The New Civic Leadership: Place and the co-creation of public innovation

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ABSTRACT
This paper discusses the role of place-based leadership in stimulating the co-creation of inclusive public services and outcomes. A conceptual framework, designed to illuminate the forces shaping the power of place, and to provide a fresh way of envisaging the changing nature of modern local leadership and public management, is presented. This New Civic Leadership (NCL) framework, one that can be contrasted with the outdated idea of New Public Management (NPM), is being used to guide the development of the One City Approach to urban governance in Bristol, UK. This effort to unite public purpose in a city is discussed, and emerging themes relating to the role of place-based leadership in spurring new ways of co-creating public service futures are explored.

IMPACT
This paper on New Civic Leadership (NCL) presents specific ideas on how to improve the leadership of collaborative governance in cities and localities. It explains how the power of place—the strong feelings of commitment people have to ‘their’ city or locality—has been seriously neglected in public management theory and practice. The NCL conceptual model is being used by the mayor of Bristol, and other civic leaders to develop a One City Approach to meeting the complex challenges facing the city. This paper provides practical steps that civic leaders can take to improve collaborative governance.

Introduction
In response to a range of complex challenges, a growing number of cities across the world are developing new forms of collaborative governance. The academic literature on collaboration in public policy and public management is expanding (Margerum, 2011; Williams, 2012; Emerson & Nabatchi, 2015; Torfing, Sorensen, & Roiseland, 2016; Ansell, Sorensen, & Torfing, 2017), as is the literature on user engagement and community involvement (Oliver & Pitt, 2013; Ersoy, 2017; Norton & Hughes, 2017). There appears to be a growing recognition that the state needs to become much more inventive in working with other stakeholders to achieve societal goals. A consequence is that, as noted by Bovaird, Flemig, Loeffler, and Osborne (2017), a new vocabulary relating to public service reform is emerging, one that makes widespread use of the prefix ‘co’.

In the 1980s, New Public Management (NPM), which involves the use of private sector management practices in the public sector, gained popularity in many countries (Hood, 1991). In essence, the approach stems from the belief that government should be run like a private business. Various writers have shown that privatization, marketization, treating citizens as if they were self-interested consumers, and similar strategies have serious limitations (Hoggett, 1991; Barzelay, 2001; Hood & Dixon, 2013). Mintzberg (1996) offered a particularly robust critique of NPM arguing that to treat citizens as customers of public services is to completely misunderstand the nature of the relationship between people and their government. In academic circles, partly as a reaction to the limitations of NPM, interest in new forms of public governance, ones involving co-production of public services, has grown considerably (Osborne, 2010; Pestoff, Brandsen, & Verschuere, 2012; Bovaird & Loeffler, 2015).

The New Civic Leadership (NCL), presented in this paper, offers a clear alternative to NPM. It involves strong, place-based leadership acting to co-create new solutions to public problems by drawing on the complementary strengths of civil society, the market and the state. The NCL approach, which is set out in detail elsewhere (Hambleton, 2015, pp. 66–74), draws on the New Public Governance (NPG) literature and is aligned with recent thinking relating to co-production and co-governance. For example, it takes account of the shift from government to governance taking place in many countries and provides a way of imagining different relationships between citizens, the state and other stakeholders. However, NCL has three characteristics which are, perhaps, distinctive. First, NCL draws attention to the importance of the power of place in public policy-making. The role of place, including the strong feelings of commitment people have to ‘their’ locality, has been seriously neglected...
in public management theory and practice. Second, it stresses the importance of improvisation and radical innovation in local governance. NCL steps beyond conventional performance management and promotes experimental behaviour and risk-taking (Barrett, 2012). Third, NCL highlights the critical role of leadership, specifically place-based leadership, in spurring the co-creation of new ways of enhancing the quality of life in a locality.

Brandsen and Pestoff (2006) provide a helpful way of mapping the terrain of public governance by distinguishing between co-production, co-management and co-governance. Interestingly, they suggest that co-governance involves developing more strategic relationships between the state and other actors than the other two because it involves stakeholders working together on policy formulation. In their model, ‘co-management’ refers to interactions between organizations, whilst co-production refers to voluntary efforts by individual citizens. In this paper the focus is on the leadership of new forms of co-governance at the local level.

