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RE-THINKING LIVELIHOOD SECURITY: WHY ADDRESSING THE DEMOCRATIC DEFICIT IN ECONOMIC POLICY-MAKING OPENS UP NEW PATHWAYS TO PROSPERITY

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March 2021



THIS PAPER IS PART OF THE REBUILDING PROSPERITY CAMPAIGN

Rebuilding prosperity for the 21st century requires new ways of thinking and acting and the kind of vision, commitment and courage that informed the national conversation in the 1940s. The Institute for Global Prosperity is launching the [Rebuilding Prosperity Campaign](#) calling on policy-makers from Town and City Halls to Whitehall and from National Assemblies to Westminster Parliament to engage in a new conversation and to join our campaign for a radical new approach that will create shared prosperity across the country.

We would like to acknowledge the [London Prosperity Board](#) partners for their continuing support and enthusiasm for innovating with new ways of working together.

ABSTRACT

Citizen-led research in east London identifies livelihood security as a critical determinant of prosperity for local communities (Moore and Woodcraft, 2019; Woodcraft and Anderson, 2019). Livelihood security depends on more than income and work. Households draw on a range of assets including: secure income and good quality work; affordable, secure and good quality housing; access to key public services (healthcare, education, care, transport, digital communication); and inclusion in the social and economic life of the city. These assets display complex inter-dependencies, intersect with class, race, gender and other identities in multiple ways, and cut across sectors and policy domains that are commonly siloed in economic decision-making. In this paper, we conceptualise these assets as an ‘infrastructure’ for secure livelihoods to draw attention to their over-lapping nature and to demonstrate how knowledge based on lived experience

generates fundamentally different ways of understanding the economy. We argue there is a democratic deficit in economic policy-making that must be addressed to better account for context-specific interactions between macro- and micro-economic factors and generate more effective policy-making. Taking inclusive growth policies as a case in point, we explore how an expanded concept of ‘inclusion’ that incorporates participatory research, problem-framing and policy development opens-up new spaces for action on place-based prosperity.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Place-based prosperity has become a policy priority for national, regional and local government in Britain in recent years, in response to growing regional and intra-urban inequalities and social and economic exclusion (BEIS, 2017a; Brien, 2020). Creating ‘prosperous communities across the UK’ is one of the five foundations of the UK Industrial Strategy, which will determine priorities for public spending and private investment in the next decade (BEIS, 2017b). In policy terms, prosperity is widely associated with economic growth and measured by rising GDP. New forms of citizen-led research challenge this narrow framing of prosperity as material wealth, offering diverse perspectives on what it means to live a prosperous life that encompass freedom, autonomy, security, social and economic inclusion, healthy environments, belonging and participation (Moore, 2015; Mintchev et al., 2019; Moore and Woodcraft, 2019). Recognising prosperity as diverse and context-specific presents a challenge to conventional ways of understanding the economy and relationships between economic and social life. At a time where prosperity is a national policy priority (BEIS, 2017a) making sense of people’s experiences of prosperity, and the specific challenges and constraints that limit opportunities to live well, is critical in order to develop policy pathways that align with lived realities.

In this paper, we examine how citizen-led research in east London offers a new way of understanding livelihood security as a critical determinant of prosperity (Moore and Woodcraft, 2019). Drawing on detailed individual accounts, we develop a conceptual framework to represent the range of assets that people depend on for livelihood security, and demonstrate how conventional policy responses that focus primarily on economic growth and getting people into work, can marginalise and undermine

other components of this framework. While the empirical research discussed here concentrates on individuals and households in five east London neighbourhoods, the findings have broader relevance to place-based policy. The research draws attention to a more general misalignment between concepts of livelihood security, and prosperity more widely, in economic policy-making, and the specific challenges that particular communities face. We conceptualise this misalignment as a democratic deficit and argue that knowledge based on lived experience generates fundamentally different ways of understanding how economic and social policy impact on people’s lives.

Approaches like the secure livelihoods infrastructure presented in this paper offer new ways of developing policy-relevant knowledge about the economy, which can be translated to other geographical contexts and policy challenges such as post-COVID recovery planning and local industrial strategies. By applying the secure livelihoods infrastructure to the concept of inclusive growth, the policy framework championed in the post-pandemic ‘build back better’ context, we draw out these misalignments between policy and lived experience. We do this to demonstrate how new forms of knowledge and collaboration can reveal spaces for action that are currently overlooked by local authorities, public agencies and business, but are crucial if pathways to prosperity are to be equitable and achievable.

