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University of Glasgow
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Urban Studies

**Urban autonomy and its impact on policy making, the delivery of
public services, and the economic performance of cities**

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Abstract

Ever since the establishment of the first city, urban regions have been increasingly driving economic growth and helping improve the well-being of individuals across the world. After investigating the implications of globalisation on urban regions, this study contributes to current debates regarding devolution by attempting to achieve a better understanding of how urban autonomy influences economic growth. Moreover, the study observes, through the lens of the UK City Deals, how devolution impacts sub-national governance and decision making before assessing whether or not the City Deals have succeeded at enhancing the delivery of public services.

Following the examination of data from several publications and journals, a clear relationship between autonomy and the economic performance of urban regions was not identified. Regardless, the data suggests that granting additional autonomy to urban regions in over-centralised countries has the potential to yield great benefits, particularly when devolution is the outcome of a bottom-up process. Additionally, the evidence hints that the capabilities and capacity of urban-region authorities are major factors in determining whether urban regions benefit from increased autonomy. Furthermore, a thorough investigation of different reports indicates that devolution does boost sub-national governance. However, for devolution to promote good, sub-national governance and inclusive decision-making processes, sub-national authorities should introduce mechanisms that increase democratic accountability and public participation in decision making as additional power is devolved to them. Moreover, although the City Deals appear to be a good first step at devolving power and enhancing the delivery of services, the deals should, as inter-governmental trust and local-authority capabilities grow, be built on to develop more radical devolutionary approaches.

Keywords: Globalisation; Cities; Urban regions; Urban autonomy; Devolution; City Deals; Economy; Governance; Public services

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1- Introduction

Globalisation generally refers to a historical, non-linear process, which encompasses the motives, procedures, and outcomes of global human and non-human activities (Perraton, Goldblatt, Held and McGrew, 1997; Al-Rodhan, 2006 and Steger, 2013). According to Al-Rodhan (2006) and Steger (2013), this dynamic process includes the expansion, and intensification of political, economic, social, and cultural exchanges and activities along networks that connect continents, nations, cities, communities, and individuals.

The economic processes of globalisation, by increasing the extent and intensity of economic flows, and progressively integrating the world economy, catalysed the establishment of trans-national networks, which connect urban regions with one another across the world (Perraton, Goldblatt, Held and McGrew, 1997; Graafland and Hauptmann, 2001; Taylor, Derudder and Saey, 2006 and Sassen, 2012). In turn, those trans-national networks gave rise to a global urban hierarchy within which urban regions are continuously competing to attract global firms, capital, and talent (Mollenkopf, 1993; Hall, 2005; Taylor, Derudder and Saey, 2006; OECD, 2006; Mionel, Mionel and Mihăescu, 2014 and Ács, 2015). By successfully attracting and agglomerating global firms, urban regions not only increase their connectedness, wealth, and influence, but also their productivity (Taylor, Derudder and Saey, 2006; OECD, 2006; World Bank, 2009; Feine and Manning, 2013; Mionel, Mionel and Mihăescu, 2014; Ács, 2015 and Office for National Statistics, 2018). Although this presents urban regions with the opportunity to drive faster economic growth at the urban and national levels, globalisation has been increasingly subjecting urban regions to a growing set of challenges (Brenner, 1999; Brenner, 2011; Blond and Morrin, 2015; Coughlan, 2016 and Khan, 2018). As a result, to effectively address those challenges and increase their global competitiveness, the urban regions of the 21st century are progressively behaving as autonomous islands of governance whose authorities have to engage with stakeholders in order meet their heterogeneous needs (Mollenkopf, 1993; Deas and Ward, 2000; Khanna, 2010; Mionel, Mionel and Mihăescu, 2014; Walport and Wilson, 2016; Khanna, 2016; Shaw and Tewdwr-Jones, 2017 and Hoolachan, 2017). However, the ability of urban-region authorities to control their own finances, design effective policies, develop integrated strategies, and deliver high-quality public

services has been impeded by the policies and governance structures of their national governments (Mollenkopf, 1993; Herod and Wright, 2002; Lefèvre, 2010; Cox, Henderson and Raikes, 2014; OECD, 2015; Martin, Pike, Tyler and Gardiner, 2015; The World Bank, 2015; Whitney, Fenning, Clarence and Skalski, 2016 and Tyler, Evenhuis, Martin, Sunley and Gardiner, 2017). As such, despite criticism that increased autonomy could lead to urban corporatism, it is suggested that additional political, administrative, and fiscal autonomy should be granted to urban regions for them to successfully stimulate faster economic growth and improve the well-being of their residents (Harvey, 1989; Deas and Ward, 2000; OECD, 2006; United Cities and Local Government and World Bank, 2009; RSA City Growth Commission, 2014; Cox, Henderson and Raikes, 2014; The World Bank, 2015; McFarland and Hoene, 2015; Blond and Morrin, 2015; Whitney, Fenning, Clarence and Skalski, 2016 and Norman, 2018). Nevertheless, given that the relationship between increased autonomy and the economic performance of urban regions is not yet clear, it is crucial to better understand the implications of urban autonomy on economic growth, especially at a time of sluggish growth in countries like Britain (Trading Economics, 2018).

In the UK, decades of tight central government control over the delivery of public services led to the demise of sub-national governance, which created a vacuum between the national government and local authorities, and limited the potential of urban regions (Gurr and King, 1987; Cox, Henderson and Raikes, 2014; Core Cities, 2015b; Blond and Morrin, 2015; Whitney, Fenning, Clarence and Skalski, 2016 and Shaw and Tewdwr-Jones, 2017). As a result, the national government has been devolving power and responsibilities down to the combined authorities of urban regions through a variety of mechanisms, like the City Deals (Cabinet Office and Clegg, 2011; Clegg and Clark, 2011; O'Brien and Pike, 2014; O'Brien and Pike, 2015; Clayton and McGough, 2015; Bailey and Pill, 2015 and Shaw and Tewdwr-Jones, 2017). By doing so, the government aims to boost sub-national governance, particularly at the urban-region level, while enabling urban-region authorities to design targeted policies, integrate strategies, deliver place-based services efficiently, and stimulate faster economic growth (Cox, Henderson and Raikes, 2014; Clayton and McGough, 2015; O'Brien and Pike, 2015; Blond and Morrin, 2015; Pike, MacKinnon, Coombes, Champion, Bradley, Cumbers, Robson and Wymer, 2016; Shaw and Tewdwr-Jones, 2017 and Waite, McGregor and

McNulty, 2018). Although this attempt has been hailed as a great step towards re-distributing power, many have questioned the City Deals' ability to boost sub-national governance, and empower urban regions to design effective policies and deliver high-quality services (Martin, Pike, Tyler and Gardiner, 2015; Blond and Morrin, 2015; Kerslake, 2016 and Shaw and Tewdwr-Jones, 2017). As such, additional research to assess how such devolutionary mechanisms impact sub-national governance and decision making, and determine whether the City Deals have succeeded at improving the delivery of services is required. This is particularly important in the context of a globalised world, which demands sub-national tiers of government, especially at the urban-region scale, to have high levels of good governance; effective, inclusive policies; and high-quality, place-based services (Mollenkopf, 1993; Brenner, 1999; OECD, 2006; Taylor, Derudder and Saey, 2006; Brenner, 2011; Glaeser, 2012; Storper, 2012; Steger, 2013; Mionel, Mionel and Mihăescu, 2014; Blond and Morrin, 2015; Walport and Wilson, 2016; Khanna, 2016; Coughlan, 2016 and Hoolachan, 2017).

In order to address the identified research gaps, this dissertation utilises a mainly quantitative, discourse-based approach in an attempt to answer the following questions:

- (1) What are the implications of urban autonomy on economic performance?
- (2) Can devolution boost sub-national governance and improve decision-making processes?
- (3) Have the UK City Deals succeeded at enhancing the delivery of public services?

