, cultural and institutional aspects', while the second is 'the issue of knowledge in policy intervention' (Barca et al, 2012: 139). Good policy cannot ignore spatial variation but it may need more than locally generated knowledge to develop the appropriate responses as local decision-makers may be trapped in a cycle of thought that is too limited. Our argument is that there is some developed practice in the other three arms of place-based policymaking – promoting, co-ordinating and deciding – but less so when it comes to matching. To meet the policy challenges of the post-Brexit world, matching needs to become a stronger part of the mix.

MEASURING BRITAIN'S NEW POLITICAL AND POLICY DIVIDES

Will Jennings, University of Southampton
Gerry Stoker, University of Canberra and University of Southampton

While there have always been schisms in the electoral geography of Britain, such as the urban-rural divide associated with the industrial revolution (Lipset and Rokkan 1967) or the north-south divide that widened under the Thatcher government (Johnston et al. 1988; Johnston and Pattie 1989; Fieldhouse 1995), we argue that in recent times place has increasingly shaped the outlook of citizens, and in important ways – arguably most notably in the result of the referendum on Britain's membership of the EU. In our essay published in The Political Quarterly ahead of the referendum in 2016, we identified 'Two Englands' as emerging out of this process of uneven economic development – with parallels observed in trends of the electoral geography of other countries too, such as the U.S. and France. Specifically, we found that cosmopolitan, urban areas were becoming more global in outlook, socially liberal and more plural in their sense of identity. In contrast, we found that provincial, coastal settings were more inward-looking, relatively illiberal, negative about the European Union and immigration, nostalgic and more English in their identity.

Our argument is that this bifurcation – driven by economic processes associated with development of the modern global economy – will continue to reconfigure national politics in future, shaping both the supply of politics (via party strategies and elections) and demand for policy (via the needs and preferences of citizens).

In this report, we consider differences in the outlook and policy demands of citizens living in highly connected urban areas, and those residing in two types of location on the economic periphery: coastal-regional areas and post-industrial towns. These are distinct variations on areas that have been gradually disconnected from Britain's economic model over several decades. The former tend to be associated with light industry, including fishing, and in some cases were at one point affluent as a result of the growth of domestic tourism (now marked by the decaying vestiges of seaside piers). The latter tend to have been home to heavier industries – such as coal and steel mining – enjoying relative prosperity with the growth of those sectors, and in some instances experienced inward economic migration in the post-war years.

We first explain how we developed our categorisation of parliamentary constituencies for these 'Three Englands', based on geodemographic profiles of each of these three types of place, before proceeding to outline how public opinion varies between them. We then outline how policy-makers in these different areas perceive challenges to delivering place-based policy that reflects the particular needs and demands of their areas. We summarise with a discussion of potential policy solutions and political strategies that might be adopted in the face of the pressures created by the new political divides.

In order to explore how place impacts on the political outlook and demands of citizens, we need to develop a measure or index of which places (in this case parliamentary constituencies) exhibit those features associated with each of our types of location. Our first step is therefore to develop profiles of cosmopolitan, coastal-regional and post-industrial areas in England – based on their theoretical trajectories, using geodemographic data (from the 'Mosaic' classification scheme). In our original analysis (Jennings and Stoker 2016), we developed theoretical profiles of (1) cosmopolitan and (2) coastal-provincial settings, using the constituencies of Cambridge and Clacton (the places cited in Jeremy Cliffe's essay in The Economist) as exemplars. For this analysis, we added (3) post-industrial towns as a second type of disconnected economic setting. We consider this important as the social and economic context of post-industrial towns differs somewhat from coastal-regional areas (most notably tending to be home to heavier industry and, relatedly, having a stronger history of labour movements and inward migration – which colour the politics of those areas substantially).

Our approach using the Mosaic geodemographic classifications differs from other studies which use population size to distinguish types of cities and towns (e.g. Pike et al. 2016; Jennings et al. 2017), as it combines both physical descriptions of areas (such as in terms of housing) with the sort of resident who lives there (such as students, commuters, industrial workers). This enables a more fine-grained differentiation of place. We first used the Mosaic geodemographic segmentation classifications to identify the proportion of the population resident in each parliamentary constituency for each type (of which there are 63 in total), ranking the constituencies in order. We then identified a set of Mosaic types associated with each of the three theoretical profiles, and calculated the top fifty scoring English constituencies across those Mosaic categories (as a function of the total ranking on all the identified Mosaic types). The Mosaic categories used are summarised in Appendix Table A1, and the full list of constituencies is reported in the Appendix, Table A2. Below we outline general descriptions of the three types of area, detailing some exemplar constituencies of each.

Cosmopolitan areas: These are growing, prosperous and diverse parts of cities, and occasionally smaller university towns, with younger more mobile populations. They have more professionals and graduates, and are more likely to be home (or located near) to knowledge- and service-based firms across a range of sectors. Typically, these areas experience inflows of younger people who relocate due to education or employment. The Mosaic types chosen for this area include 'Busy executives in town houses in dormitory settlements', 'Diverse communities of well-educated singles living in smart, small flats', and 'students and other transient singles in multi-let houses'.

Exemplars: Bristol West, Kensington, Battersea, Cambridge, Hove, Manchester Withington, Sheffield Central

Provincial-coastal: These are very often aging coastal towns with a history of light rather than heavy industry, sometimes characterised by the decaying vestiges of Victorian seaside resorts. They tend to have older and less affluent populations, and often are physically located some distance from major urban conurbations. As such these areas can be economically disconnected and experience outflows of younger populations. The Mosaic types include categories such as 'Empty nester owner occupiers making little use of public services', 'Self-employed trades people living in smaller communities' and 'Retired people of modest means commonly living in seaside bungalows'.

Exemplars: Clacton, Thanet North, Great Yarmouth, Norfolk North, Boston and Skegness, Brigg and Goole.

Post-industrial towns: These are mostly former industrial towns and coal mining areas in the North and Midlands, suffering high levels of deprivation, poor educational outcomes, and low levels of inward investment. They often are 'satellite' towns that sit in the shadow of larger cities (Pike et al. 2016), such as Manchester, Sheffield, Liverpool, Newcastle or Birmingham. These also experience outflows of younger populations.