**Framing the power of place**

Place-based leaders are not free agents able to do exactly as they choose. On the contrary, various powerful forces shape the context within which civic leaders operate. These forces do not, however, disable local leadership and cannot prevent local leaders from co-creating new possibilities. Rather they place limits on what local leaders may be able to accomplish in particular places and at particular moments in time. *Figure 1* provides a simplified picture of the four sets of forces that shape the world of place-based governance in any given locality.

At the bottom of *figure 1* are the non-negotiable environmental limits. Ignoring the fact that cities are part of the natural ecosystem is irresponsible, and failure to pay attention to environmental limits will store up unmanageable problems for future generations (Boone & Modarres, 2006; Bulkeley, 2013). This side of the square in the figure is drawn with a solid line because, unlike the other sides, these environmental limits are, despite the claims of climate change deniers, non-negotiable.

On the left-hand side of the diagram are socio-cultural forces—these comprise a mix of people (as actors) and cultural values (that people may hold). Here we find the rich variety of voices found in any city or locality—including the claims of activists, businesses, artists, entrepreneurs, trade unionists, religious organizations, community-based groups, citizens who vote, citizens who don’t vote, children, newly-arrived immigrants, anarchists and so on. Places have traditions and identities that are built up over a long period of time (Bell & de-Shalit, 2011). The people of the city will have different views about the kind of city they wish to live in, and they will have differential capacity to make these views known (Davies & Imbroscio, 2010). Some, maybe many, will claim a right to the city (Brenner, Marcuse, & Mayer, 2012). We can assume that, in democratic societies at least, elected leaders who pay little or no attention to these political pressures should not expect to stay in office for too long. Expression of citizen voice, to use Hirschman’s term (1970), will see them dismissed at the ballot box.

On the right-hand side of the figure are the horizontal economic forces that arise from the need for localities to compete, to some degree at least, in the wider marketplace—for inward investment and to attract talented people. Given the globalization of economic relations, localities cannot ignore this wider environment. However, it does not follow that localities must collapse into being servants of global capitalism. Various studies have shown that, contrary to neo-liberal dogma, it is possible for civic leaders to bargain with business (Savitch & Kantor, 2002).

On the top of *figure 1*, we find the legal and policy framework imposed by higher levels of government. In some countries, this governmental framing will include legal obligations decreed by supra-national organizations. For example, local authorities in countries that are members of the European Union (EU) are required to comply with EU laws and regulations, and to take note of EU policy guidance. Individual nation states determine the legal status, fiscal power and functions of local authorities within their boundaries. These relationships are subject to negotiation and renegotiation over time.

It is clear that *figure 1* simplifies a much more complex reality. The space available for local agency is always shifting, and a key task of local leaders is to be alert to the opportunities for advancing the power

![Figure 1. Framing the political space for place-based governance. Source: Hambleton (2015), p. 114.](image)
of their place within the context of the framing forces prevailing on their area at the time.

Figure 1 indicates that place-based governance, shown at the centre, is porous. Successful civic leaders are constantly learning from the environment in which they find themselves in order to discover new insights, co-create new solutions and advance their political objectives. Note that the four forces are not joined up at the corners to create a rigid prison within which civic leadership has to be exercised. On the contrary, the boundaries of the overall arena are, themselves, malleable. Depending on the culture and context, imaginative civic leaders may be able to disrupt the pre-existing governmental frame and bring about an expansion in place-based power.

The New Civic Leadership

NCL involves strong, place-based leadership acting to co-create new solutions to public problems. This approach to public leadership recognizes that place not only has significant meaning for people and can be an important sense of identity (Tuan, 1977). It also understands that these feelings of attachment and loyalty can provide a source of energy and power. If we are to understand how effective, place-based leadership works, we need a conceptual framework that highlights the role of local leaders in facilitating public service innovation. Here I provide a sketch of a possible framework.

Figure 2 suggests that in any given locality place-based governance is likely to comprise five overlapping realms of place-based leadership, with leaders in each realm drawing on different sources of legitimacy:

- **Political leadership**—referring to the work of those people elected to leadership positions by the citizenry.
- **Public managerial/professional leadership**—referring to the work of public servants appointed by local authorities, governments and third sector organizations to plan and manage public services, and promote community wellbeing.
- **Community leadership**—referring to the many civic-minded people who give their time and energy to local leadership activities in a wide variety of ways.
- **Business leadership**—referring to the contribution made by local business leaders and social entrepreneurs, who have a clear stake in the long-term prosperity of the locality.
- **Trade union leadership**—referring to the efforts of trade union leaders striving to improve the pay and working conditions of employees.