To achieve that, the dissertation is divided into five chapters: (1) Introduction; (2) Literature Review; (3) Methodology; (4) Research Findings & Synthesis; and (5) Conclusion. The first chapter introduces the research background and identified gaps. Additionally, this chapter helps clarify the aims and structure of the dissertation. The second chapter critically examines the available literature to establish an understanding of the implications of globalisation on urban regions and the roles of different tiers of government. Moreover, this chapter highlights the need to investigate the relationship between increased autonomy and the economic performance of urban regions. Furthermore, the chapter presents the historical events that drove the national government in the UK to adopt the City Deals as a mechanism to devolve power to urban regions. The chapter then proposes that additional research should be carried out

to assess how such deals impact sub-national governance, decision making, and the delivery of services. The third chapter outlines the utilised research strategy, states the chosen case studies, and acknowledges the limitations of the research. The fourth chapter examines and synthesises, in three sections, evidence from a variety of sources, like reports and journals, in order to address the identified research gaps. Finally, the fifth chapter starts by summarising the previous chapters and research findings. The chapter then suggests how the findings might shape future policies before making recommendations for further study based on the findings of this dissertation.

2- Literature Review

2.1- A brief introduction of cities

Ever since the discovery of agriculture, cities emerged from the need of individuals and groups to trade and interact with one another (Childe, 1950; Glaeser, 2012 and Khanna, 2016). This marked the beginning of an era where cities, across the world, became key locations that helped organise both human and non-human activities while facilitating major, often global, processes (Graafland and Hauptmann, 2001; Herod and Wright, 2002; Taylor, Derudder and Saey, 2006; Glaeser, 2012; Walport and Wilson, 2016 and Khanna, 2016). With the advent of the industrial revolution in the late 18th century, the rate of industrialisation, urbanisation, trade, and economic growth rapidly increased, especially in Europe (Ács, 2015). This, in addition to the formation of centralised nation states, transformed many cities from being near-sovereign entities into the powerhouses that drove the economies of the empire-nation systems of trade, resource acquisition, and development (Brenner, 1999; Taleb, 2014; Ács, 2015 and Khanna, 2016). As a result, cities and their hinterlands emerged as complex, ever-evolving entities, termed urban regions, with substantial social, political, and economic significance (Deas and Ward, 2000; Dear, 2003; Taylor, Derudder and Saey, 2006; OECD, 2006; Brenner, 2011; Mionel, Mionel and Mihăescu, 2014; Walport and Wilson, 2016; Khanna, 2016 and Whitney, Fenning, Clarence and Skalski, 2016).

By covering economically-functional regions, sometimes referred to as Travel to Work Areas (TTWAs), within which people live their lives and businesses operate, those urban regions transformed into more capable, synergistic wholes (OECD, 2006; Larkin, 2010; Wilcox, Nohrova and Williams, 2014; Fikri and Zhu, 2015; Office for National Statistics, 2016; Kerslake, 2016; Klapka and Halas, 2016 and Shaw and Tewdwr-Jones, 2017). This increased their ability to create opportunities for their residents, generate economic growth, and act as places where connections can be made and differences negotiated (Deas and Ward, 2000; Davis and Libertun de Duren, 2011; Glaeser, 2012; Mionel, Mionel and Mihăescu, 2014; Coughlan, 2016 and Whitney, Fenning, Clarence and Skalski, 2016). As such, those regions became the infrastructure that most define us, symbols of collective unity and growth (Mumford, 1936 and Khanna, 2016). Additionally, by existing in relation to one another within a space of flows, urban

regions became hybrid sites that link what is local and known with what is global (Herod and Wright, 2002; Taylor, Derudder and Saey, 2006; Massey, 2007; Glaeser, 2012; Mionel, Mionel and Mihăescu, 2014; Ács, 2015 and Khanna, 2016).

These characteristics, which enabled urban regions, throughout history, to lift people out of poverty and improve their well-being, made urban regions attractive places to live and work in (Glaeser, 2012 and Fikri and Zhu, 2015). However, as a consequence of attracting people to them, urban regions have been increasingly facing a growing set of challenges, like the rising demand for services from their residents (Brenner, 1999; Brenner, 2011; Blond and Morrin, 2015; Coughlan, 2016 and Khan, 2018). Subsequently, the urban regions of the 21st century are becoming islands of governance that not only behave as the centres of economic activity and growth, but also are at the forefront of addressing both local and global challenges (Mollenkopf, 1993; Deas and Ward, 2000; Khanna, 2010; Mionel, Mionel and Mihăescu, 2014; Walport and Wilson, 2016; Khanna, 2016; Shaw and Tewdwr-Jones, 2017 and Hoolachan, 2017).

2.2- The implications of globalisation on urban regions

Beginning in the mid-1960s and after a period of rapid economic growth, globalisation and technological advancements led to the dispersal of factories from the cities of industrialised nations to a variety of third world countries (Mollenkopf, 1993; Perraton, Goldblatt, Held and McGrew, 1997; Abrahamson, 2004; Sassen, 2012, Steger, 2013 and Tyler, Evenhuis, Martin, Sunley and Gardiner, 2017). This process of de-industrialisation caused a large number of major European and North American cities to lose their role as top export centres for manufacturing (Perraton, Goldblatt, Held and McGrew, 1997; Abrahamson, 2004; Sassen, 2012 and Tyler, Evenhuis, Martin, Sunley and Gardiner, 2017). As a result, to preserve their economic relevance, those cities tried to transition from being manufacturing sites to becoming the key loci for global economic flows by attracting international headquarters and the specialised firms that are associated with them (Mollenkopf, 1993; Perraton, Goldblatt, Held and McGrew, 1997; Sassen, 2002; Abrahamson, 2004; OECD, 2006; Sassen, 2012; Khanna, 2016 and Tyler, Evenhuis, Martin, Sunley and Gardiner, 2017). This shift intended to transform post-industrial urban regions into the command centres that helped global firms, whose

products were being increasingly manufactured in multiple locations globally, monitor and organise the global economy (Beaverstock, Smith and Taylor, 2000; OECD, 2006; Taylor, Derudder and Saey, 2006; Sassen, 2012 and Mionel, Mionel and Mihăescu, 2014). Moreover, by developing service-sector economies, urban regions aimed at becoming the major production sites and marketplaces for producer services and innovative industries (Mollenkopf, 1993; Hall, 2005; OECD, 2006; Taylor, Derudder and Saey, 2006 and Sassen, 2012). Consequently, despite new communication and transportation technologies as well as increasingly dispersed patterns of human settlement, which seemed to suggest that cities would become obsolete, some cities experienced rapid rates of urbanisation and economic growth (Webber, 1968; Mollenkopf, 1993; Perraton, Goldblatt, Held and Mcgrew, 1997; Brenner, 1999; Taylor, Derudder and Saey, 2006; Sassen, 2012; Tyler, Evenhuis, Martin, Sunley and Gardiner, 2017). As a result, complex, trans-national networks, which connect urban regions and the firms that they host with one another both regionally and across the world, emerged (Perraton, Goldblatt, Held and Mcgrew, 1997; Beaverstock, Smith and Taylor, 2000; Taylor, Derudder and Saey, 2006 and Sassen, 2012). Furthermore, technological advances, coupled with an increasingly globalised economy, catalysed the intensification and expansion of those trans-national networks (Perraton, Goldblatt, Held and Mcgrew, 1997; Graafland and Hauptmann, 2001; Taylor, Derudder and Saey, 2006 and Sassen, 2012). Subsequently, a global urban hierarchy, within which urban regions constantly compete to change their status by attracting global firms, knowledge-intensive activities, capital, and mobile workers, was established (Perraton, Goldblatt, Held and Mcgrew, 1997; Sassen, 2002; Abrahamson, 2004; Hall, 2005; Taylor, Derudder and Saey, 2006; OECD, 2006; Massey, 2007; Sassen, 2012; Glaeser, 2012; Cox, Henderson and Raikes, 2014; Mionel, Mionel and Mihăescu, 2014 and Whitney, Fenning, Clarence and Skalski, 2016). By increasing their status, a few successful urban regions managed to become strategic sites that are capable of influencing the global economy (Mollenkopf, 1993; Brenner, 1999; Abrahamson, 2004; Taylor, Derudder and Saey, 2006; OECD, 2006; Sassen, 2012; Mionel, Mionel and Mihăescu, 2014 and Cox, Henderson and Raikes, 2014). This, in turn, allowed them to further attract and agglomerate global firms, which helped urban regions reinforce the trans-national networks that they belong to, and increase their wealth and power (Mollenkopf, 1993; Brenner, 1999; Beaverstock, Smith and Taylor, 2000; Graafland and Hauptmann, 2001;

Abrahamson, 2004; Hall, 2005; Taylor, Derudder and Saey, 2006; OECD, 2006; Sassen, 2012; Khanna, 2016 and Norman, 2018).