Exemplars: Middlesbrough, Rotherham, Hull East, Redcar, Stoke-on-Trent Central, Ashfield, Wigan, Mansfield.
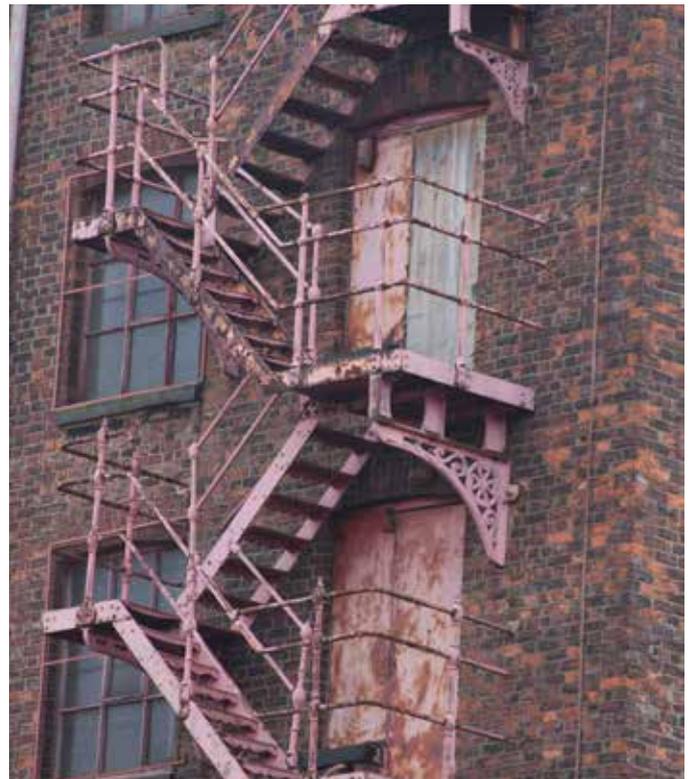
To understand the political make-up of these areas, one can consider how these constituencies voted in the 2017 general election. Figure 1 depicts the Labour, Conservatives and Liberal Democrat vote share in our cosmopolitan, post-industrial and provincial-coastal constituencies, contrasted against all other English constituencies. This reveals a striking pattern – with Labour comfortably ahead in cosmopolitan seats (47% to 35%) and far ahead in post-industrial towns (61% to 30%) but far behind in provincial-coastal areas (26% to 56%). Interestingly, the Liberal Democrats received minimal support in post-industrial towns (2%) but were rather better supported in cosmopolitan and provincial-coastal areas. If one further considers the Conservative to Labour swing in the election, as shown in Figure 2, it becomes apparent that Labour picked up most support in cosmopolitan areas and in fact lost votes in post-industrial towns despite their large lead in those places.
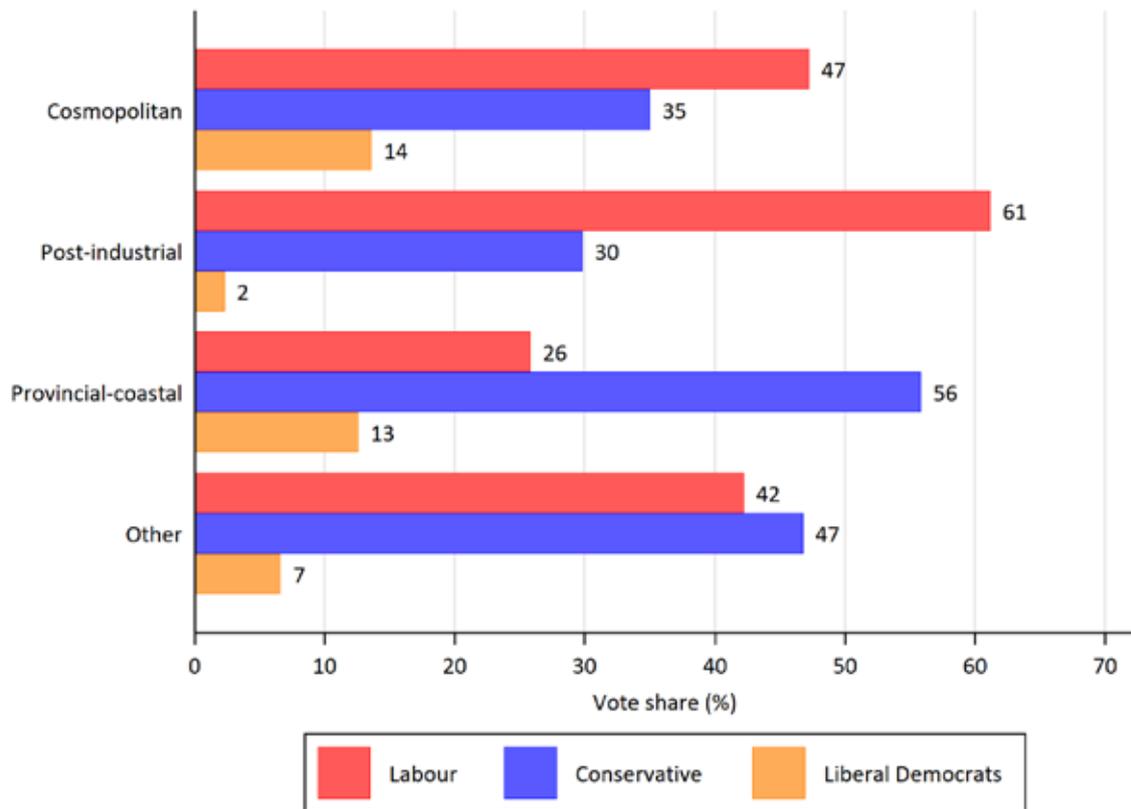
Figure 1. Vote share by party in constituency types, 2017 general election
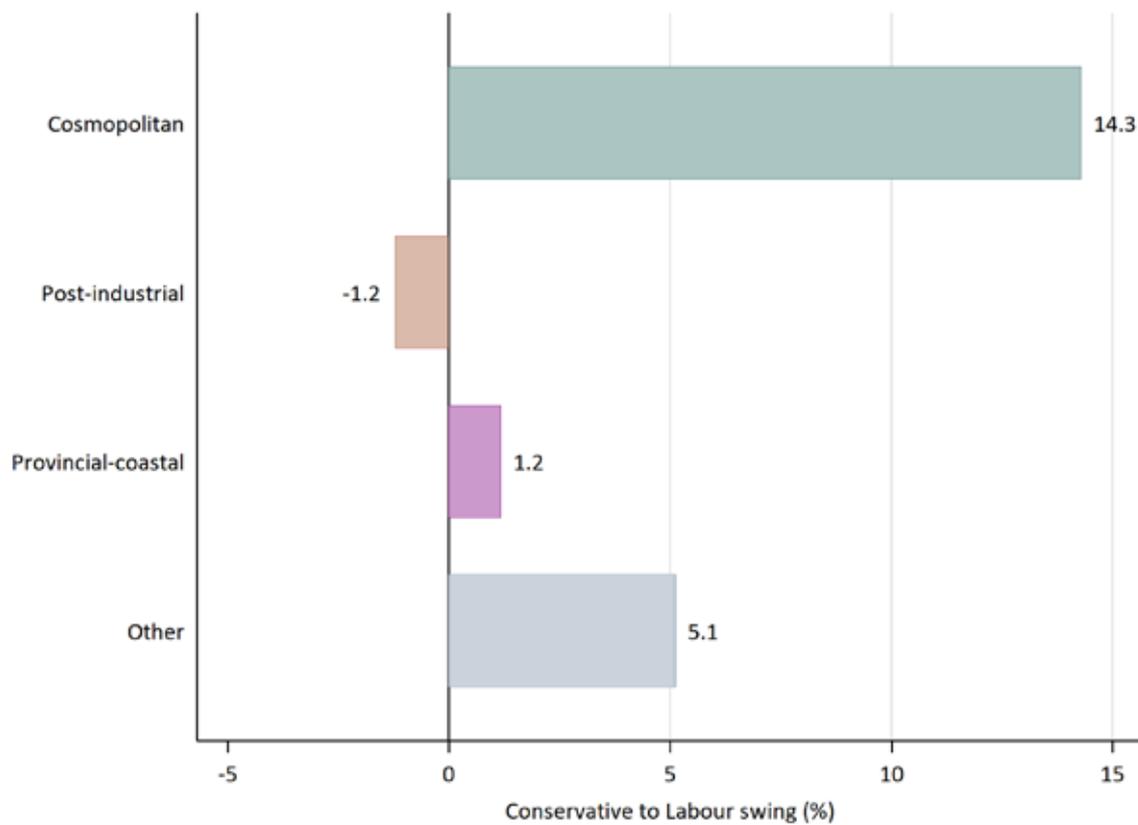

Figure 2. Conservative to Labour swing by constituency type, 2017 general election

Political attitudes in the Three Englands

Figure 3. Leave vote share by constituency types, 2016 EU referendum

Our main interest in this study, however, is the political outlook and policy demands of these three types of area. For this, we draw on survey data from waves of the British Election Study (BES) Online Panel between 2014 and 2017. Each wave consists of a sample size of around 30,000 respondents. We are able to identify respondents residing in three sets of constituencies (which number around 15,000 respondents across the thirteen waves of the BES panel).