2. SECURE LIVELIHOODS AS THE FOUNDATION OF PROSPERITY

London successfully won the bid to host the 2012 Olympic Games based on the premise that the legacy of the Games would regenerate social and economic prospects and prosperity for east London, where the Games were hosted (DCLG, 2015). Extensive qualitative research in east London, with citizens living in five neighbourhoods around Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park (QEOP), explored meanings of prosperity and the conditions that enable people to live well and take up future pathways to prosperity (Moore and Woodcraft, 2019; Woodcraft and Anderson, 2019). This research found that secure livelihoods were consistently identified as the most important factor to people's prosperity – providing a foundation for people to build upon and supporting the possibility of a good life (Moore and Woodcraft, 2019). The majority of respondents described how a secure livelihood relies on several inter-related factors that together work to support or hinder opportunities for a prosperous life. People described secure income and good work, secure and genuinely affordable housing, access to public services, local support networks and belonging to local communities, as part of the mix of assets, networks and services they depend on to make a living. The interactions between these different assets were widely discussed. For example, at the time of the research employment in London was at a record high (ONS, 2017), however, participants talked about their own experiences of in-work poverty linked to low-wage and insecure work. It was common to hear people discuss the necessity of having more than one job to cope with unpredictable or insecure employment and the high costs of private rented housing:

“How can we have a prosperous life for everyone, people of all classes? The situation is precarious for people around here. The combination of unaffordable housing, zero-hours contracts, portfolio careers ... people have no security. Jobs are not good quality ... this is a toxic mix,” (Frances, Hackney resident, 2015).

People recognised community services and participation in community life as vital in supporting their livelihoods, but in a way that interacts with employment opportunities and social support:

“[T]here is a community spirit here. There is an after-school club in the library and I go and help out there. It's really good and I volunteer there. It's children having help with homework and things like that,” (Niaja, Heath resident, 2017).

But even the provision of certain services does not necessarily mean they are fully accessible for everyone. As this example demonstrates, it is the intersection of employment opportunities and affordable public services, which make work and caring responsibilities possible:

“[T]here is like a community centre and that's all the way in Dalston and I mean if I don't go and pick her up because it's a lot [of money] for transport, it's about a fiver a day just for transport to take her to this place, so we said no we'll stop that,” (Carer, Hackney, 2017).

The accounts indicate there is not a straightforward relationship between having a job or income and livelihood security (Moore and Woodcraft, 2019). Good quality work and a secure income are critical, however, it is clear that people depend on a range of inter-connected services and supports to make a living, which intersect with other identities in multiple ways to exacerbate insecurity. In this context, understanding how the deeply-embedded ‘horizontal’ forms of inequality (Morris et al., 2018) that co-exist across gender, race, disability, sexual orientation, trans-status and class, are configured in relation to the complex system of formal and informal services and livelihood supports people draw on is essential¹. A resident of Hackney Wick (2017) describes how disability and age intersect with processes of regeneration and change, which result in a lack of accessible public services leading to unpaid care:

“[B]ecause all of the facilities that were around 20 years ago have now all gone [...] Everything’s gone, for instance, my mum is disabled, I’m her carer, that’s why I’m here, all the places she can go into and be looked after, they’re all gone, so I have to [...] give up my work so I can look after my mum.”

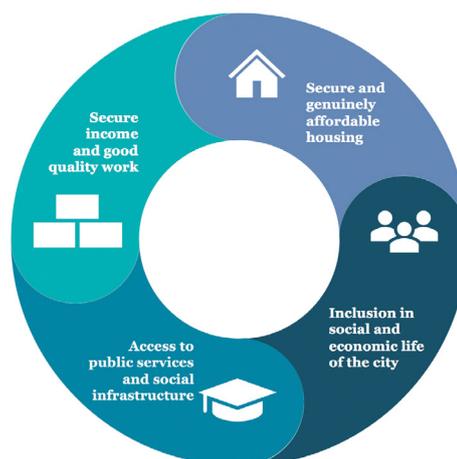
What these examples demonstrate is the misalignment between economic and social policy-making and lived experience, which fail to account for the ways identities, services and social supports interact to support or impede people’s livelihoods. Next, we outline an infrastructure for secure livelihoods that represents the interdependencies of assets, services and supports that citizens in east London draw on to build a secure livelihood.

¹ For example, London Prosperity Index analysis shows how Black, Asian and minority ethnic groups suffer not only from lower household disposable income than white ethnic groups, but that they feel less safe in public space, feel less secure about their future, report greater dissatisfaction with local environmental and health services, experience a lack of autonomy and ability to change their lives (Charalambous, 2020). Most people experience an intersection of identities (Crenshaw, 1991) and realities that contribute to their ability to make a living and live a good life, which cannot be understood by macro-economic analysis alone.

3. AN INFRASTRUCTURE FOR SECURE LIVELIHOODS

Research in east London shows how people depend on a range of inter-related assets for livelihood security: a secure income and good quality work; affordable, secure and good quality housing; access to key public services (healthcare, education, care, transport, digital communication); inclusion in the social and economic life of the city, including strong local social and community networks (Moore and Woodcraft, 2019; Woodcraft and Anderson, 2019). In this article, we conceptualise these inter-dependent assets as an infrastructure for secure livelihoods, visualised in Figure 1. We do this to draw attention to the ways in which people experience the complex inter-dependencies between, for example, work and housing, or the critical role that services like childcare, schools and public transport, play in enabling people to make a living. This is significant because the assets that constitute this ‘infrastructure’ cut-across different sectors and policy domains, as well as aspects of public and private life. Yet, the multi-sectoral and multi-dimensional reality of livelihood security described here is rarely addressed holistically; instead, it is tackled through problem-specific responses and siloed decision-making. Conventional policy approaches to livelihood security focus on economic growth that drives job creation and employment. In recent years, greater attention has been paid to the quality and security of jobs being created (NEF, 2017; RSA, 2017), but the same attention has not been given to the interactions between labour and housing markets, or how basic services give people the capacities to seek and maintain work, for example.