As some urban regions capitalised on the benefits of globalisation to gain more political and economic weight, many, less-dynamic urban regions and under-developed rural areas lagged behind and rapidly became peripheralised (Reid, 1972; Mollenkopf, 1993; Taylor, Derudder and Saey, 2006 and Fikri and Zhu, 2015). This increased the socio-economic tensions and spatial inequality both within urban regions and between urban regions and rural areas in several nations, like Britain, reducing, as a consequence, the overall wealth of those nations (Reid, 1972; Mollenkopf, 1993; Taylor, Derudder and Saey, 2006 and Tyler, Evenhuis, Martin, Sunley and Gardiner, 2017).

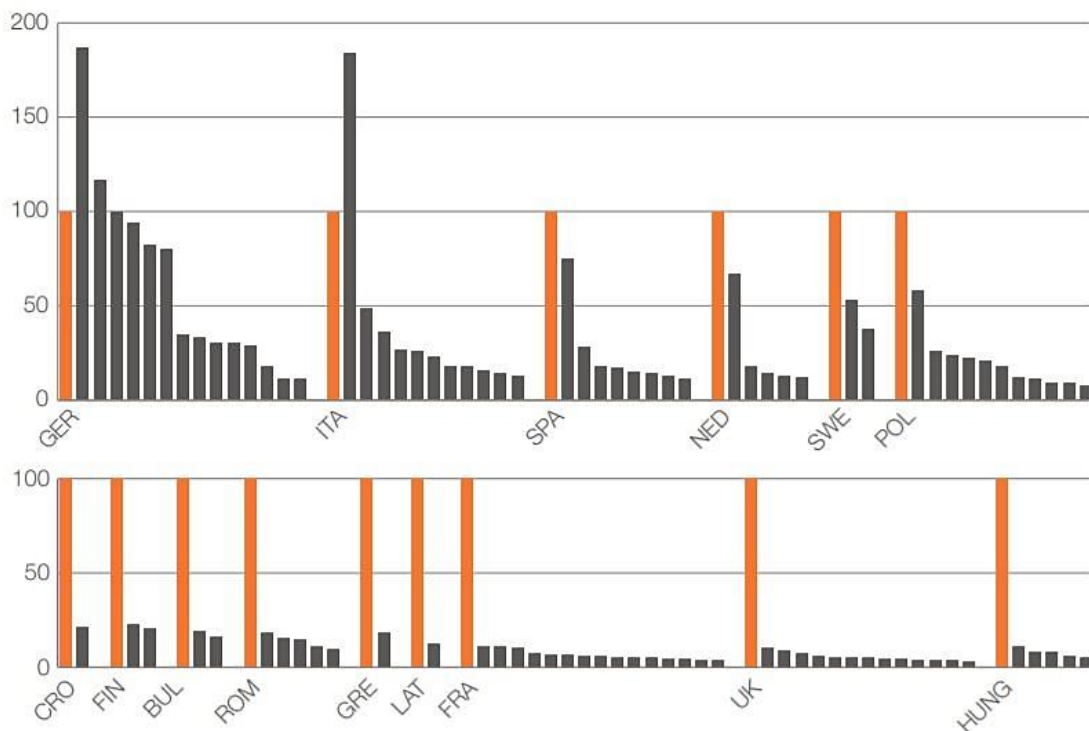


Figure 1: Diagram showing the differences in economic performance between capital (in orange) and other cities (in grey) from a sample of European nations. The diagram highlights the spatial inequality between the cities of those nations, particularly in countries, like the UK, where there is a significant difference between the performance of the capital and the other cities of those countries (100 = economic performance of the capital city). Source: (Cox, Henderson and Raikes, 2014).

Regardless, the processes of globalisation empowered urban regions, especially the successful amongst them, to emerge as the economic engines of nation states (Mollenkopf, 1993; Deas and Ward, 2000; Hall, 2005; OECD, 2006; Mionel, Mionel and Mihăescu, 2014; Cox, Henderson and Raikes, 2014; Ács, 2015; Khanna, 2016; Core Cities, 2017; Shaw and Tewdwr-Jones, 2017 and Norman, 2018). Those regions typically have better productivity rates, GDP per capita, levels of economic growth, and employment performance than the nation states that they belong to (Glaeser, 2012; OECD, 2006; Fikri and Zhu, 2015; Florida, 2015 and Khanna, 2016). Today, the world's urban regions generate up to 80% of the global economy with 20 of those regions generating up to 1/6 of the world's GDP (Beaverstock, Smith and Taylor, 2000; Mionel, Mionel and Mihăescu, 2014; RSA City Growth Commission, 2014; Fikri and Zhu, 2015; Whitney, Fenning, Clarence and Skalski, 2016).

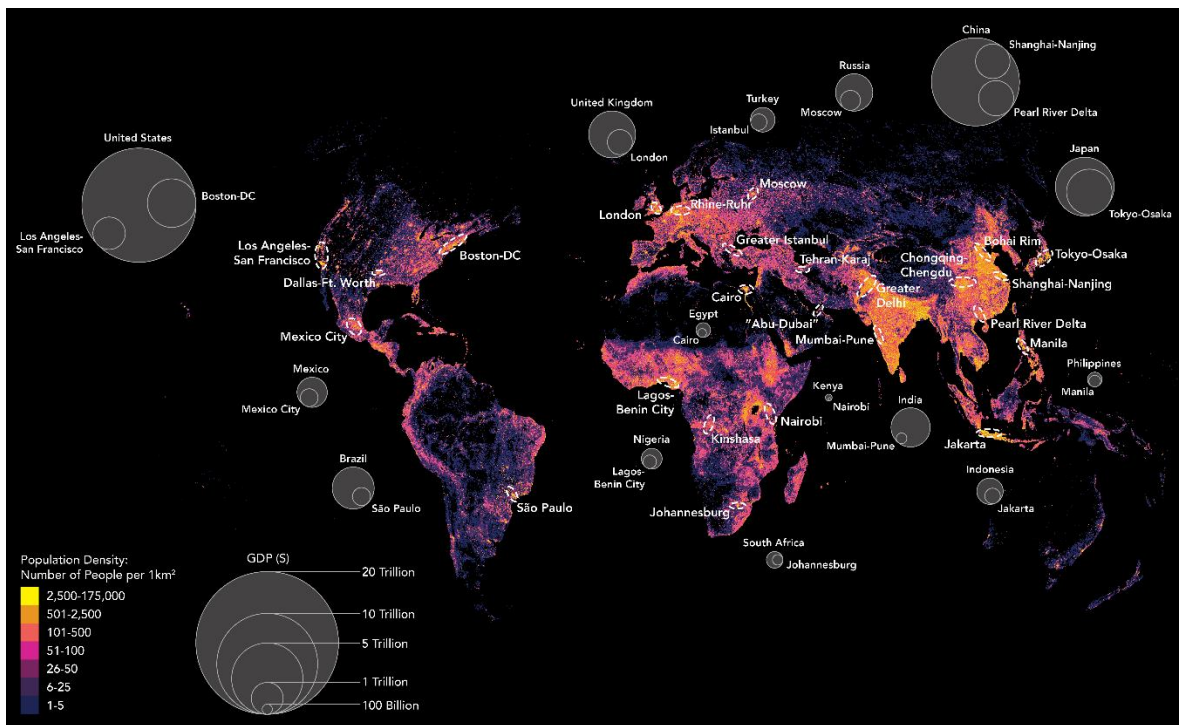


Figure 2: Map showing the distribution of the global population and the generated GDP of the world's largest urban archipelagos in comparison to the GDP of the nations that they are located in. The map reveals that the global economy depends more on a small number of urban regions than on the many nation states that exist. Source: (Swanson, 2016).