These leadership roles are all important in cultivating and encouraging public service innovation and, crucially, they overlap. The areas of overlap can be described as innovation zones—areas providing many opportunities for inventive behavior. This is because different perspectives are brought together in these zones and this can enable active questioning of established approaches.

It is fair to say that the areas of overlap in figure 2 are often experienced as conflict zones, rather than innovation zones. These spaces do, of course, provide settings for power struggles between competing interests and values. Moreover, power is unequally distributed within these settings. This is precisely why place-based leadership matters. The evidence from my research on urban governance is that civic leadership is critical in ensuring that innovation zones are orchestrated in a way that promotes a culture of listening that can, in turn, lead to innovation (Barrett, 2012). Civic leaders are, of course, not just ‘those at the top’. All kinds of people can exercise civic leadership, and they may be inside or outside the state. My definition of leadership is: ‘Shaping emotions and behavior to achieve common goals’ (Hambleton, 2007, p. 174). This definition puts emotions centre-stage and stresses the importance of the co-creation of new possibilities.

Having explained the five realms of place-based leadership it is now possible to advance the presentation by locating the five realms within the broader context outlined earlier—see figure 3.

The introduction of mayoral governance in Bristol, UK

I now turn to consider the efforts being made by civic leaders in Bristol to apply NCL principles to the governance of their city. First, however, we need to look at the national context. In 2011, the UK Coalition government
passed the Localism Act, which required, *inter alia*, the big cities in England to hold referenda to enable local citizens to decide whether or not they would like to adopt a directly-elected mayor form urban governance. This model, still relatively unfamiliar in the UK context, involves the direct election of an individual to serve as the executive leader of their locality (Fenwick & Elcock, 2014; Sweeting, 2017). In the event, 10 referenda were held in May 2012. Nine cities voted ‘no’. Bristol, by contrast, voted ‘yes’ and a mayoral election was organized for November 2012. A longitudinal study of the impact of mayoral governance on the city of Bristol has been carried out, and this shows that the change in leadership arrangements has had a major impact on the governance, particularly the leadership, of the city (Hambleton & Sweeting, 2014; Hambleton & Sweeting, 2015; Sweeting & Hambleton, 2017).

On the positive side the research shows that many civic leaders and citizens felt that the leadership of the city improved following the introduction of a directly-elected mayor. Leadership was felt to be far more visible, a clear vision for the city was set out, and few would deny that Mayor George Ferguson, an independent politician who became the first directly-elected mayor of Bristol, was very successful in using the position of the office of mayor to raise the profile of the city nationally and internationally.

On the down side the research revealed that this particular version of the mayoral model can concentrate too much power in the hands of one individual, and that citizen trust in decision-making and timeliness of decision-making did not improve that much. Mayor Ferguson certainly adopted a top-down style of leadership and he also centralized power in the mayor’s office. Many councillors felt excluded from decision-making, and formed a negative view of the mayor.

In May 2016, the citizens of Bristol elected a new mayor: Marvin Rees. Young and charismatic, and a Labour party member, Mayor Rees sees himself as a facilitative leader and places a high value on building good relationships between state and non-state actors in the city. Bristol has a buoyant economy and is prosperous, but social and economic divisions are significant and growing. Mayor Rees is striving to strengthen place-based, collaborative governance in order to tackle inequality in the city and create, in the words of his first annual mayoral public lecture given in October 2016, a ‘City for all’.

The UK Coalition government (2010–2015) and the Conservative government (since 2015) have placed major constraints on the exercise of place-based leadership by local authority leaders across the entire country (Latham, 2017). In essence, the UK central state has chosen to decimate central government financial support to local government, an approach described as ‘super-austerity’ by some scholars (Lowndes & Gardner, 2016). In the Bristol case, the cut in central government financial support is from £201 million a year in 2010/2011 to £45 million a year in 2019/2020—a 78% cut (Hambleton, 2017).

This central government attack on local democracy draws attention to the importance of understanding the way forces outside a place can impact the public leadership and public management of a place—see figure 1. In the UK case, the governmental framing, shown at the top of the figure, has become overbearing. This contrasts with the experience of many countries where locally elected governments enjoy constitutional protection and have significant fiscal power.