Figure 1. Secure Livelihoods Infrastructure. IGP 2021.



Approaching livelihood security in infrastructural terms foregrounds these interactions. It offers decision-makers a framework to examine the context-specific ways that different assets interact with each other, and intersect with inequalities linked to class, race, gender, and other identities. This provides a nuanced understanding of how the links between services, networks, and resources that support livelihood security are configured for particular groups at specific points in time. This draws attention to where a lack of access in one infrastructural component can undermine the strength of others to create insecurity and instability. As in the case of east London, where insecure and poor quality work, low wages, unaffordable housing, and diminishing public services generate a spiral of negative interactions. What we see is that local communities carry the burden, where by social networks of friends, family and neighbours, informally provide essential support, such as childcare, as people live with insecurity (Woodcraft and Anderson, 2019).

3.1 Infrastructures in theory

“Infrastructures – visible and invisible – are deeply implicated in not only the making and unmaking of individual lives, but also in the experience of community, solidarity and struggle for recognition,” (Amin, 2014).

The secure livelihoods infrastructure framework presented here (Figure 1) builds on earlier literature that identifies the social, physical, human, financial and natural assets people draw on to build a livelihood (Chambers and Conway, 1991). This work, often described as the Sustainable Livelihoods Approach, succeeded in bringing asset-based approaches to development focusing on people’s strengths rather than vulnerabilities. It has been criticised for focusing too much on the individual level at the expense of understanding the way macro-level policy, decisions and power relations impact the assets people have to draw on (Moser and Norton, 2001; De Haan, 2012). The lived experience lens, upon which the secure livelihoods infrastructure is based, seeks to address this weakness by framing the building blocks, or assets, necessary for livelihood security, and acknowledging the different scales at which decisions about these assets are made - how macro-level policy decisions (such as, welfare payments, tax and interest rates, spending on public services, investment in infrastructure and supply-side policies such as privatisation or deregulation) intersect with everyday lives.

In policy terms, infrastructure is often framed in either physical or social terms as ‘things’, ‘spaces’, ‘services’ and ‘networks’; with water, power, transport and telecommunications seen as material infrastructures, for example, and libraries, pools, schools, playgrounds, community organisations, parks and even commercial establishments, as social infrastructures (Latham and Layton, 2019). Social capital, trust, civic action and participation are often

described in relational terms as intangible aspects of social infrastructure. However, social and urban theorists have recognised that infrastructures are ‘social’ in every respect (Amin, 2014); functioning as socio-technical systems in which political, cultural, social, economic and physical factors become enmeshed (Klinenberg, 2018), and around which political actors align (Harvey and Knox, 2015). Viewing the secure livelihoods infrastructure in these terms, foregrounds both the interaction of assets as experienced at the individual and household level, and draws attention to the wider political and economic systems in which these livelihood supports are imagined, planned and delivered. For example, the four components of the secure livelihoods infrastructure encompass physical (transport, communication technology, housing), economic (policies determining investment in physical assets, shaping labour and housing markets, job quality, minimum income), social (services such as education, care, and social networks) and political domains (shaping economic and social policy, and investment decisions that frame all of these components from affordable housing to policies on welfare, taxes and the minimum wage).

A failure to understand livelihood security as the outcome of a functioning infrastructure of inter-related assets, which is both local and subject to macro-level economic and political influences, marginalises the critical significance of the relationships between different fragments of the systems that influence people’s lives. This is how, before the pandemic, we could have record-levels of employment in the UK (ONS, 2019) alongside record levels of in-work poverty (Bourquin et al., 2019) compounded by the ongoing housing crisis (National Housing Federation, 2019) and rising costs, due to government cuts, of childcare (Ferguson, 2019). Conventional policy responses that address work and employment in isolation are blind to the ways that policies and services can work in conflict with each other to maintain, rather than address, socio-

economic inequalities and reduce the capacities of people to participate fully in society. For example, the Government's Industrial Strategy highlights the importance of good jobs and greater earning power (BEIS, 2017a), yet fails to acknowledge that drivers of livelihood insecurity extend beyond issues that can be addressed solely by increasing people's pay. By focusing on a single asset of livelihoods, it fails to acknowledge the parallel levels of in-work poverty and compounding barriers to security beyond that which can be fixed by addressing people's pay. This is not to discount the importance of fair pay and income to people's lives, especially people in poverty. We also appreciate the well-researched intersection between employment and education recognised in UK policy. However, more attention needs to be paid to researching and understanding how aspects of livelihood security interact, in order to make a clear case for integrated policy responses.