2.3- Devolved power and economic growth

Using the established trans-national networks, urban regions have to continuously compete on improving their status within the global urban hierarchy (Perraton, Goldblatt, Held and McGrew, 1997; Sassen, 2002; Abrahamson, 2004; Hall, 2005; Taylor, Derudder and Saey, 2006; OECD, 2006; Massey, 2007; Sassen, 2012; Cox, Henderson and Raikes, 2014; Mionel, Mionel and Mihăescu, 2014 and Whitney, Fenning, Clarence and Skalski, 2016). By doing so, those urban regions would, regardless of their size, increase their ability to attract the international headquarters of global firms, which would enable those regions to increase productivity at the urban-region and national levels (Mollenkopf, 1993; Taylor, Derudder and Saey, 2006; OECD, 2006; Mionel, Mionel and Mihăescu, 2014; Ács, 2015; The World Bank, 2015; Fikri and Zhu, 2015 and Tyler, Evenhuis, Martin, Sunley and Gardiner, 2017). By achieving higher productivity rates, those regions would: (1) facilitate the creation of jobs; (2) help increase the wages of their residents; (3) achieve higher levels of economic growth; and (4) generate the necessary revenues to deliver high-quality infrastructure projects and services, which would make those urban regions more attractive places for firms, investors, and skilled talent (Glaeser, 2012; Feine and Manning, 2013; Fikri and Zhu, 2015; Ács, 2015; The World Bank, 2015; Tyler, Evenhuis, Martin, Sunley and Gardiner, 2017 and Office for National Statistics, 2018).

In order to emerge on top of the global urban hierarchy and succeed at attracting global corporations, urban regions should focus on a variety of complex and interrelated factors, namely economic specialisation and city competitiveness (Storper, 2012; Storper, 2013; Mionel, Mionel and Mihăescu, 2014; Ács, 2015; Fikri and Zhu, 2015; CBRE, 2016 and Khanna, 2016). However, given that developing a specialised economy is, to a large extent, the outcome of uncontrollable circumstances, urban-region authorities should put more effort into increasing their global competitiveness while trying to influence their economies (Storper, 2012 and Storper, 2013). To successfully increase their competitiveness and effectively shape their economies, urban regions and their local authorities should invest in: (1) high-quality infrastructure (OECD, 2006; Mionel, Mionel and Mihăescu, 2014; Wilcox, Nohrova and Williams, 2014; RSA City Growth Commission, 2014; The World Bank, 2015; Ács, 2015; Whitney, Fenning, Clarence and Skalski, 2016 and Tyler, Evenhuis, Martin, Sunley and

Gardiner, 2017); (2) increasing their connectedness to resources, data, markets, and other valuable assets (Mollenkopf, 1993; Taylor, Derudder and Saey, 2006; Mionel, Mionel and Mihăescu, 2014 and Khanna, 2016); (3) research institutions (OECD, 2006 and The World Bank, 2015); (4) attracting and retaining specialised workers (Taylor, Derudder and Saey, 2006; OECD, 2006; Storper, 2012; Storper, 2013; Wilcox, Nohrova and Williams, 2014; Mionel, Mionel and Mihăescu, 2014; The World Bank, 2015; Ács, 2015 and Tyler, Evenhuis, Martin, Sunley and Gardiner, 2017); (5) supporting the creation and growth of start-ups (Florida, 2015 and The World Bank, 2015); (6) developing innovative policies that would lead to a politically-stable, business-friendly environment (Taylor, Derudder and Saey, 2006; Wilcox, Nohrova and Williams, 2014; Mionel, Mionel and Mihăescu, 2014; The World Bank, 2015 and Tyler, Evenhuis, Martin, Sunley and Gardiner, 2017); (7) encouraging various partnerships between different public-sector and private-sector actors (Taylor, Derudder and Saey, 2006; OECD, 2015; The World Bank, 2015; PwC, 2016a and PwC, 2016b); and (8) collaborating with one another to integrate strategies, benefit from their agglomeration economies, capitalise on local assets, and reduce inter-urban competition (Wirth, 1937; Harvey, 1989; Taylor, Derudder and Saey, 2006; Lefèvre, 2010; Wilcox, Nohrova and Williams, 2014; RSA City Growth Commission, 2014; OECD, 2015 and The World Bank, 2015).

However, the potential of urban-region authorities to increase the competitiveness of their urban regions and, as a result, drive economic growth has been greatly hindered by the policies and governance structures of their national governments (Mollenkopf, 1993; Herod and Wright, 2002; Lefèvre, 2010; Cox, Henderson and Raikes, 2014; OECD, 2015; Martin, Pike, Tyler and Gardiner, 2015; The World Bank, 2015; CBRE, 2016; Whitney, Fenning, Clarence and Skalski, 2016 and Tyler, Evenhuis, Martin, Sunley and Gardiner, 2017). This is especially the case in over-centralised countries, like the UK, where centralisation is causing most urban regions to suffer from spatial inequality, low productivity levels, and sluggish economic growth (Mollenkopf, 1993; Cox, Henderson and Raikes, 2014; Martin, Pike, Tyler and Gardiner, 2015; Walport and Wilson, 2016; Whitney, Fenning, Clarence and Skalski, 2016 and Tyler, Evenhuis, Martin, Sunley and Gardiner, 2017). As such, supported by academic research and the reports of several inter-governmental organizations, there is a growing sentiment that

additional political, administrative, and fiscal autonomy should be granted to the authorities of urban regions (Deas and Ward, 2000; OECD, 2006; United Cities and Local Government and Work Bank, 2009; RSA City Growth Commission, 2014; Cox, Henderson and Raikes, 2014; The World Bank, 2015; McFarland and Hoene, 2015; Blond and Morrin, 2015; Whitney, Fenning, Clarence and Skalski, 2016 and Norman, 2018). This would enable local authorities to collaborate on forming globally-competitive, economically-functional urban regions that would unlock higher productivity levels and stimulate faster economic growth, which is crucial at a time of slow growth in countries like Britain (Sassen, 2002; OECD, 2006; Massey, 2007; Greasley, John and Wolman, 2010; Centre for Cities, 2011; IPPR, 2014a; Northern Correspondent, 2014; RSA City Growth Commission, 2014; Blond and Morrin, 2015; The World Bank, 2015; CBRE, 2016; Whitney, Fenning, Clarence and Skalski, 2016; and Trading Economics, 2018). Moreover, those economically-functional urban regions would be more capable of designing effective policies; integrating strategies; delivering high-quality services; buffering against economic downturns; becoming financially self-sustainable; and reducing spatial inequality (Harvey, 1989; Iimi, 2005; OECD, 2006; Centre for Cities, 2011; IPPR, 2014a; Northern Correspondent, 2014; Cox, Henderson and Raikes, 2014; Martin, Pike, Tyler and Gardiner, 2015; McFarland and Hoene, 2015; Blond and Morrin, 2015; Pike, MacKinnon, Coombes, Champion, Bradley, Cumbers, Robson and Wymer, 2016 and Whitney, Fenning, Clarence and Skalski, 2016).