In our earlier study (Jennings and Stoker 2016), we used individual-level survey data from the 1997 and 2015 British Election Studies to demonstrate the growing divide between cosmopolitan and provincial-coastal areas. Specifically, we found that the gap in attitudes on immigration and equal opportunities for minorities had increased (with residents of provincial-coastal areas more negative). Crucially, as it turned out for the result of the referendum on Britain's membership of the European Union, in 1997 provincial-coastal areas did not disproportionately favour leaving the EU whereas in 2015 they exhibited strong Euroscepticism. Lastly, there was a growing divergence in expressions of identity in these areas: with the populations of cosmopolitan areas less likely to identify as English only.

These divides were indeed revealed by the referendum on Britain's membership of the EU. Figure 3 plots the Leave vote share in each set of parliamentary constituencies, using the constituency-level estimates produced by Hanretty (2017). Here the gulf between Remain-voting cosmopolitan centres and Leave-voting post-industrial towns and provincial-coastal areas is marked – nearly 30 points – confirming the deep geographical polarization of the Brexit vote.
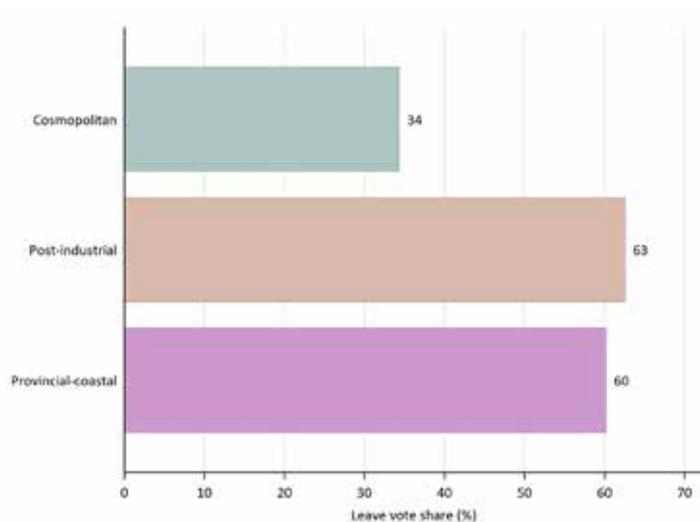
As has been observed, the fault lines of the Brexit vote were ultimately between the 'winners' and 'losers' of Britain's experiment with globalisation, with the propensity to vote Leave higher among less-educated, poorer and older voters more concerned about immigration (Hobolt 2016). In terms of attitudes on social change, in Figure 4 we see a geographical divide using survey items from the waves of the British Election Study Online Panel in April to June 2016, with residents of provincial-coastal areas and post-industrial towns tending to be more nostalgic (being more likely to agree or strongly agree that 'things were better in the past'), and concerned about immigration (tending to agree or strongly agree 'immigrants are a burden on the welfare state' and believing immigration 'undermines' rather than 'enriches' cultural life). In contrast, the difference with cosmopolitan areas is slight on equal opportunities for gays and lesbians having 'gone too far' (where social liberalism is the majority view across all areas). These findings confirm the variation in political outlook by type of area – with the residents of provincial-coastal and post-industrial towns tending to hold more closed and nostalgic views. While political attitudes are consequential for voting behaviour, the policy demands and expectations of citizens of these areas also matter for the way in which policy-makers can respond. It is to this that our analysis now turns.
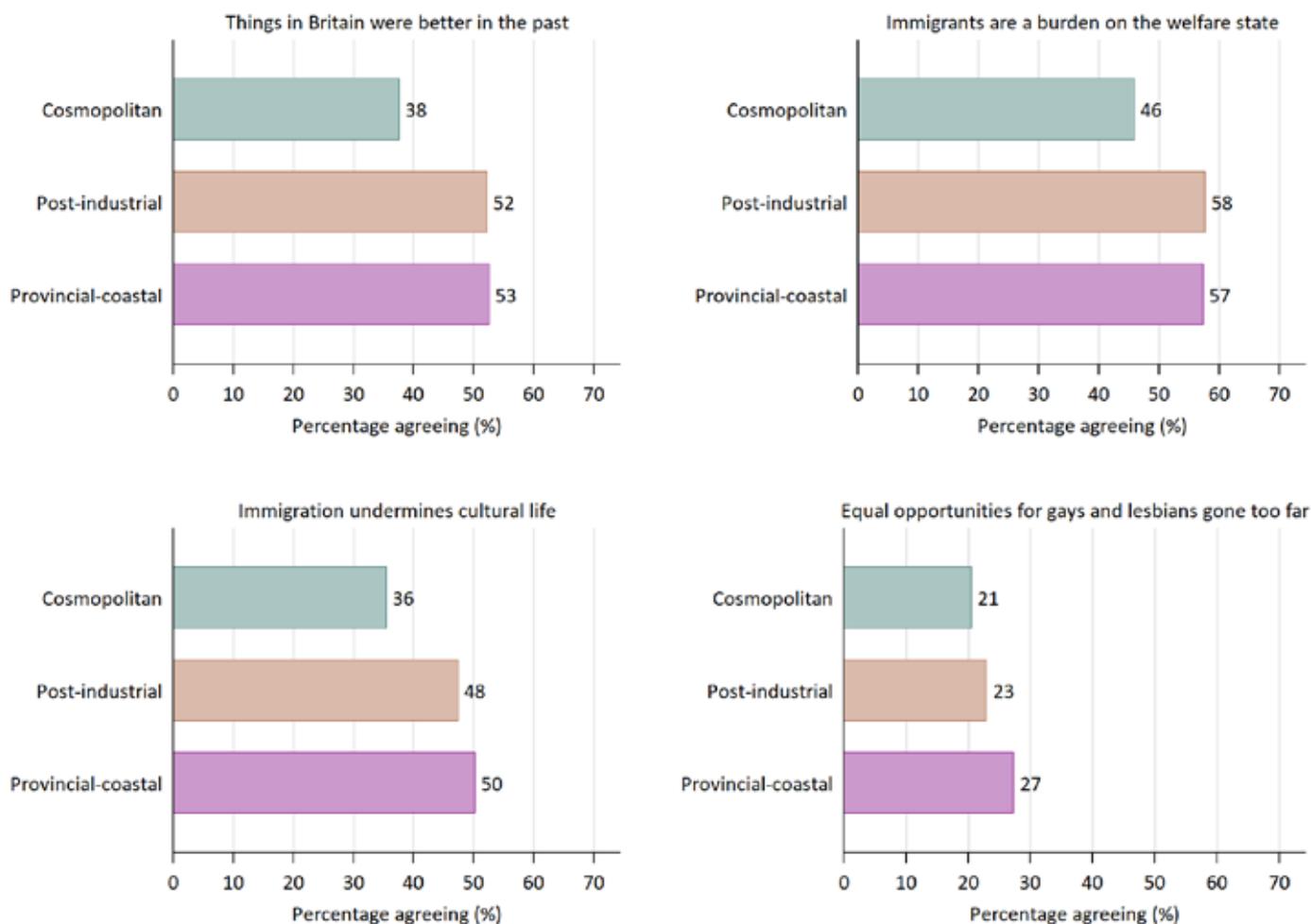
Figure 4. Political outlook by area type