We need new ways of thinking and acting. To do this, policymakers must understand lived realities in order to know where and how to intervene to improve quality of life and prosperity. The secure livelihoods infrastructure draws directly on lived experiences of people living in east London neighbourhoods. Experiences in east London will be different to other areas of the country. For example, in Hartlepool, where housing is much more affordable than in east London, children from low-income households are three times less likely to go to university than those in east London (UK2070 Commission, 2019). An infrastructural way of thinking and framing experience provides a way to examine how pathways to prosperity are configured in different places.

We have reviewed research presenting livelihood security as a critical determinant of prosperity for communities in east London. We can conclude from this work that livelihood security depends on more than a job – it is about access to an infrastructure of assets, services and networks that support livelihoods. The pandemic has demonstrated the

extent and severity of livelihood insecurity around the UK, and drawn attention to the necessity of local and regionally-specific responses to post-COVID recovery. In the next section, we use the secure livelihoods infrastructure as a lens to examine inclusive growth, the policy framework that underpins many post-pandemic economic recovery strategies, and call for greater practical efforts to address the participation gap in economic policymaking.

4. INCLUSION, LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND ‘BUILDING BACK BETTER’

Local government has a critical role in leading post-pandemic recovery planning and the national ‘levelling-up’ agenda that seeks to address regional inequalities in Britain (Kruger, 2020; Tomaney and Pike, 2020). Global calls for post-COVID planning to ‘build back better’ (OECD, 2020; United Nations, 2020) are echoed by growing cross-party support in Britain for economic and social policies that are fair, inclusive, environmentally sustainable and context-specific (LGA, 2020b). Foregrounded even before the pandemic, COVID-19 has highlighted the scale and severity of livelihood insecurity in Britain, exacerbating the punitive effects of inequalities in income, job security, health, housing, education and digital access, and drawing attention to links between inequalities, poverty and race (Caul, 2020; White and Vahé, 2020)².

Inclusive growth is the policy framework being championed by and for local government to ensure that all people and places are able to benefit from economic growth (LGA, 2020c, 2020a). Calls for inclusive growth to be the focus of post-COVID renewal strategies have been accompanied by a swathe of resources targeted at local government: setting out the role of local authorities in inclusive growth and mapping the available policy levers³. However, evidence that inclusive growth policies are able to significantly address inequalities is contested (Lee and Sissons, 2016; Sissons, Green

and Broughton, 2018; Lee, 2019). In the next section, we examine this literature through the lens of secure livelihoods infrastructure to explore how the gap between ‘lived’ and ‘learned’ forms of knowledge marginalises economic and social outcomes for people whose livelihoods are already precarious.

4.1 Problematizing inclusive growth

“Because it is so hard to disagree with the notion of Inclusive Growth, the danger is that it becomes a sort of placebo: helping policy-makers feel they are doing the right thing, but without leading to meaningful change,” (Lee, 2019).

Inclusive growth policies have garnered widespread attention in Britain since 2015 and are increasingly aligned with urban policies that focus on cities as sites of economic transformation and distribution (Beatty, Crisp and Gore, 2016; OECD, 2016, 2018; Inclusive Growth Commission, 2017; Lee, 2019). It is a response to recognition that the economy, as it is currently constructed, is not delivering for many people even as it increases in value. Inclusive growth is concerned broadly with achieving a fairer distribution of the benefits of growth, including between population groups and across areas (Inclusive Growth

² People from the poorest areas of England and Wales have been twice as likely to die from COVID-19 than less deprived areas (Caul, 2020). People from Pakistani, Bangladeshi and black and ethnic backgrounds have a significantly higher risk of death than people from white backgrounds, which is partly a result of socio-economic deprivation (White and Vahé, 2020)

³ Policy levers, or styles of action, are instruments available to policy-makers to direct, manage and shape services (Steer et al., 2006)

Commission, 2017). Two models of inclusive growth have been put forward, the most widely adopted of which is known as the “growth plus” model (Lupton and Hughes, 2016), which acknowledges the need to connect more people to growth and the benefits of growth. Second is the “inclusive economy” model which posits a more fundamental change to current economic systems and structures to achieve greater inclusion and wider social goals such as reducing inequality and poverty while focusing on the nature of the economy itself rather than just redistributing the gains of growth (Lupton and Hughes, 2016; LGA, 2020a).

Yet ‘inclusion’ and ‘inclusive growth’ lack conceptual precision. As a consequence, the terms are used interchangeably with associated concepts like ‘social value,’ ‘community wealth building’ and ‘fair economies’ (Tiratelli and Morgan, 2020). Policy frameworks that might make growth inclusive are not clearly defined, or connected to practical action, and inclusion is rarely connected to specific outcomes, such as poverty-reduction or enhancing livelihood security, rather is seen as an end in itself (Lee and Sissons, 2016; Hughes, 2019). This weakens the power of inclusive growth as a shared vision around which stakeholders with different objectives and interests can align.