While there is plenty of evidence that supports the need for more autonomous urban regions, the extent to which economic growth is linked to autonomy, which is criticised by some for its potentiality to give rise to urban corporatism, is not yet clear (Harvey, 1989; Sassen, 2002; Massey, 2007; United Cities and Local Government and Work Bank, 2009; Storper, 2012; Cox, Henderson and Raikes, 2014 and Whitney, Fenning, Clarence and Skalski, 2016). As such, it is critical to further inspect the available evidence to properly understand the implications of different types of autonomy on the economic performance of urban regions.

2.4- City Deals and their impact on policy making and the delivery of public services

As national governments attempted to design policies that would empower their urban regions to stimulate economic growth and address spatial inequality, they have been struggling to boost sub-national governance and deliver public services more efficiently (Harvey, 1989; Sassen, 2002 and Shaw and Tewdwr-Jones, 2017). This challenge has emerged from a post-World War Two era, during which politicians were condoned for articulating, mostly one-size-fits-all, policies and tightly controlling public services, which alienated citizens and highlighted the need for a proper re-distribution of power (Arnstein, 1969; Reid, 1972; Kisby, 2010; Healey, 2010; Allmendinger and Haughton, 2012; Cox, Henderson and Raikes, 2014; Blond and Morrin, 2015; Whitney, Fenning, Clarence and Skalski, 2016 and Shaw and Tewdwr-Jones, 2017).

Prior to 1945, the UK was described by Jim Bulpitt as having a dual state where the central government was concerned with high politics, like defence, while local governments had autonomy over low politics and the delivery of public services (Cox, Henderson and Raikes, 2014 and Shaw and Tewdwr-Jones, 2017). However, in an effort to modernise and homogenise public services as well as reduce public spending, the central government tightened its control over the delivery of public services between 1945 and 1980 (Gurr and King, 1987; Cox, Henderson and Raikes, 2014; Blond and Morrin, 2015 and Shaw and Tewdwr-Jones, 2017). This agenda of austerity led to the demise of sub-national governance, which created a vacuum between the central government and local authorities while transforming the UK into one of the most centralised nations in the developed world (Gurr and King, 1987; Cox, Henderson and Raikes, 2014; Blond and Morrin, 2015; Whitney, Fenning, Clarence and Skalski, 2016 and Shaw and Tewdwr-Jones, 2017). As a result, in an effort to re-establish sub-national governance as well as deliver effective solutions to local challenges, officials identified, particularly following the publication of the Redcliffe Maud Report, the urban-region level as one of the most adequate levels for governance (Deas and Ward, 2000; Hall, 2002; UNDP, 2002; Cochrane, 2007; Allmendinger and Haughton, 2012; Blond and Morrin, 2015 and Shaw and Tewdwr-Jones, 2017). This is, in part, because urban regions, by covering the functional economy of a place, have the potential to be more democratically accountable and more attuned to the preferences of their residents,

which increases their responsiveness to their residents' heterogeneous needs (OECD, 2006; Jones, Goodwin and Jones, 2010; Larkin, 2010; Centre for Cities, 2011; Taleb, 2014; RSA City Growth Commission, 2014; Wilcox, Nohrova and Williams, 2014; Blond and Morrin, 2015; The World Bank, 2015; Kerslake, 2016; Rumbach, 2016; Coughlan, 2016; CBRE, 2016 and Shaw and Tewdwr-Jones, 2017). As such, starting 2010 and building on previous attempts by the Conservative government in the early-1990s and the Labour government in 1997, the UK Coalition government has been devolving responsibilities down to the combined authorities of urban regions (Hall, 2002; Cabinet Office and Clegg, 2011; Clegg and Clark, 2011; Haughton and Allmendinger, 2013; House of Commons Business, Innovation and Skills Committee, 2013; O'Brien and Pike, 2014; Blond and Morrin, 2015; Bailey and Pill, 2015; Clayton and McGough, 2015; House of Commons Committee of Public Accounts, 2016 and Shaw and Tewdwr-Jones, 2017). This has been done through the introduction of a variety of mechanisms, such as the City Deals, which were launched in 2011 after the abolishment of the Regional Development Agencies (RDAs) that were established in 1997 by the Blair government (Hall, 2002; Cabinet Office and Clegg, 2011; Clegg and Clark, 2011; Sergeant, 2012; House of Commons Business, Innovation and Skills Committee, 2013; O'Brien and Pike, 2014; O'Brien and Pike, 2015; Bailey and Pill, 2015 and Shaw and Tewdwr-Jones, 2017).

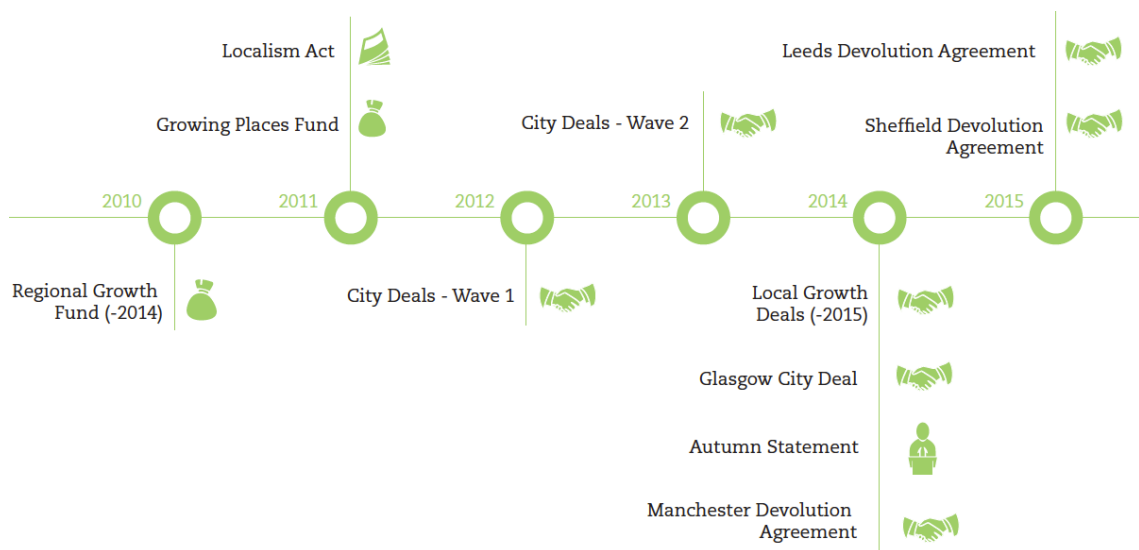


Figure 3: Diagram showing the different local economic development policies, which were adopted between 2010 and 2015. Source: (Clayton and McGough, 2015).