Policy demands of the Three Englands

We can gain further insights into the particular demands of citizens residing in these distinct types of area again using survey questions from the British Election Study Online Panel, depicted in Figure 5. Some of these differ in interesting ways from the political outlooks described above. Concern about cuts to the NHS having gone too far is substantially greater in post-industrial towns, whereas there is little difference between cosmopolitan and provincial-coastal areas despite their divergent political outlooks. Similarly, the populations of post-industrial towns are more likely to be concerned about local cuts, with the residents of provincial-coastal areas slightly more concerned than those living in cosmopolitan areas. This pattern– of greatest policy concerns in post-industrial areas, followed by provincial-coastal settings, followed by cosmopolitan areas – is repeated for schools (shown in the lower left panel of Figure 5) and for the level of crime (in the lower right panel). There is variation, then, in the concerns of citizens in different areas, which might be expected to shape the strategies and solutions adopted by policy-makers – either directly or in the communication of policy decisions to local communities.
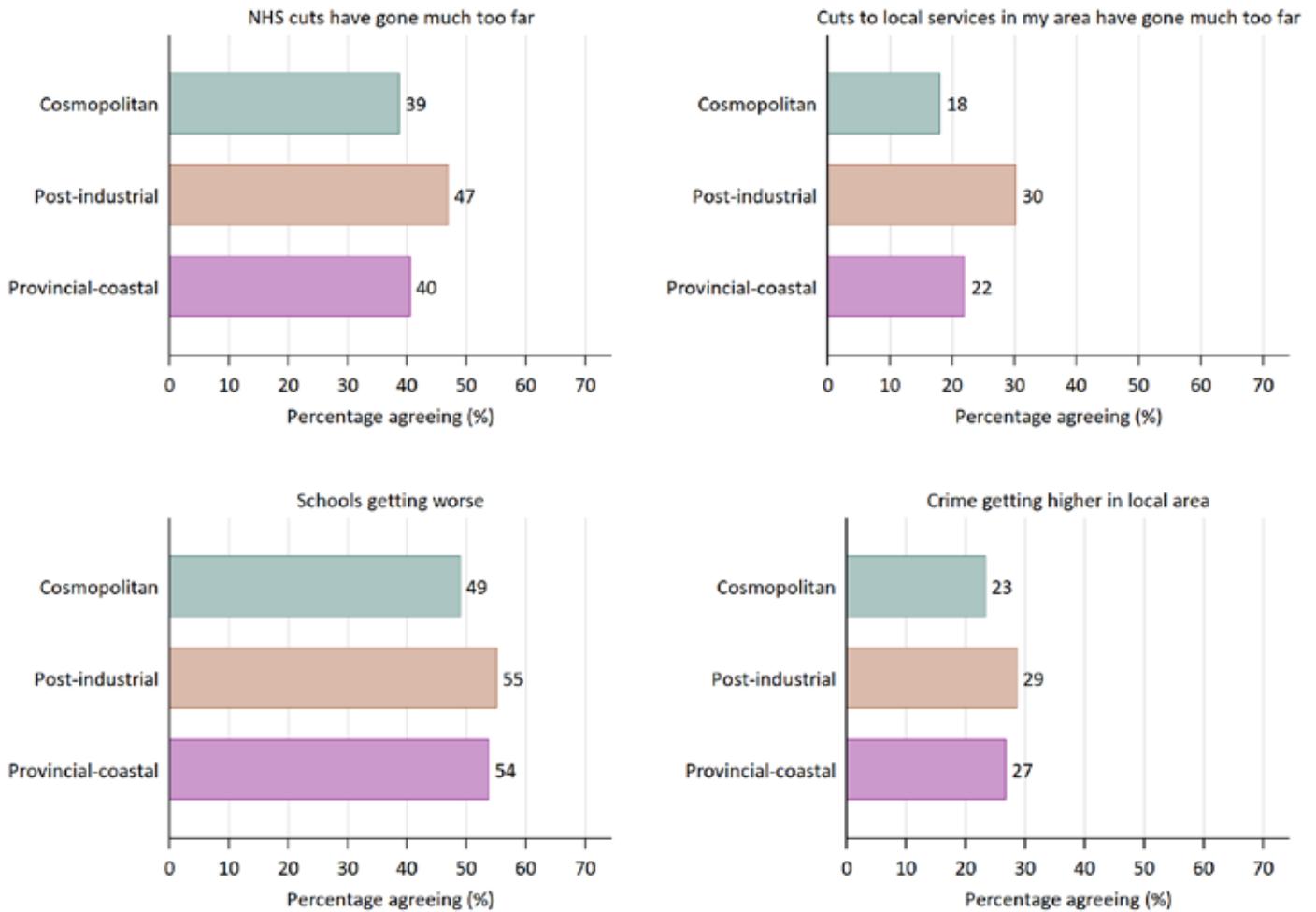
NHS cuts have gone much too far

Area	Percentage agreeing (%)
Cosmopolitan	39
Post-industrial	47
Provincial-coastal	40

Cuts to local services in my area have gone much too far

Area	Percentage agreeing (%)
Cosmopolitan	18
Post-industrial	30
Provincial-coastal	22

Schools getting worse

Area	Percentage agreeing (%)
Cosmopolitan	49
Post-industrial	55
Provincial-coastal	54

Crime getting higher in local area

Area	Percentage agreeing (%)
Cosmopolitan	23
Post-industrial	29
Provincial-coastal	27

Figure 5. Policy concerns by area type

[2] These survey items are from Wave 7 (April-May 2016), and detailed in full in the appendix to this report.

Given that Britain's impending exit from the EU will have considerable repercussions for the delivery of public services and policy-making in the years ahead, at both local and national levels, it is helpful to consider the expectations citizens have in a number of specific policy domains. Specifically, what are citizens' expectations for improvements in the economy and the NHS, increases in international trade and reductions in immigration? Using survey questions from the British Election Study fielded in April-May 2016 prior to the EU referendum, Figure 6 plots the percentage of respondents giving positive responses regarding whether particular policy domains would be better "... if the UK leaves the European Union".