Action on inclusive growth requires a shared vision and coordinated efforts across sectors, yet most UK strategies are local authority-led and lack buy-in from business (Rafferty and Jelley, 2018; Lupton et al., 2019). If the term is not clearly understood, it makes it harder to align and integrate the interests of ‘growth actors’ (such as politicians and officers responsible for economic development, and business leaders) with those of ‘inclusion actors’ (politicians and officers responsible for public services, and leaders of voluntary, community and other social economy organisations). Goals to improve both growth and inclusion may co-exist but in silos. The implication of this misalignment between the interests of ‘growth’

and ‘inclusion’ actors is that ‘inclusion’ remains a policy problem and fails to become embedded in mainstream practice (Lupton et al., 2019). In this context, ‘inclusive growth’ is merely a substitute for ‘economic growth’ or ‘growth,’ accepting the premise that growth is always desirable (Burch and Mcinroy, 2018). Consequently, inclusive growth ‘practices’ remain focused on conventional aspects of economic development: improving job quality, increasing pay and minimum income standards, supporting local supply chains and procurement, improving learning, skills and apprenticeships, and enhancing connections to local labour markets (Lupton and Hughes, 2016; Inclusive Growth Commission, 2017; Lupton et al., 2019).

By applying a secure livelihoods infrastructure lens to ‘conventional’ inclusive growth practices it is evident that critical inter-dependencies between income, work, housing and public services are not taken into account. This reflects a long-established, and taken for granted, bifurcation of economic and social ‘policy problems’ (Lupton and Hughes, 2016). However, in the context of post-pandemic recovery planning, this places severe limitations on scope for meaningful improvements in livelihood security, resilience, quality of life, and, thereby ‘inclusion’ in place-based prosperity. Tools and frameworks are required to draw attention to the gap between lived experience and policy goals, in key areas of society and the economy, and to what lived experience reveals about how ‘policy problems’ span sectors, scales and challenges. Without such tools and frameworks, it will be significantly harder to see why ‘inclusion’ goals (such as the impacts of livelihood insecurity on public spending) should be the concern of growth actors, or how economic strategies might need to be reconfigured to produce better social or environmental outcomes. Such approaches can open up the range of tools, policy levers and interventions available to deliver place-based prosperity, by connecting ‘inclusion’ policies to context-specific actions and problems. In the next section, we explore

how reframing the way inclusion is understood and operationalised in economic policy-making is an essential step, which opens-up new spaces for action and levers for change on place-based prosperity.

4.2 Changing how 'inclusion' is operationalised

While inclusive growth as a concept seeks to challenge the nature and distribution of gains (the pace and pattern of growth (Lee, 2019)), the question of inclusion is narrowly interpreted. Gidley's work mapping the ideological underpinnings of social inclusion theory and policy in the UK and Australia (Gidley et al., 2010) proposes a tri-partite, nested schema to explain degrees and effects of social inclusion (Figure 2). This schema proposes that the narrowest interpretation of inclusion, or first domain,

emerges from a neo-liberal ideology of 'access' with the goal of enhancing human and social capitals and economic productivity. In policy terms, this means access to education, labour markets, skills and training to support global competitiveness and growth potential. The middle domain incorporates ideologies of social justice, which in policy terms translates to concerns with inequalities and forms of engagement and participation. The third and broadest interpretation of social inclusion draws on ideologies of human development, which go beyond questions of social justice to consider diversity, complexity, capacities and empowerment.

This framework can usefully be extended to considering problems of economic inclusion and shared prosperity. Current inclusive growth frameworks and practices align with the narrowest

Figure 2. Spectrum of ideologies underlying social inclusion theory and policy (Gidley et al., 2010).



interpretation of inclusion as ‘access’: connecting more people to growth and to the benefits of growth. The focus on growth means that ‘inclusion’ in this sense is only understood as inclusion in growth, not in a broader place-based prosperity which we know depends on a functioning infrastructure of assets and services, and processes that connect citizens to decision-making (Moore and Woodcraft, 2019). Expanding how inclusion is conceptualised opens up the range of policy levers available to local government, and other stakeholders who are shaping places and local economies, by creating space for new forms of collaboration, knowledge-generation and action. For example, thinking about inclusion in relation to questions of participation, social responsibility and empowerment, highlights the democratic deficit in economics and economic policymaking that we discuss here and is acknowledged by the RSA’s Inclusive Growth Commission (2017).