These newly-developed deals are meant to encourage local authorities to collaborate with one another in order to form larger, more capable urban regions, which are then allowed to negotiate with the national government for more autonomy (Taylor, Derudder and Saey, 2006; OECD, 2006; Cabinet Office and Clegg, 2011; Sergeant, 2012; Cox, Henderson and Raikes, 2014; Bailey and Pill, 2015; Blond and Morrin, 2015; Kerslake, 2016 and Shaw and Tewdwr-Jones, 2017). After being granted additional autonomy, those urban regions are expected to, among other things, co-design innovative, effective policies that address local challenges; collaborate on developing integrated, urban-region-wide infrastructure, planning, and economic strategies; and deliver place-based services more efficiently than the national government could (Taylor, Derudder and Saey, 2006; Centre for Cities, 2011; Cabinet Office and Clegg, 2011; Cox, Henderson and Raikes, 2014; Bailey and Pill, 2015; Ministry of Housing, communities & Local Government, Clark and Wharton, 2015; Gupta, Pfeffer, Verrest and Ros-Tonen, 2015; Blond and Morrin, 2015; Clayton and McGough, 2015; O'Brien and Pike, 2015; Core Cities, 2015b; Kerslake, 2016; Shaw and Tewdwr-Jones, 2017 and Waite, McGregor and McNulty, 2018). By doing so, those regions would have the opportunity to not only improve their governing capacity; enhance the quality public services; and boost sub-national governance, but also capture substantial economic benefits (BBC, 2009; Larkin, 2010; Centre for Cities, 2011; Cabinet Office and Clegg, 2011; Wilcox, Nohrova and Williams, 2014; Cox, Henderson and Raikes, 2014; OECD, 2015; Bailey and Pill, 2015; Blond and Morrin, 2015; O'Brien and Pike, 2015; Core Cities, 2015a; CBRE, 2016; Kerslake, 2016; Pike, MacKinnon, Coombes, Champion, Bradley, Cumbers, Robson and Wymer, 2016 and Shaw and Tewdwr-Jones, 2017).

Although such devolution deals have been hailed as a great step towards autonomous urban regions and higher degrees of sub-national governance, many have considered them to be a failed attempt at meaningfully devolving power and responsibilities to urban regions (Martin, Pike, Tyler and Gardiner, 2015; Blond and Morrin, 2015; Kerslake, 2016 and Shaw and Tewdwr-Jones, 2017). This failure is blamed on the hidden motives of the neoliberal government, which is criticised for having adopted devolution not as a way to empower urban regions, but rather dump responsibilities on them under conditions of systematic austerity (Kisby, 2010; Peck, 2012; Local

Government Association, 2014; Cox, Henderson and Raikes, 2014 and Shaw and Tewdwr-Jones, 2017). Additionally, the deals have been accused of increasing spatial inequality by devolving different forms of governance unevenly (Shaw and Tewdwr-Jones, 2017 and O'Brien and Pike, 2018).

Governance model	Example
Elected Mayor	Liverpool City; Bristol City
Combined Authority	North East Combined Authority; West Yorkshire
Elected 'metro-mayor' and Combined Authority*	Greater Manchester; Sheffield City Region; Liverpool City Region; Tees Valley; Greater Birmingham and Solihull; West of England
Joint Committee**	Black Country; Coventry and Warwickshire; Hull and Humber; Oxford and Oxfordshire; Plymouth; Thames Valley Berkshire; Glasgow and Clyde Valley; Cardiff Capital Region; Aberdeen; Edinburgh and South East Scotland; Swansea Bay
Single Local Authority	Inverness
LEP or private sector-led	Greater Ipswich; Preston; South Ribble and Lancashire; Swindon and Wiltshire
Economic Board	Nottingham; Greater Brighton; Greater Cambridge; Greater Norwich; Leicester and Leicestershire; Solent; Southend; Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire

*Elections for new 'metro-mayors' took place in May 2017, with the exception of Sheffield City Region, which is looking to hold elections in 2019.

**Joint Committees established for City Deals in England are created under the 1972 Local Government Act. Joint Committees in Scottish City Region Deals are created under the terms of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973. In Wales, the Local Government Act (1972), Local Government (Wales) Act 1994 and the Local Government Act 2000 provide the legislative basis for City Deals in Wales to establish Joint Committees.

Figure 4: Table showing the different models of governance that have been introduced as part of the City Deals. Source: (O'Brien and Pike, 2018).

Furthermore, some have drawn connections between Glasgow's City Deal and the Scottish independence referendum, which justify suspicions that the deals have been used as political tools by the UK government (Hetherington, 2014; Khanna, 2016; Shaw and Tewdwr-Jones, 2017 and Waite, McGregor and McNulty, 2018). The validity of such allegations is further justified by noting that albeit demanding more devolved powers for themselves, the Scottish and Welsh national governments are often hesitant about devolving power to other sub-national tiers of government (Hetherington, 2014). This might be the case because of their fear that devolving power to other sub-national levels of government could undermine their quest for national autonomy (Hetherington, 2014 and Blond and Morrin, 2015). Regardless, the City Deals and promotion of urban governance are still being supported by the acceptance of local-authority leaders that such a scale is more effective at increasing sub-national governance and delivering services efficiently (Cox, Henderson and Raikes, 2014; Kerslake, 2016 and Shaw and Tewdwr-Jones, 2017). As such, additional research to assess the ability of such deals to

boost sub-national governance, develop inclusive decision-making processes, and deliver better public services is required. This is especially important in the context of a globalised world, which is subjecting urban regions to a growing set of challenges that increasingly require those regions to have high levels of governance, effective policies, and high-quality services (Mollenkopf, 1993; Brenner, 1999; OECD, 2006; Taylor, Derudder and Saey, 2006; Brenner, 2011; Glaeser, 2012; Storper, 2012; Steger, 2013; Mionel, Mionel and Mihăescu, 2014; Blond and Morrin, 2015; Walport and Wilson, 2016; Khanna, 2016; Coughlan, 2016; Hoolachan, 2017 and Khan, 2018).

2.5- The roles of supra-national, national, and sub-national governments

2.5.1- The rise of supra-national unions and the re-structured systems of governance

As the processes of globalisation intensify, they are increasingly undermining the power and sovereignty of national governments (Perraton, Goldblatt, Held and McGrew, 1997; Hajer, 2003; Al-Rodhan, 2006; OECD, 2006; Davis and Libertun de Duren, 2011; Griffin, 2012 and Khanna, 2016). This is caused by the way globalisation helps up-scale national power to global firms and trans-national organisations, like the EU, and down-scale it to more local tiers of government, like urban-region authorities (Perraton, Goldblatt, Held and McGrew, 1997; Deas and Ward, 2000; Hajer, 2003; OECD, 2006; Al-Rodhan, 2006; Brenner, 2011; Griffin, 2012 and Khanna, 2016). As a result, the traditional, vertical relationships between different layers of government are being transformed into more horizontal, poly-centric networks within which power is equally distributed (Hajer, 2003; Griffin, 2012 and Wachhaus, 2013). Regardless, this transition is not making national governments less relevant (Mollenkopf, 1993; Mann, 1997; Perraton, Goldblatt, Held and McGrew, 1997; Brenner, 2011; Van den Dool, Hendriks, Gianoli and Schaap, 2015; House of Commons Committee of Public Accounts, 2016 and Rode, Heeckt, Ahrend, Melchor, Robert, Badstuber, Hoolachan and Kwami, 2017). Instead, as power is re-distributed among different tiers of government, national governments are seeing their roles change (Kettl, 2002; Jones, Goodwin, Jones and Pett, 2005; Kerslake, 2016; House of Commons Committee of Public Accounts, 2016 and Rode, Heeckt, Ahrend, Melchor, Robert, Badstuber, Hoolachan and Kwami, 2017). This is particularly true in a world where global

challenges, like global warming and the need for sustainable development, demand different national governments to cooperate with one another at the trans-national scale to develop effective, integrated strategies and large-scale infrastructure projects (Wirth, 1937; OECD, 2006; Feine and Manning, 2013; Williams-Fleming, 2016; Khanna, 2016; Klapka and Halas, 2016; CBRE, 2016 and Rode, Heeckt, Ahrend, Melchor, Robert, Badstuber, Hoolachan and Kwami, 2017). The higher levels of cooperation and trade between those nations is catalysing the formation of supra-national unions (Khanna, 2016). Furthermore, as the need to improve the quality of life for citizens drives nation states to increasingly view political and administrative borders as obstacles, the role of economically-functional, culturally-compatible supra-national unions will continue to grow (Wirth, 1937; Ahuja, 2011; TEDx, 2012; Feine and Manning, 2013; Williams-Fleming, 2016; Klapka and Halas, 2016; Khanna, 2016 and Rode, Heeckt, Ahrend, Melchor, Robert, Badstuber, Hoolachan and Kwami, 2017). This will create additional layers of governance that extend beyond national boundaries and make way for a multi-layered, multi-actor, and trans-national system of governance within which supra-national, national, and sub-national entities share power and responsibilities (TEDx, 2012; Wachhaus, 2013; Blond and Morrin, 2015; Van den Dool, Hendriks, Gianoli and Schaap, 2015; Khanna, 2016 and Norman, 2018).