**The One City Approach—a new way of governing a city?**

Marvin Rees began to develop the idea of creating a city office to underpin a One City Approach in the summer of 2015. He was, at that time, preparing to compete to be selected as the Labour party candidate to run for mayor in the May 2016 local election. He was keen to offer some fresh ideas on how to go about the task of city governance. In the simplest of terms, the city office is an attempt to unite public purpose in the city, one that seeks to bind together all those who care about the city in a much more effective collaborative effort. The approach is strongly place-based in the sense that it draws energy and momentum from the positive feelings people have about Bristol and the various neighbourhoods within the city.

In a headline on his campaign website in August 2015, Rees signalled the nature of the shift he had in mind: ‘Bristol shouldn’t be run from the council chamber’. This, in itself, was a radical statement for a politician seeking public office. In various speeches he explained that, while elected local government is enormously important in city governance, it is the
way that public organizations work in creative collaboration with other interests in the city that holds out real promise for making social and economic progress. Intellectual underpinning for the city office concept is supported by, *inter alia*, research on successful place-based leadership in 14 different countries (Hambleton, 2015). Mayor Rees is using the evidence set out in the author’s book to guide his approach to place-based leadership. In particular, he finds the ‘flower diagram’, shown in figure 2, to be helpful and is keen to build connections between the different realms of leadership in the city. The city office is located at the heart of this flower diagram.

The city office provides the organizational heart of the One City Approach. It aims to mobilize energies from the different realms of leadership for the benefit of the whole city. The central ethos is to focus on making an additional contribution over and above the activities of existing agencies and established collaborative arrangements. From the outset, the One City Approach has emphasised the co-creation of new possibilities for progressive action. This is unusual. The long-established, and increasingly outdated, approach to civic leadership, sometimes referred to as the ‘city boss’ model in American urban political science, anticipates the newly-elected mayor, or leader, of a city setting out a vision and then, more or less, instructing or pressuring city hall officials to implement the vision (Yates, 1977; John & Cole, 1999). Mayor Rees has rejected simplistic top-down management models of this kind. He stresses that effective place-based leadership requires a much more inclusive and much more flexible approach, one that involves a process of opening up conversations with different stakeholders and one that involves risk-taking and experiment.

The style of mayoral leadership

A few days after being elected, Mayor Rees, at his swearing-in ceremony on 9 May 2016 in the M-Shed (a museum documenting the history of the people of Bristol) demonstrated his strong commitment to developing a collective, not an individualized, approach to city leadership. Note that this ceremony was not held in city hall. Rather, this important civic event was located in a public building in the centre of the city that is visited by large numbers of Bristol residents. The symbolism was clear—city hall is only part of the governance of the city.

Most unusually for a swearing-in ceremony, the mayor was not the only speaker on the platform offering ideas on the future of the city. After the formal swearing-in procedure, Mayor Rees introduced Miles Chambers, later to become the first Bristol Poet Laureate, who read a passionate poem about the history of the city. Rees then invited three other civic leaders in Bristol to offer their contributions: a senior health services manager; the vice-chancellor of one of the two local universities; and the Bristol area commander of Avon and Somerset Police. Rees did not know in advance what these civic leaders were going to say. From the get-go, then, Rees was signalling his interest in sharing power and valuing the leadership contributions of other agencies and actors. In his own speech, Rees emphasised that the city office model of city leadership was intended to improve partnership working and would emphasise the co-creation of new ideas and ways of working.

The One City Approach to co-creating public services

It is possible to summarise the main features of the One City Approach by referring briefly to six elements.

City gatherings: First, inclusive city gatherings of civic leaders, drawn from the realms of place-based leadership shown in figure 2, have been held on a regular basis since the city office founders’ meeting held in July 2016. City gatherings, which take place every few months in different locations across the city, create highly interactive ‘city conversations’, with participants working together in cross-sectoral teams, to examine the major challenges facing the city and to explore ideas on how to tackle them. Typically, city gatherings attract between 100 and 200 participants.

Innovation zone: Second, Rees has created a physical innovation zone in city hall on the same floor as the mayor’s office. People, from any of the realms of leadership in the city, who are working on activities relating to the One City Approach, are invited to work in this open plan office space on Tuesdays. In addition, the city office organizes regular presentations and workshops on Tuesday mornings. The creation of this space, clearly an innovation zone within the NCL approach to co-governance outlined earlier, is a simple step that has already enabled a good deal of informal communication to take place between stakeholders from the different realms of place-based leadership shown in figure 2.