In Britain, participatory approaches to framing policy problems and co-designing policy solutions are widely recognised and applied in the context of public health (Evans, Pilkington and McEachran, 2010; South, 2015; LGA, 2016a; South et al., 2019) and education (Luff and Webster, 2014; Seal, 2018), and acknowledged but not widely practiced in the context of planning policy (Bennett and Roberts, 2004). Participatory approaches have been used in various forms and with differing degrees of participation: to understand poverty (Bennett and Roberts, 2004), in the management of fishing in Marine Protected Areas (JNCC, 2020), for housing and windfarm consultations in Wales (Mills, 2002), participatory budgeting in Govanhill, Glasgow (LGA, 2016b) and Tower Hamlets, London (LGA, 2016c), and in urban renewal projects (such as Gillet Square in east London (Bianchi, 2019)) - to name a few. However, citizen participation in shaping local and regional economic development strategies and policies, whether consultative or deliberative or co-produced, is rare, meaning most people have little power over decisions that affect them (Miller et al., 2020).

Yet there is a wide array of evidence that points to the transformative potential of policy that is locally situated and integrates the lived experience and

understanding of a community’s aspirations for a prosperous life, to enhance their capacities and capabilities and ability to contribute to a sustainable, fair and inclusive future (Sen, 1999; Nussbaum, 2011; Osuteye et al., 2019). Participatory approaches to policy, planning and design originated in the global South through development projects meant to empower local communities – as an alternative to traditional top-down development projects (Participatory Methods, no date; Chambers, 1994; Sen, 1999). Done well, participation involves the people directly impacted by a policy or programme as peers, partners or co-designers, from the beginning of the process and actively throughout its development - beyond superficial and tokenistic representation. Local communities and services users are viewed as agents of change, and participatory processes as a means for people to define who they are, what they value and priorities for change in order to live better lives. When embedded in decision-making processes - across global institutions such as the United Nations and down to the local level – principles of participation work to offer equal standing to a diversity of communities in problem solving, dialogue, planning and collective action and long-term societal change (UNDP, 2011).

We argue that expanding ‘inclusion’ from a model of access (inclusion in growth and connections to the economy), to a model of participation, social responsibility (or fairness) and capacity-building, creates space for citizens to be included in the processes of knowledge production that are used to frame problems and develop policy responses. The secure livelihoods infrastructure shows how a deliberative understanding of the economy as it is experienced in everyday life can account for context-specific interactions between macro- and micro-economic factors, and can generate new kinds of evidence to inform problem-framing and policy responses. As the east London research demonstrates, a grounded approach to examining what constitutes shared prosperity and pathways towards it, highlights the multiple ways that economic structures and activities are enmeshed with social ones. Work, housing, debt, food and public services for example, are inter-connected resources (different aspects of the ‘economy’ from a household perspective), impacted by macro- and

micro-policy decisions, with profound effects on social relationships, support networks, capacities and capabilities. Furthermore, this work illuminates how policies that pull in opposing directions intersect at the household level to undermine 'inclusion' that focuses only on growth, employment and wages. For example, macro-economic policies that focus on housing market growth to drive employment, planning gains, institutional wealth, household wealth, and to subsidise affordable housing, generate micro-economic effects that undermine claims to inclusion.

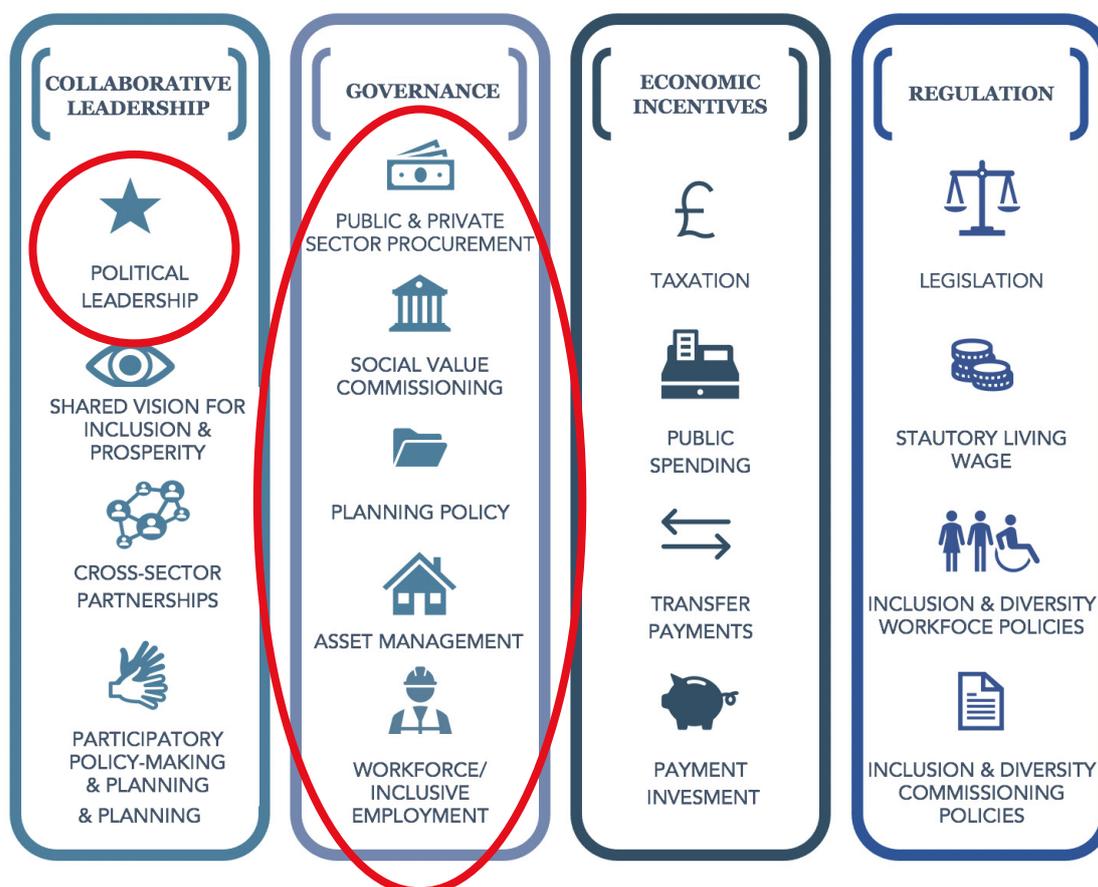
Knowledge co-production approaches that bring citizens and policymakers into dialogue breakdown arbitrary distinctions that demarcate economic growth and employment from other aspects of life and maintain policy silos. While in policy terms the economy may be seen in isolation from social life, it is actually embedded within it - a social construct, designed for and managed by people (Bourdieu, 2005). An expanded notion of what constitutes the economy and its effects on everyday life, creates space for 'inclusive' policy frameworks to consider how intersecting areas of policy can be brought into the debate about 'inclusion' and reconfigured. In this sense, expanding how inclusion is conceptualised and operationalised through different forms of citizen and stakeholder collaboration, participation and co-production, can be seen as also expanding the range of 'policy levers' open to local authorities and institutions with an interest in place-based prosperity. In the next section, we map out the new spaces and levers that become available.