2.5.2- Globally-connected, economically-functional islands of governance

By down-scaling power to urban regions and empowering them to grow their wealth and global influence, globalisation is enabling those regions to increasingly detach themselves from their nation states and integrate within global networks (Beaverstock, Smith and Taylor, 2000; Deas and Ward, 2000; OECD, 2006; Khanna, 2010; Coughlan, 2016 and Khanna, 2016). This is rapidly increasing global, inter-urban connections, allowing urban regions to share their capacities and ideas without framing them in terms of national ideologies and political parties, which is enabling them to form effective trans-place alliances and increase inter-urban governance (Herod and Wright, 2002; Taylor, Derudder and Saey, 2006; Coughlan, 2016; Walport and Wilson, 2016; Khanna, 2016; C40 Cities, 2018 and Norman, 2018). One of those many collaborative networks is the C40 network that connects the 40 cities, which are responsible for 25% of the global GDP and house 1 in 12 people, in a network that has permitted those cities to take more than 10,000 actions to combat climate change (C40 Cities, 2018).

Through the inter-urban networks, those regions are replacing political divisions with competitive connectivity as the new model of global organisation and emerging as the places that people most identify with, especially as the idea of national identity diminishes (OECD, 2006; Massey, 2007; Davis and Libertun de Duren, 2011; TEDx, 2012; Campbell, 2015; Khanna, 2016 and Coughlan, 2016). Moreover, by emerging out of the collaboration of local authorities, urban regions often represent economically-self-sustained areas with large capabilities and economic potential (Taylor, Derudder and Saey, 2006; OECD, 2006; Mionel, Mionel and Mihăescu, 2014; The World Bank, 2015 and Walport and Wilson 2016). As a result, those regions are behaving as islands of governance, which are better at addressing local challenges, like congestion, sustainable urban development, and inequality, as well as global challenges, like climate change, than far-removed, centralised national governments (Taylor, Derudder and Saey, 2006; OECD, 2006; Larkin, 2010; Mionel, Mionel and Mihăescu, 2014; Coughlan, 2016; Rumbach, 2016; Khanna, 2016; Hoolachan, 2017). Additionally, the authorities of those regions tend to be more attuned to the ambitions of their residents (OECD, 2006; Blond and Morrin, 2015; Rumbach, 2016 and Shaw and Tewdwr-Jones, 2017). This explains why, as the political divide between rural and urban areas across the world grows, urban regions are beginning to pass progressive policies that go beyond or even clash with the policies of higher tiers of government, especially when those tiers of government are paralysed or polarised (Campbell, 2015; Bergal, 2015 and Norman, 2018).

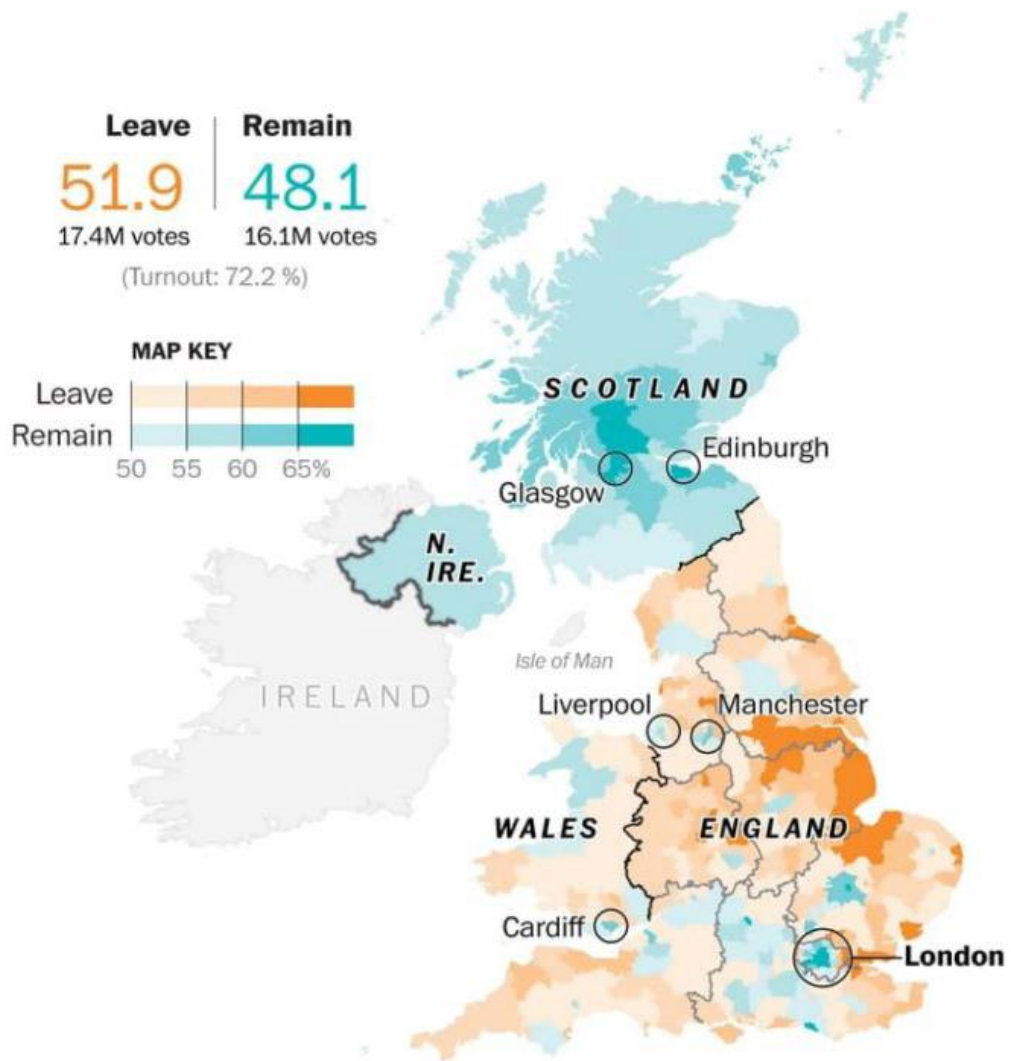


Figure 5: Map showing how people, across the UK, voted on Brexit. The map highlights the differences between some of the preferences that urban residents have and the preferences of most people living in rural area. Source: (Modified from Etehad, 2016).

For example, although the US national government left the Paris climate accord, cities across the country vowed to uphold the terms of the agreement (Francis, 2017; Lumb, 2017 and Tabuchi and Fountain, 2017). Another example comes after the Lebanese government failed to find an effective solution to the country's waste crisis, which drove the city of Jbeil to independently take the initiative to ban the use of plastic bags by the end of 2018; a decision that was praised by the Lebanese civil society (Yan, 2018; Khalil, 2018 and The961, 2018).