Collaborative projects: A third element in the model is to create and deliver specific city office collaborative projects on pressing issues. A good example is provided by the Street Homelessness Challenge project. In late 2016, Rees asked local leaders to work together to create 100 extra beds for homeless people in the first 100 days of 2017. A project group, chaired by the city office director, was set up to develop ways of achieving this ambitious target. City office partners launched a ‘spectrum of activity’ to tackle homelessness (Morris, 2017). This approach brought in actors not normally involved in addressing this challenge, for example local businesses.

This effort to help some of the most vulnerable people in the city created 34 new bed spaces within
100 days. In addition, the local bus company has helped to create 12 bed spaces by providing two double-decker buses for conversion into emergency accommodation. The Street Homelessness Challenge team was successful in building improved collaborative relationships between local stakeholders, including local charities, church-based groups, housing providers and private sector actors.

One city plan: Fourth, the one city plan, prepared in the 2017–2018 period, is designed to deliver the main strategic aim of the One City Approach. It is orchestrating the creation of a ‘big picture’ strategy for the future development of the city, one that looks forward to 2050, and one that agencies are expected to commit to.

Place-based leadership: The fifth element in the One City Approach is the development of place-based leadership talent. The city gatherings, mentioned earlier, identified the importance of developing and delivering new kinds of civic leadership programmes, ones that target under-represented groups in the city. The idea is for the city office to orchestrate a step-change in the provision of place-based leadership programmes—ranging from city leadership courses for young people (under 18s) through to advanced place-based leadership workshops for senior leaders from the realms of leadership shown in figure 2.

City funds board: A sixth feature of the model is the creation of a city funds board. Discussions at city gatherings in 2017 led to a suggestion that, partly because of the drastic cuts in central government funding mentioned earlier, the city needed to create innovative ways of generating new funding streams to support public purpose in the city. Established in April 2018, the city funds board, which brings together representatives from communities, business, finance, the public sector and the two local universities, is developing new match-funding initiatives to focus finance, via repayable loans and grant-giving, on the priority areas set out in the one city plan.

Opposition

The One City Approach to co-creating public service is not without its critics. For example, some of those who are opposed to the central government attack on both local public services and local democracy fear that creative approaches to local collaboration can become a distraction. They argue that a One City Approach in a particular city is unlikely to make much difference in a country that is super-centralized. They have a point. Indeed, cross-national comparative research shows that, in countries where public power is much more dispersed than in the UK, local public leaders have been able to pursue world-leading approaches to public innovation (Hambleton, 2015). However, it would be misguided to conclude that place-based collaborative action in the UK is pointless. The efforts of local leaders across Britain, not just those in Bristol, are making a difference to the local quality of life, notwithstanding the constraints imposed by Whitehall.

Another criticism is that a consensual approach, one that strives to bring together different stakeholders just takes too long, when a more decisive approach to place-based leadership is needed. It is true that relationship building takes time and, given the One City Approach has only been in operation since the summer of 2016, it is too early to judge whether or not it is going to be effective in shaping the emotions and behaviour of civic leaders in the long term. Debates about the strengths and weaknesses of the model revolve, to some extent, around different conceptions of leadership. Those who remain attracted to the idea of top-down leadership exercised by a skilled executive or expert telling people what to do are unlikely to be impressed with the model. However, those who take the view that successful modern leadership is, at root, a collaborative affair will see virtue in the approach.

Emerging themes for public leadership and management

A number of important themes for public policy and future research emerge from the analysis presented above and four are highlighted here.

Rallying the power of place

The evidence presented in this paper, and in related research on other innovative cities, suggests that place-based leadership can play a vital role in energizing and promoting the power of place. The concepts presented here suggest that the power of place is constrained by various forces—see figure 1. Wise central and state governments realize that elected local authorities are a major asset and they encourage the development of independent, innovative municipalities. However, even in countries where the central state does not value local government, as in the UK at the present time, there is always some political space available to local actors. Effective place-based leaders, depending on the geo-political context, are capable of expanding the power of place, and there are many examples that illustrate this point. Place, and the feelings of attachment people have to their place, are an important resource for those seeking to strengthen the co-production and co-creation of new solutions to public policy challenges.

The One City Approach to co-governance in Bristol clearly aims to enhance the power of place. This is not just the political and fiscal power of Bristol City Council, but also the collective power of people living in the city. The city office is still at a very early stage
of development and it is unwise to claim too much. However, the model is already attracting interest from other cities and localities in the UK. A major report from the Royal Society of Arts’ Inclusive Growth Commission refers positively to the Bristol city office approach, praising it as a promising example of ‘whole place leadership’ (RSA, 2017, p. 35). The One City Approach has also attracted international interest. In June 2018, the city office responded to the EU’s invitation to European cities to put in bids to be recognized as the ‘European Capital of Innovation’. The bid explained the One City Approach and, while Bristol did not win this prize, it was the only city from the UK to be shortlisted for the award.