5. NEW LEVERS FOR ACTION ON SHARED PROSPERITY

In the context of ‘building back better’ and ‘levelling up’, local authorities are being inundated with resources championing inclusive growth (LGA, 2020a, 2020b). This guidance focuses primarily on the strategic functions of local government, and the policy levers (see figure 3) available through public spending, procurement and social value commissioning, planning policy to drive affordable housing and workspace, and infrastructure investment to drive job growth and improve connections to labour markets (LGA, 2020a). While these resources highlight the importance of political leadership and

innovative approaches like good work charters and community wealth building initiatives (LGA, 2020a, Lupton and Hughes, 2016), they fail to take account of lessons about the impacts of inclusive growth discussed earlier in this paper. While attention to the need for ‘inclusion’ has intensified, policy debates remain focused on a narrow definition of inclusion as access to the benefits of growth, and on traditional markers of economic activity – employment, skills, infrastructure and transport. Important lessons are overlooked, including connecting inclusion to specific outcomes, such as livelihood security and prosperity,

Figure 3. Local government policy levers for inclusive growth



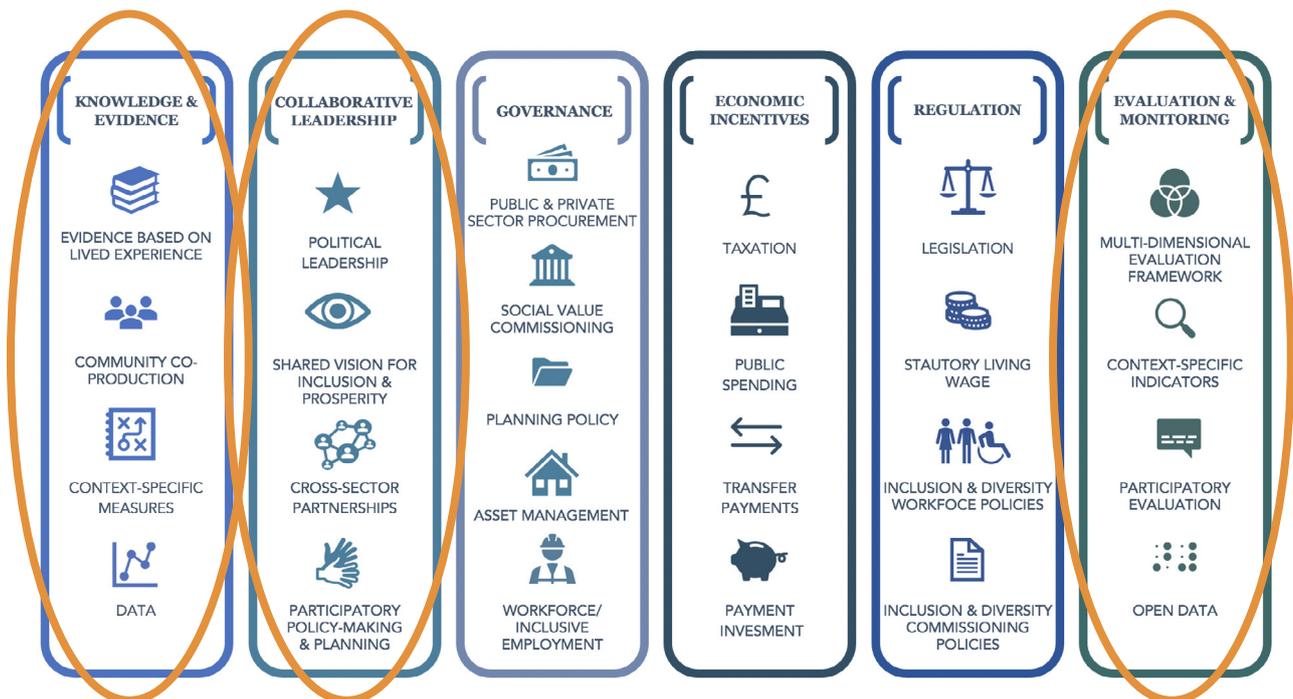
and the need for cross-sector collaborations that engage business in developing a shared vision and strategies for action.