Reflecting the geographical division in the EU referendum vote itself (reported in Figure 3), the citizens of provincial-coastal areas are most optimistic about the effect of leaving the EU, expecting a better NHS, reductions in immigration, improvement in the UK economy (though this is still a minority view) and increased international trade. Citizens are more optimistic in post-industrial towns than cosmopolitan areas in expectations on the NHS, immigration and the economy, with no difference on international trade. While this gap ranges from between 5% and 8%, and thus is a matter of degree rather than indicating complete polarisation, it highlights that place structures the demands and expectations of citizens for public policy.
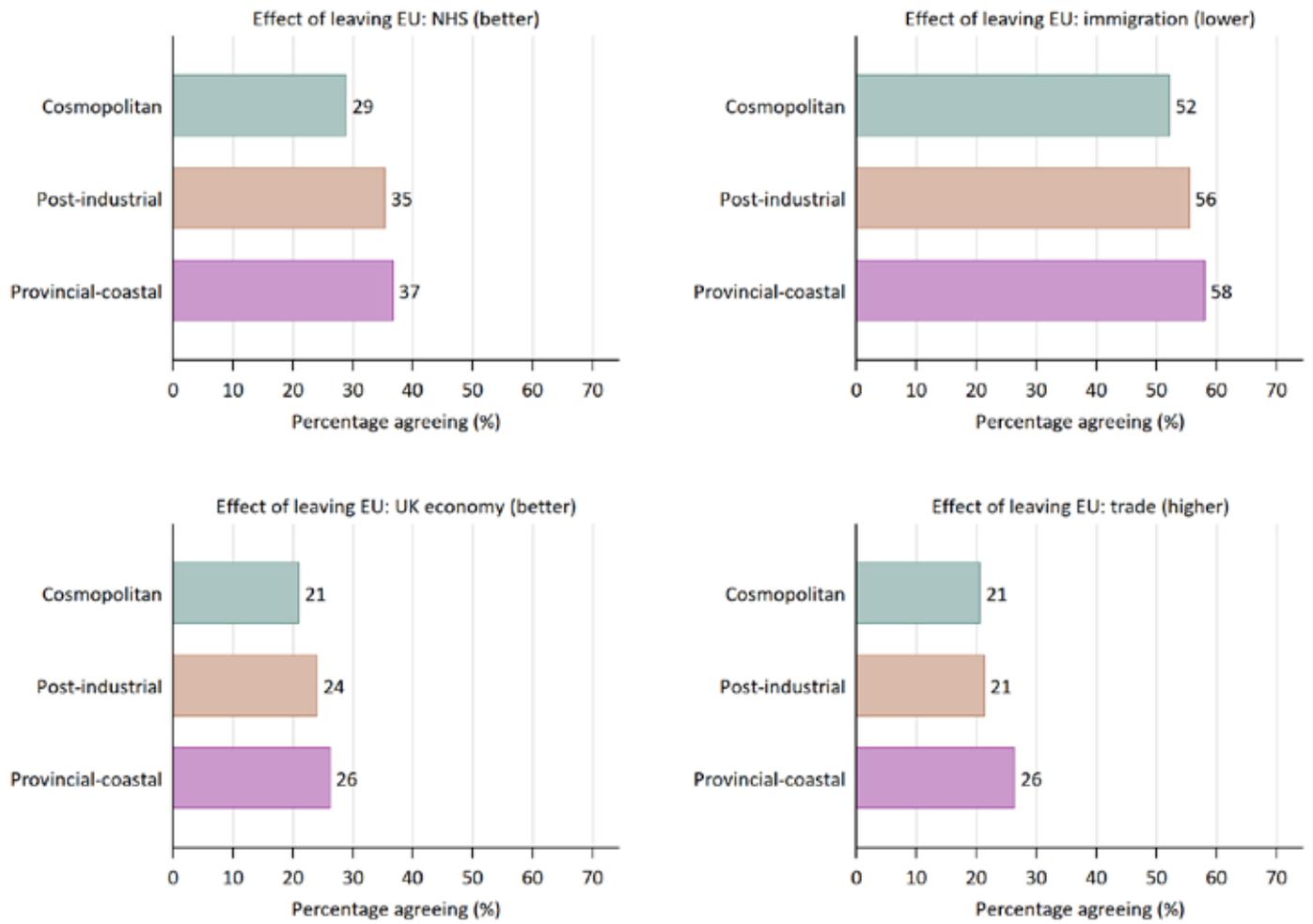
Effect of leaving EU: NHS (better)

Category	Percentage agreeing (%)
Cosmopolitan	29
Post-industrial	35
Provincial-coastal	37

Effect of leaving EU: immigration (lower)

Category	Percentage agreeing (%)
Cosmopolitan	52
Post-industrial	56
Provincial-coastal	58

Effect of leaving EU: UK economy (better)

Category	Percentage agreeing (%)
Cosmopolitan	21
Post-industrial	24
Provincial-coastal	26

Effect of leaving EU: trade (higher)

Category	Percentage agreeing (%)
Cosmopolitan	21
Post-industrial	21
Provincial-coastal	26

Figure 6. Citizen expectations after Brexit

[3] These survey items are from Wave 7 (April-May 2016), and detailed in full in the appendix to this report.

PLACE-BASED POLICY MAKING: DEFINITIONS, DRIVERS AND DIFFERENCES

Adam Lent, Director, New Local Government Network

Introduction

In recent years, central government, local government and public sector bodies more generally have displayed a growing interest in place-based policy making. This report explores what is understood by the term place-based policy making, what is driving the interest, what differences – if any – exist in the approach to place-based policy making between areas with different economic profiles, and how much progress is being made towards a place-based approach. It will also take a brief look at whether recent developments in the devolution debate have affected the interest in place-based policy making.

The report is based on a series of interviews with senior officers in councils covering areas with a variety of economic profiles and two roundtable discussions involving senior council officers, academics, and policy specialists from the private sector and think tanks.

What is Place-based Policy Making?

One immediate finding which arose from the study was the fact that there are three distinct meanings applied to place-based policy making by those working in local government.

1. The first associates place-based policy making with devolution. In this definition, the approach is regarded as a break with the 'one-size-fits-all' attitude to policy of central government. Instead of policies in areas such as employment, growth, skills and public service provision being determined and designed by Westminster and Whitehall and then applied across the whole country, local agencies are given the freedom and resources to develop and implement policies that are more sensitive to the specific needs of local areas. There is then obviously a concomitant obligation on local agencies to design and develop meaningful place-based policies.

2. The second associates place-based policy-making with policy that is designed to deliver a specific vision of place. In this approach, the delivery of services and the design and implementation of policy by local agencies is shaped by a set of goals specific to a place. So, for example, if the local agencies in an area agree that they want to deliver a radical up-lift in skills over the next decade then all or, at least, a significant proportion of agency policy and activity should be dedicated to that goal. This approach can be built around a series of goals rather than just one and can also be linked to more intangible targets such as creating a strong sense of allegiance to a place amongst residents, building on a strong historical and cultural heritage or repositioning the 'brand' of a place.

3. The final approach defines place-based policy making as about the creation of a stronger approach to joint working amongst the public sector agencies in a local area. This involves the combination, either formally or informally, of two or more of local government, NHS, housing bodies, education, police and others to deliver services more effectively and efficiently.

None of these particular definitions can be said to dominate but it is certainly the case that given local agencies' lack of control over the devolution of powers and resources from central government, the second and third have proven more important to our research participants.

In practice, these definitions are far from mutually exclusive and may well be elided in the minds of local agency leaders and/combined as methods for delivering change. It is quite possible and not unknown for a local area to develop a strong vision of place built around shared goals for an area that is reliant on closer joint-working between agencies and which takes advantage of extra powers devolved from central government.

The common factor that all three definitions share is a recognition of the need for policy design and delivery that is shaped by the needs of a local area rather than a larger place. Even the more technocratic final definition inherently assumes that it is when agencies defined by their location in a local place, rather than as part of a regional or national institution or polity, work together more closely they can deliver better outcomes for the residents of that place.

Drivers of Place-Based Policy-Making

There are five reasons driving the adoption of place-based approaches in local government and amongst wider agencies which can be inferred from our interviews and the roundtable sessions.

Austerity

Austerity was the most commonly-cited reason. There was a strong sense amongst research participants that the severity of cuts being made to public services and, in particular, local government required a radical transformation in the way the public sector worked. Developing a strong sense of shared goals for a place that could inspire communities, local agencies and the private sector to work together was seen as central to this transformed approach. This relates to austerity in four main ways.

Sharing resources between agencies clearly can help ameliorate the shrinkage in budgets experienced by those individual agencies. This can include more formal joint-working such as sharing back office services, agreeing strategic partnerships and pooling of resources to deliver agreed outcomes, and more informal arrangements such as agreeing to broadly work together to deliver a specific outcome or series of outcomes.

Austerity creates a further imperative for a more

place-based approach in that it has encouraged the sense that the failure of public sector agencies in an area to work together has militated against efficient use of resources and led to sub-optimal outcomes. The most notable policy area in this regard is in relation to adult social care where the fragmentation of the sector between local government and local NHS bodies has led to the numerous problems, including high costs, plaguing the policy area.

Importantly, austerity has also promoted a strong feeling within local government that the areas they represent cannot rely on central government resources or support to meet the challenges they face to nearly the same extent they could prior to 2010. Loss of funding for statutory services, the abolition of Regional Development Agencies and the loss of the Audit Commission have created a sense that local areas must now develop their own strategies for survival and growth while falling back on their own inherent resources and advantages.