Understanding the role of leadership in public service improvisation

The role of leadership in bringing about the co-creation of public services has been neglected in the academic literature, albeit with one or two notable exceptions (Bason, 2010). The argument presented in this paper is that place-based leadership can have a significant impact on the trajectory of public service innovation, and it follows that the role of leadership should be given more explicit attention in future studies of co-production and co-creation. Research on Bristol, as well as studies of other innovative cities, suggests that effective local leaders are able to connect to place-based feelings of loyalty and civic identity and inspire a process of imaginative risk-taking.

Figure 3 provides a useful starting point for understanding local power structures and the role of civic leadership in creating innovation zones which can generate new ways of thinking and new solutions. The meaning of ‘leadership’ has long been contested but, as Bolden, Witzel, and Linacre (2016) explain, there is now renewed pressure to rethink the meaning of leadership in an uncertain world. The long-established view that sees leadership as a top-down affair in which senior people issue instructions to subordinates is well past its ‘sell-by’ date. A contrasting view, facilitative leadership, emphasises the importance of leaders listening to diverse views and building coalitions. In this model leadership is not about knowing the answers and encouraging others to follow. Rather, it is the capacity to spot talent and release collective problem-solving capacity. As explained by Barrett (2012), who draws on his experience as a jazz musician, civic leaders need to become skilled at improvisation—the art of adjusting, flexibly adapting, learning through trial-and-error initiatives and inventing ad hoc responses. Effective civic leaders, and the leaders involved in the Bristol One City Approach, provide some inspiring examples, strive to create a culture in which risk-taking and experimentation are valued and encouraged.

The creation of innovation zones

A central claim of this paper, and it lies at the heart of the Bristol One City concept, is that successful civic leadership brings people with different backgrounds and experiences together into a single purposive process. This is easier said than done—but it can be done! Wise civic leadership requires the creation of innovation zones—sometimes referred to as ‘space for dialogue’ (Oliver & Pitt, 2013, pp. 198–199)—and the promotion of a culture of listening within these zones that can, in turn, lead to innovation. There are many ways of creating these new spaces or zones, and the Bristol One City Approach is using a variety of methods to engage stakeholders, including young people, from different backgrounds in new ways.

Three examples of innovation zones invented by the Bristol city office can be mentioned. First, the city gatherings held so far represent a new way of bringing civic leaders from the five realms of leadership in the city together. These gatherings have taken place at different locations, and outside facilitators from the private sector and the local universities have provided assistance at no charge to the city office. Second, the open plan office area in city hall, close to the mayor’s office, is another imaginative step. This space provides opportunities for informal and unexpected encounters and it is helping to build trust between different actors. Third, the various city office collaborative project groups bring new kinds of people into a given conversation.

International city-to-city learning and exchange

International learning relating to city governance, urban innovation and co-creation is nothing new. For example, Aristotle despatched his helpers to collect the constitutions of over one hundred city-states, which he then compared to derive general political principles. However, the process of international city-to-city exchange has received a rocket boost in recent times. In the last thirty years or so, globalization has led to a spectacular increase in the intensity and velocity of international exchange in all spheres of life. Campbell (2012) believes that forward-looking city leaders are keen to acquire new knowledge from cities in other countries, and the international transmission of ideas, and the values behind them, is now an inextricable part of urban innovation.

These ideas relating to international city-to-city learning are relevant to the Bristol One City Approach to urban governance. The city council has led the preparation of a 10-year strategy designed to align the international priorities of the council and city partners (Bristol City Council, 2017). Mayor Rees is very international in his outlook and is strongly committed to working with other cities, in the UK and further afield,
to develop progressive alliances. He is active in the relatively new Global Parliament of Mayors: a rapidly-expanding organization that is strongly committed to advancing the power of place in our globalizing world. Bristol hosted the Annual Summit of the Global Parliament of Mayors held in October 2018.

In conclusion, this paper suggests that future efforts at public service reform should pay much more attention to the power of place and, just as important, the role of local public leadership in inspiring the co-creation of new possibilities for inclusive public outcomes.

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