The expanded notion of inclusion that we outline in section 4, broadens the range of levers available for action in three key ways (see figure 4). The first is **inclusion in knowledge generation processes**. As argued throughout this paper, data, evidence and knowledge based on lived experience generates fundamentally different ways of understanding the economy and the impacts of economic policy on everyday life. The participation gap in economic policy-making, allows few opportunities for understanding and generating actions based on lived experience. The knowledge that is used to frame problems, inform policy and drive investments intended to level-up regional inequalities and place-based policy-making is based on expert-led and macro-level data, missing the nuance of place and knowledge of lived experience. Prioritisation and decision-making based on GDP growth is one example of aggregated data used by experts that misses the nuances of what constitutes place-based prosperity (Moore and Woodcraft, 2019). Alternatively,

context specific indicators and disaggregated data, designed and implemented through community co-production of policy, drawing on citizen's own knowledge, can enhance local capacities and capabilities through participation in knowledge generating processes contributing to a wider range of livelihood opportunity.

The second lever overlooked in a narrow vision of inclusion is **collaborative leadership**. New approaches to collaborative leadership should focus on cross-sector partnerships that include citizens and businesses, alongside local government, public agencies and the third sector. In this sense, an expanded notion of inclusion is operationalised around local priorities, developed through co-produced forms of knowledge, and through new forms of partnership that bring citizens into participatory planning and policy-making. This shift broadens the range of stakeholders involved in economic decision-making and thereby the scope of plans, policies and practices that can be influenced across sector.

Figure 4. Expanded range of levers linked to broader definition of inclusion



The third lever available in an expanded notion of inclusion is **evaluation and monitoring**. Taking the case of secure livelihoods in east London as an example, we can see the interrelated and multi-scalar assets people draw on in daily life. It follows thereby that positioning secure livelihoods as the desired outcome of inclusive growth policy would require a multi-dimensional framework for analysis that can incorporate these intersecting assets in a way that can be used to hold government and service providers to account. Necessitating context-specific indicators and participatory forms of monitoring and evaluation as well as open performance data accessible to citizens utilised to hold agencies to account.

An expanded notion of inclusion recognises the need to focus on local lived experience and context-specific pathways to prosperity (which in east London means secure livelihoods), as an outcome of inclusion and economic policy. It would work to address the participation gap that currently gives citizens little voice in the research used to frame the problems or in the conversations to contribute to meaningful change through genuinely inclusive policy-making.

6. CONCLUSION: WHO SHAPES ECONOMIC POLICY? ADDRESSING THE DEMOCRATIC DEFICIT

This article argues that there is a misalignment between economic policy-making and lived experience – a participation gap. We have demonstrated that livelihood security should be at the centre of post COVID-19 responses in east London where it has been defined as a critical determinant of prosperity (Moore and Woodcraft, 2019). Secure income and good quality work; affordable, secure and good quality housing; access to key public services; and inclusion in the social and economic life of the city, form the assets that people draw on to build a secure livelihood. These are interdependent, intersect with multiple identities and cut across sectors and policy domains which are commonly siloed in economic decision making. It is evident from the scale of insecurity that the infrastructure for secure livelihoods is relevant for other parts of the UK, but this article calls for citizen-led knowledge to drive action on strategies and policies for shared-prosperity and levelling-up in post-COVID context.

We use secure livelihoods as the lens by which we examine inclusive growth/inclusive economies policy, dominating COVID-19 recovery policy in local government. Currently, framing of inclusive growth policy comprises a narrow vision of inclusion, as access to the benefits of economic growth. It fails to account for lived realities and this participation gap has contributed to ongoing failures to successfully address rising social and economic inequality and in-work poverty in the UK. Expanding the notion of inclusion and addressing the participation gap opens up new policy levers for local government accounting for context-specific interactions between macro- and

micro-economic factors to generate effective policy-making. Opening up new spaces for action on place-based prosperity can fundamentally shift not only the spheres within which local government operates, but the way the economy is understood.

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