This is linked to another impact of austerity: the recognition that local services cannot be delivered and local challenges met without the active involvement of a local community and its associations. Local public sector agencies are increasingly aware that they do not have the funds to continue delivering services as fully as necessary particularly at a time of rising demand. This means securing help from local communities either to take action to reduce demand (such as by looking after their own health through exercise and good diet) or to actually deliver services (such as taking over the management of libraries). This clearly relies on a notion of place-based policy making in that local services are delivered or supported by local people for the sake of the well-being of a place and the people who live there.

Economic Growth

All research participants emphasised the economic aspect of their place-based approach. Although local government has always had an interest in the economic well-being of their area, activity designed to drive up investment, employment and growth has reached higher levels of intensity in recent years. There are several reasons for this.

Firstly, the abolition of the Regional Development Agencies in 2010 meant the loss of the chief governmental bodies tasked with driving forward a place-based approach to growth. Local Government has filled the gap left partly because there is no other obvious body to do so but also because the establishment of Local Enterprise Partnerships in 2011 specifically involved local councils.

Secondly, austerity has focused minds on promoting local growth. As funding from central government falls, councils

have been keen to ensure that local sources of revenue in the form of council tax remain stable and preferably grow. The plan for greater retention of business rates incentivised this focus further as the link between local growth and an increase in business rate revenue is clearly more direct than that with council tax. However, as mentioned above, the future of this policy remains uncertain.

Thirdly, the rise in demand for public services has also stimulated a focus on growth. Councils and all public sector bodies are now increasingly concerned with how demand can be prevented from rising further or even reduced particularly as funding shrinks or remains static. There are a number of approaches to demand management being employed but it is widely acknowledged that areas with weak labour markets and higher levels of deprivation will have higher demand particularly for healthcare services, children's services and adult social care (proportionate to the age profile of the population). Encouraging investment, growth and jobs is regarded as an effective and humane strategy for limiting demand over the medium to long term.

Devolution

Devolution itself has been an important driver of place-based policy making. For those areas that secured devolution deals after 2010 there was clearly a strong incentive to forge a shared vision of place, a set of strategic goals as well as new place-based institutions such as combined authorities and mayoralties to deliver that vision and those goals. The extra funding and new powers they secured as a result obviously make the ongoing development and delivery of a place-based approach a key imperative.

However, many areas which did not secure deals have also been influenced by the general popular and governmental focus on devolution and the importance of place leading to them developing and implementing place-based approaches. It is fair to say, therefore, that the

Government's very strong focus on devolution between 2010 and 2016 created an awareness of and openness to more place-based approaches across the country. Even those areas which tried and failed to secure deals have been left, at least in some part, with a strong appetite for continuing with the place-based visions and strategies they developed even if they may not involve considerable extra funds or powers.

The slower pace and lower profile of devolution ambitions since Theresa May took over as Prime Minister has not necessarily dented this appetite for place-based approaches for reasons outlined immediately below.

Brexit

The vote for the UK to leave the EU in June 2016 is playing a significant if complex and still somewhat unclear role in encouraging a place-based approach.

Most significant to date has been the sense of a Government distracted by the pressures of Brexit from addressing the challenges facing local government and other local agencies. This has been most notable in the decline of Government interest in the devolution agenda and, in particular, the associated decision not to include a Local Government Finance Bill in the Queen's Speech due to lack of legislative time. That Bill was widely expected to pave the way for a flagship devolution policy in the form of the shift to 100% business rates retention and ultimately fiscal autonomy for local councils.

While this has caused enormous consternation within local government, it has also served to emphasise the extent to which places will have to address their own challenges themselves; a sense that was first promoted by austerity.

The longer term impact of Brexit and the process of exiting the EU is having on place-based approaches remains uncertain. Research participants identified three effects but all were expressed with some doubt about their longevity or impact which clearly reflects the wider uncertainty about Brexit itself.

The first is that Brexit is operating as a general catalyst for change particularly in areas that voted Leave. There is an inchoate but developing recognition that policy-making, governance and broader politics needs to be done differently both to respond to the alienation that drove the anti-EU vote but also to start preparing for what might be a considerable economic shock once the UK does leave. A place-based approach with its focus on greater

collaboration between fragmented parts of the public sector and a desire to shepherd one's own area through tough times is clearly inspired by this post-Brexit sense.

A second, and not disconnected effect, is a growing interest in more robust skills, training and employment policies to prepare a place for the economic challenge ahead but also as a response to the potential loss of EU migrants as a source of labour. Research participants reported a growing interest from private sector employers to work with local government and educational bodies to start nurturing local sources of skilled labour.

Finally, the vote for Brexit provided added impetus for place-based policy-making in the economic policy area with a particular focus on 'inclusive growth'. Driven by the impression that the Leave vote was, at least in part, driven by those who have felt 'left behind' by economic growth since the 1990s, there is a renewed focus on developing local growth programmes that specifically seek to bring the benefits of jobs and higher living standards to those parts of an area that have historically struggled to enjoy greater investment and more vibrant labour markets.

Social Outcomes and Impact

The focus of the research participants reflected a growing trend in local government to emphasise social outcome and impact as being a key goal of their councils' activity as well as the day-to-day delivery of services. This has been a growing theme for many years but has been given added impetus by austerity and rising demand which has highlighted the difficulty of sustaining public services at ever growing levels. The attitude that has emerged is an eagerness to deliver change that ultimately reduces the need to provide residents with crisis services in the form of acute healthcare or social care. There is a focus on addressing the underlying causes and context that leads to ill-health and incapacity.

Although this need not be a project delivered at local level in a place-based fashion, there are good reasons why it lends itself to a place-based approach. The different demographics, economics and cultures of different places means that the nature and the intensity of various causes of poor social outcomes can vary very widely. Developing nation-wide approaches that can address such diversity is clearly deeply problematic and while there are clear efforts to do so at central government level, it is widely recognised that meaningful programmes of social impact require a granularity that only local government and other local public sector bodies can deliver.

The Focus and Differences in Focus of Place-Based Policy-Making

There was a remarkable consistency across research participants with regards to the topics which place-based policy-making was focused upon. Economic growth based on creating jobs, improving skills and attracting investment both for business and infrastructure development was a priority area across all participants. Improving public service outcomes particularly for health and social care was another major focus that was very widely cited. Regularly referenced, although not as often as growth and services, was the need to deliver decent affordable housing as well as better transport links.

There was no difference in focus between areas that were predominantly rural or urban or those with a more challenging post-industrial economy as against more economically vibrant cosmopolitan areas. Nor could any distinction be discerned between areas that had voted majority Leave and those that had voted majority Remain in the referendum on the UK's membership of the EU.

As indicated above, there was some difference in motivation, rather than policy focus, for taking a place-based approach between Leave areas and Remain areas. In particular, the sense of the Brexit vote as a catalyst for change and a need to address popular alienation. However, this should not be overstated as all of the other causal factors behind place-based approaches were shared by all participants.

The major difference that emerges in place-based approaches is the extent of their progress and sense of momentum. This was, however, entirely determined by contingent factors discussed immediately below rather than anything inherent to the different types of places studied here.

Success in Place-Based Approaches

Research participants were asked about what made for successful progress in place-based policy-making. The strong view emerged that the personalities, relationships and mind-set of the leaders involved in developing and delivering place-based approaches was far more important than any specific characteristics associated with a particular locality.

Participants observed that public sector leaders needed to have trusting relationships with each other. That, in part, came down to the characters of the people involved but was also reliant on some other factors which were more within the gift of any group aiming to take a place-based approach.

The group needed a clarity of vision about what it was trying to achieve and, in particular, about what sort of place it was trying to shape. This was deemed vital because a shared vision of place could transcend institutional narrowness and encourage leaders to look beyond self-interest to wider goals. This outlook, increasingly entitled 'system leadership' in the public sector, is a growing concern of local government and one that is fundamentally linked to place-based approaches.

In a similar vein, it was also felt that leaders needed to look beyond short-term political cycles and instead be committed to doing what is right to deliver a vision of place – which can take many years and involve many compromises with other bodies – rather than what serves party or personal interest. This applies to officers as well as elected members with the former having to maintain commitment to press ahead with agreed strategies and delivery even in election years when officers are often encouraged to avoid controversy or difficult decisions.

A number of participants felt that citizen engagement and a sense of ownership of a place-based vision and approach was key to success. However, this did not seem to be an aspect that groups leading place-based approaches had made particular progress against with planning, development and implementation still largely restricted to elite groups of public sector leaders.

How Important is Devolution?

Research participants regard greater devolution of powers and resources as important to the delivery of place-based approaches but far from fundamental to its continuation.

There was wide frustration that the enthusiasm in central government had dimmed so significantly since Theresa May came to power and that this would make delivering place-based policy more challenging. One respondent lamented, for example, how difficult it was to develop a meaningful place-based skills policy without extra local powers just at a time when Brexit had encouraged the private sector to be more engaged and had made the need for local skills all the more important and urgent.

However, there was no sense that the slowing of devolution or even failed devolution deals were taking the energy out of place-based policy making. In fact, as the lack of enthusiasm from central government was seen as part of a general lack of capacity in Whitehall to address big challenges beyond Brexit, it only strengthened resolve to address such challenges locally and in a place-based fashion. One respondent, a senior leader of a major council, was particularly dismissive of the idea that place-based policy making required devolution asserting that 80% of anything a local council and other public sector bodies wanted to do through place-based approaches was possible without further powers and resources.

Overview

This report highlights quite how complex and varied an area is place-based policy making. As well as there being a number of overlapping understandings of what the term means, there are also several intertwined drivers of interest in the approach most of which are deeply influenced by rapidly developing policy areas such as austerity, Brexit and devolution.

More straightforwardly, there is a striking consistency in the focus for place-based approaches, despite the varied economic profiles of research participants, with a particular emphasis on economic growth and improving public service outcomes and wider social impact. In addition, the research seems to indicate that while there may be some difference in the motivation for place-based policy making between areas where a majority voted Leave and those where a majority voted Remain, the factors which determine momentum and progress are highly contingent relying on the personalities, relationships and outlook of the individuals leading a place-based approach.

Most interestingly, the recent slowing of the devolution agenda since July 2016 has not dimmed the enthusiasm for place-based approaches. Instead, it seems to have confirmed the view amongst senior local government officers that little help is likely to come the way of local areas at a time of Brexit and that place-based policy making in areas such as growth and social impact are more required than ever.

CONCLUSION

In the first part of this report we began to explore the challenge of varied policy demands to meet increasingly diverse social and economic contexts within England. Brexit revealed the cleavages but not how to respond to them. Citizens are drawing on different experiences and outlooks to shape their expectations of the future and policymakers need to consider how to respond.

The key point is that for post-Brexit Britain, bespoke and locally-made policy responses are needed – not copycat, not off-the-shelf, not picked up from expensive travelling consultants. This argument is not fully recognized in national policymaking yet our report provides clear evidence that it should be, even if it goes against the grain of a tradition of policymaking where Whitehall knows best and where policy is developed based on a one-size-fits-all assumption (a longstanding source of policy disasters in British politics, see Dunleavy 1995). The Brexit vote was a visible expression of the diverse experiences and economic trajectories of places in Britain (Jennings et al. 2017). It was not just a protest by "left behind" areas, but rather a wake-up call to a policy system that has developed a too national and centrally generated policy process.

For cosmopolitan areas of growth, the challenges are most likely to be associated with congestion, housing shortages and sustaining a wider social fabric as the pace of work accelerates. For those "left behind" areas that can join the new economy as latecomers, a clear specification of the niche and focus of their ambition as well as targeted financial incentives, infrastructure and training would be required. We may also have to accept that some areas will be forever left behind, as permanent stragglers in the global economy, and develop a planning system capable of managing decline and ensuring the potential of declining growth might be counterbalanced in terms of climate and lifestyle gains for citizens in those areas.

We are not claiming to be able to identify all the right solutions here, but rather argue that those solutions are most likely to be found in the context of place-based policymaking. As the second part of our report establishes, place-based policymaking is a practice that is familiar to local officials. It can take different forms. Options for place-based policymaking can be given the following labels:

1. Deciding: this builds on ideas about the value of devolution and local decision-making in terms of local knowledge and accountability. Government policy since 2010 at least has been rhetorically in favour of this argument for place-based policymaking.

2. Coordinating: this rests on a rather more local standing policy practice that stretches back at least to the 1960s and 70s about the value of bringing together a combined effort from a variety of agencies to meet local needs but has been given a new impetus by the impact of austerity policies that have encouraged integration as a mechanism for getting more with less.

3. Promoting: this again draws on a long tradition of endorsing the value or worth of a particular place but has again been given a new lease of life in the context of a divisive Brexit vote and fears of communities about being forgotten or abandoned. Promoting, therefore, can extend from booster activity to wanting to preserve community identities and cultures.

There is an case to be argued for, and as we show an emerging practice in relation to, all three of these types of place-based policymaking. Yet the second part of our report also found that there was a striking consistency in the focus for place-based approaches, despite the varied economic and social profiles of research participants, with a particular emphasis on economic growth and improving public service outcomes and wider social impact. Moreover, the choice of focus seemed to express less strategic analysis about what might be appropriate and more a contingent dynamic relying on the personalities, relationships and outlook of the individuals leading a place-based approach. These findings, when combined with the analysis in the first part of the report which explores the substantial cleavages in circumstances between places, lead us to suggest a fourth, missing link in place-based policy thinking.

4. Matching: this rests on the view that we need place-based approaches that more strongly match policy responses to the circumstances and contexts of distinct areas and settings. In particular, matching place-based policy making is needed to deliver a better placed-based approach to post-Brexit Britain. Policies must, therefore, be designed to match the circumstances of places with shared but various trajectories. For a start we could develop bespoke policies designed for cosmopolitan, post-industrial, and coastal places. Within each of those policy arms it may be necessary to encourage still further distinctive place-based approaches. The challenge requires not just action at the local or regional level but a new style of national policymaking that breaks from the tradition of "one-size-fits-all" legislation and policy regulation. Place-based deciding cannot automatically be left to local elites through devolution measures as they may not be able – without external input – or perhaps willing to develop appropriate responses. Coordinating place-based policymaking might be a useful tool for its delivery but it cannot guarantee the right policy content or mix. Place-based policymaking devoted to promoting or preserving may set in stone images or identities that are not helpful for the future.

Matching place-based policymaking will require input from both national, regional and local decision-makers. The goal is to match policy responses on industry, welfare and culture to the circumstances and context of a place. It could start with an honest audit of where a locality stands in the new global order. Further, it should recognise that waves of further global changes in economic and societal structures are still on their way and will need to be taken into account. Finally, it needs to develop a bespoke but realistic vision of what might be; then the capacity to share it and organize to deliver it. Our report suggests that it is this matching dimension and dynamic that is missing at present in the challenging policy world of post-Brexit Britain. We need to explore further how to develop it and spread its practice but without some new thinking we fear that existing place-based policymaking approaches will not match the challenges ahead.

There is some awareness of the option "matching placed-based policy making" but our research shows that not enough areas are looking at it or following with the sufficient ambition or priority that our research here suggests is required. Part of this to do with the freedom and resources that are currently available to different areas but a great deal is due to a lack of strategic choice. The national and local polity together needs to find a way to lift place-based policy making beyond contingent factors to embrace the more strategic, ambitious and forward-looking approach that matching place-based policy making could deliver. Place-based differences dominate the economic and social landscape of post-Brexit Britain and a matching place-based policymaking is required in order to bring the right policies into play for the different needs of different places.

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APPENDIX

Table A1. Mosaic types for classification of cosmopolitan, provincial-coastal and post-industrial constituencies

Mosaic ID	Descriptor
Cosmopolitan	
C10	Wealthy families in substantial houses with little community involvement
C11	Creative professionals seeking involvement in local communities
C12	Residents in smart city centre flats who make little use of public services
E17	Comfortably off suburban families weakly tied to their local community
F22	Busy executives in town houses in dormitory settlements
G26	Well educated singles living in purpose built flats
G27	City dwellers owning houses in older neighbourhoods
G28	Singles and sharers occupying converted Victorian houses
G29	Young professional families settling in better quality older terraces
G30	Diverse communities of well-educated singles living in smart, small flats
G31	Owners in smart purpose built flats in prestige locations, many newly built
G32	Students and other transient singles in multi-let houses
G34	Students involved in college and university communities
H36	Young singles and sharers renting small purpose built flats
Provincial-coastal	
B6	Self-employed trades people living in smaller communities
B7	Empty nester owner occupiers making little use of public services
B8	Mixed communities with many single people in the centres of small towns
J45	Low income communities reliant on low skill industrial jobs
K51	Often indebted families living in low rise estates
L53	Residents in retirement, second home and tourist communities
L54	Retired people of modest means commonly living in seaside bungalows
M56	Older people living on social housing estates with limited budgets
M58	Less mobile older people requiring a degree of care
N61	Childless tenants in social housing flats with modest social needs
Post-industrial	
B7	Empty nester owner occupiers making little use of public services
E18	Industrial workers living comfortably in owner occupied semis
E19	Self-reliant older families in suburban semis in industrial towns
E21	Middle aged families living in less fashionable inter war suburban semis
I42	South Asian communities experiencing social deprivation
I44	Low income families occupying poor quality older terraces
J47	Comfortably off industrial workers owning their own homes
K50	Older families in low value housing in traditional industrial areas
O67	Older tenants on low rise social housing estates where jobs are scarce
O69	Vulnerable young parents needing substantial state support

Table A2. Ranking of cosmopolitan, provincial-coastal and post-industrial constituencies

Rank	Provincial-coastal	Cosmopolitan	Post-industrial
1	Clacton	Cities of London and Westminster	Sheffield Brightside and Hills
2	Norfolk North	Chelsea and Fulham	Middlesbrough
3	Isle of Wight	Wimbledon	Knowsley
4	Totnes	Kensington	Nottingham North
5	Louth and Horncastle	Richmond Park	Leeds East
6	St Austell and Newquay	Ealing Central and Acton	Rotherham
7	Norfolk North West	Twickenham	Birmingham Hodge Hill
8	Suffolk Coastal	Hampstead and Kilburn	Hull East
9	New Forest West	Finchley and Golders Green	Redcar
10	Norfolk South West	Putney	Liverpool West Derby
11	St Ives	Battersea	Bootle
12	Bexhill and Battle	Westminster North	Normanton, Pontefract and Cast
13	Dorset West	Hammersmith	Doncaster North
14	Thanet North	Enfield Southgate	Stoke-on-Trent North
15	Tiverton and Honiton	Bristol West	Bradford East
16	Christchurch	Kingston and Surbiton	Stockton North
17	Cambridgeshire North East	Brentford and Isleworth	Washington and Sunderland West
18	South Holland and The Deepings	Tooting	Sheffield Heeley
19	Camborne and Redruth	Chipping Barnet	Easington
20	Norfolk Mid	Sutton and Cheam	Blackburn
21	Cornwall South East	Brighton Pavilion	Houghton and Sunderland South
22	Broadland	Manchester Withington	Blyth Valley
23	Great Yarmouth	Hornsey and Wood Green	Wentworth and Dearne
24	Bognor Regis and Littlehampton	Holborn and St Pancras	Hartlepool
25	Cornwall North	Beckenham	St Helens North
26	Bridgwater and Somerset West	Islington South and Finsbury	Makerfield
27	Boston and Skegness	Harrow West	Ashfield
28	Devon East	Cambridge	Walsall North
29	Waveney	Hove	Stoke-on-Trent South
30	Yorkshire East	Poplar and Limehouse	Jarrow
31	Lewes	Reading East	Great Grimsby
32	Devon North	Sheffield Central	Oldham West and Royton
33	Devon West and Torridge	Dulwich and West Norwood	Liverpool Walton
34	Dorset South	Watford	Stoke-on-Trent Central
35	Norfolk South	Islington North	Hull North
36	Newton Abbot	Hendon	Barnsley Central
37	Folkestone and Hythe	St Albans	Scunthorpe
38	Dover	Bermondsey and Old Southwark	Wolverhampton North East
39	Thanet South	Brent North	Wolverhampton South East
40	Havant	Bath	Leicester West
41	Harwich and Essex North	Esher and Walton	Garston and Halewood
42	Suffolk South	Lewisham West and Penge	Wigan
43	Eastbourne	Streatham	Leigh
44	Yeovil	Chingford and Woodford Green	Denton and Reddish
45	Brigg and Goole	Bromley and Chislehurst	Leeds West
46	Berwick-upon-Tweed	Guildford	Barnsley East
47	Scarborough and Whitby	Carshalton and Wallington	Hyndburn
48	Wells	Ilford North	Bradford West
49	Hastings and Rye	Harrow East	Mansfield
50	Sleaford and North Hykeham	Vauxhall	Rother Valley

Table A3. Survey questions from the British Election Study

British Election Study Online Panel: Wave 7 (April-May 2016)

Q. "How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?"

Things in Britain were better in the past

  Strongly disagree

  Disagree

  Neither

  Agree

  Strongly agree

  Don't know

Q. "Do you think that each of these has gone too far or not far enough?"

Cuts to NHS spending / Cuts to local services in my area

  Not gone nearly far enough

  Not gone far enough

  About right

  Gone too far

  Gone much too far

  Don't know

Q. "Do you think that each of the following are getting better, getting worse or staying about the same?"

Schools

  Getting a lot worse

  Getting a little worse

  Staying about the same

  Getting a little better

  Getting a lot better

  Don't know

Q. "Do you think that each of the following are getting higher, getting lower or staying about the same?"

The level of crime

  Getting a lot lower

  Getting a little lower

  Staying about the same

  Getting a little higher

  Getting a lot higher

  Don't know

Q. "Do you think the following would be higher, lower or about the same if the UK leaves the European Union?"

International trade/Immigration to the UK

  Much lower

  Lower

  About the same

  Higher

  Much higher

  Don't know

Q. "Do you think the following would be better, worse or about the same if the UK leaves the European Union?"

The general economic situation in the UK/The NHS

  Much worse

  Worse

  About the same

  Better

  Much better

  Don't know

Q. "How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?"

Immigrants are a burden on the welfare state.

> Strongly disagree
>
> Disagree
>
> Neither
>
> Agree
>
> Strongly agree
>
> Don't know

Q. "Do you think that immigration undermines or enriches Britain's cultural life?"

1 Undermines cultural life

> 2
>
> 3
>
> 4
>
> 5
>
> 6
>
> 7 Enriches cultural life
>
> Don't know

Q. "Please say whether you think these things have gone too far or have not gone far enough in Britain."

Attempts to give equal opportunities to gays and lesbians

> Not gone nearly far enough
>
> Not gone far enough
>
> About right
>
> Gone too far
>
> Gone much too far
>
> Don't know