2.5.3- Localised decision making and the delivery of place-based public services

As globalisation up-scales power to supra-national unions and enables urban regions to grow larger, citizens will increasingly lose their ability to influence decisions and local policies (Reid, 1972 and LSE Cities, 2015). As such, it is vital for supra-national, national, and urban-region governments to encourage local authorities to prioritise engaging with citizens and developing inclusive decision-making mechanisms as higher tiers of government focus on trans-national and urban-wide matters (Arnstein, 1969; Reid, 1972; Rhodes, 1996; Kettl, 2002; O'Brien, Pike and Tomaney, 2004; Taylor, Derudder and Saey, 2006; OECD, 2006; TEDx, 2012; Cox, Henderson and Raikes, 2014; LSE Cities, 2015 and Lehmann, 2017). This would empower citizens by moving power and accountability closer to them (Wirth, 1937; Arnstein, 1969; Wachhaus, 2013; Taleb, 2014 and CBRE, 2016). Moreover, all tiers of government should embrace the principle of subsidiarity to remove the bureaucracy that accompanies unnecessary layers of government and allow citizens to shape their own policies based on their local needs (Wirth, 1937; TEDx, 2012; Cochrane, 2007; Blowers, Hamnett and Sarre, 2007; Taleb, 2014; CBRE, 2016; Rumbach, 2016 and Kerslake, 2016). This will boost sub-national governance while helping deliver bottom-up-inspired, place-based services, which are often better than state-led, top-down initiatives (Wachhaus, 2013; Bailey and Pill, 2015; Walport and Wilson, 2016 and Hoolachan, 2017).

Although allowing for local differences in policies and services poses a variety of challenges, these locally-derived variations would increase the well-being of citizens, and make way for higher levels of overall resilience and stability (Blowers, Hamnett and Sarre, 2007; Taleb, 2014; Cox, Henderson and Raikes, 2014; Kerslake, 2016; Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, 2016 and Khanna, 2016). Additionally, it enables citizens to learn from their decisions while helping create vibrant communities by participating in their governance (Rhodes, 1996; OECD, 2006; Kisby, 2010; TEDx, 2012 and Wachhaus, 2013).

3- Methodology

3.1- Research strategy and data sources

This dissertation contributes to current debates regarding devolution by utilising a mainly quantitative, discourse-based approach to address the identified research gaps by attempting to answer the following questions:

- (1) What are the implications of urban autonomy on economic performance?
- (2) Can devolution boost sub-national governance and improve decision-making processes?
- (3) Have the UK City Deals succeeded at enhancing the delivery of public services?

Although there are some pitfalls associated with discourse-based research methods, namely allowing researchers to be biased when selecting evidence or make over-generalisations, the dissertation deploys this methodology for its ability to generate valuable insights, which would not have been provided using other research methodologies (Jacobs, 2006).

To answer the identified research questions, the next chapter is divided into three sections. In the first section, the chapter aims to better understand the implication of increased autonomy on the economic performance of urban regions. This is done by critically examining and synthesising evidence from several, recent publications and journal, such as:

- Cities Analytics: Competitive cities for jobs and growth (2015);
- Competitive Cities for Jobs and Growth: What, Who, and How (2015);
- Is fiscal decentralization harmful for economic growth? Evidence from the OECD countries (2011);
- Fiscal decentralisation, efficiency, and growth (2009); and
- Decentralisation and economic growth revisited: an empirical note (2005).

In the second section, the chapter reviews reports and policy documents to assess how devolutionary mechanisms, like the UK City Deals, impact sub-national governance while trying to suggest how devolutionary deals could be better designed to boost good governance and inclusive decision making. Finally, in the third section, the chapter looks at the Greater Manchester, and Glasgow and Clyde Valley City Deals to determine how they impacted the delivery of services and, in turn, the well-being of residents.

The findings of this dissertation are then used to provide evidence-based policy advice and make recommendations for further study.

3.2- Case studies

In order to assess the impact of devolution on sub-national governance and decision making as well as determine whether the City Deals have succeeded at enhancing the delivery of public services, this dissertation takes the Greater Manchester, and the Glasgow and Clyde Valley City Deals as its case studies. By selecting the Greater Manchester City Deal, which was announced in 2012, and the Glasgow and Clyde Valley City Deal, which was signed in 2014, the dissertation manages to compare the outcome of a City Deal from the first wave and another from the most-recent, third wave of devolution (Marlow, 2012; Cabinet Office and Deputy Prime Minister's Office, 2014; O'Brien and Pike, 2014 and O'Brien and Pike, 2015). Additional reasons for selecting the mentioned case studies are the size of each of the two urban regions' population and economy, and the unique governance models that have been established as part of the two deals.

For example, with a population of 2,714,900, Manchester enjoys one of the largest, fastest growing economies in the UK (BBC, 2009 and O'Brien and Pike, 2015). In 2013, the Greater Manchester urban region generated as much as 4.3% of England's economic output (Office for National Statistics, 2015). Moreover, the City Deal made Greater Manchester the first urban region in the UK outside of London to have a directly-elected mayor (HM Treasury and GMCA, 2016?). On the other hand, the Glasgow and Clyde Valley region generates a GVA of £43 billion, which is around

32% of Scotland's GVA, and has a population of 1,750,000, which equates to 34% of the Scottish population (Cabinet Office and Deputy Prime Minister's Office, 2014; O'Brien and Pike, 2015 and Aitken, 2017). Furthermore, in addition to being one of the largest City Deals, the Glasgow and Clyde Valley City Deal represents a partnership between the urban region, UK government, and Scottish government (Cabinet Office and Deputy Prime Minister's Office, 2014 and HM Treasury, Prime Minister's Office, Alexander and Cameron, 2014). This symbolises a change in how much the governments in London and Edinburgh trust urban regions and their residents to find solutions that address their local needs (HM Treasury, Prime Minister's Office, Alexander and Cameron, 2014).

3.3- Limitations

Given the time constraints and scale of the topic under study, the dissertation utilises a discourse-based analysis method to address the identified research gaps (Jacobs, 2006). This, as a result, could lead to biases that might arise either during the selection of evidence or from the examined documents, which could have been written with the intent of pursuing certain political objectives (Jacobs, 2006). Additionally, utilising a discourse-based research method could lead to un-backed over-generalisations (Jacobs, 2006). As such, this dissertation tries to be vigilant when selecting and analysing evidence in order to present a balanced argument (Jacobs, 2006).

4- Research Findings & Synthesis

4.1- Devolution and economic performance

To better understand the implications of urban autonomy on economic growth, this section starts by inspecting how administrative autonomy, or scope, and fiscal autonomy influences the economic performance of a variety of urban regions. This is then followed by a more detailed investigation into how different types of autonomy impact the GDP and job growth rates of urban regions based on their regional geographic location, primacy, and size. Finally, the section compares the UK to other OECD countries to try and assess whether or not the UK's urban regions would benefit from devolution.

After examining the results of a multivariate regression analysis test, which started with a sample of 100 cities in 2000 and ended with 286 cities in 2012, a better understanding of the influence of autonomy on economic performance can be achieved (Fikri and Zhu, 2015). The test indicates that increasing the administrative autonomy of well-funded urban-region authorities by devolving more responsibilities to them is positively associated with higher job and GDP growth rates but negatively associated with income and labour productivity levels (The World Bank, 2015 and Fikri and Zhu, 2015). On the other hand, the results of this test, which are confirmed by several other experiments, show that granting urban-region authorities additional fiscal autonomy is negatively associated with income levels, job creation, labour productivity, and GDP growth rates (Zhang and Zou, 1998; Xie, Zou and Davoodi, 1999; Akai and Sakata, 2002; Rodriguez-Pose, Tijmstra and Bwire, 2009; Rodriguez-Pose and Ezcurra, 2011; The World Bank, 2015 and Fikri and Zhu, 2015). This suggests that most urban regions would enjoy better economic growth when they are well-funded through stable revenue streams from their national governments (Rodriguez-Pose, Tijmstra and Bwire, 2009 and Fikri and Zhu, 2015). The rare exception to this outcome is when fiscal devolution has been a bottom-up process, as opposed to a top-down objective (Rodriguez-Pose, Tijmstra and Bwire, 2009).

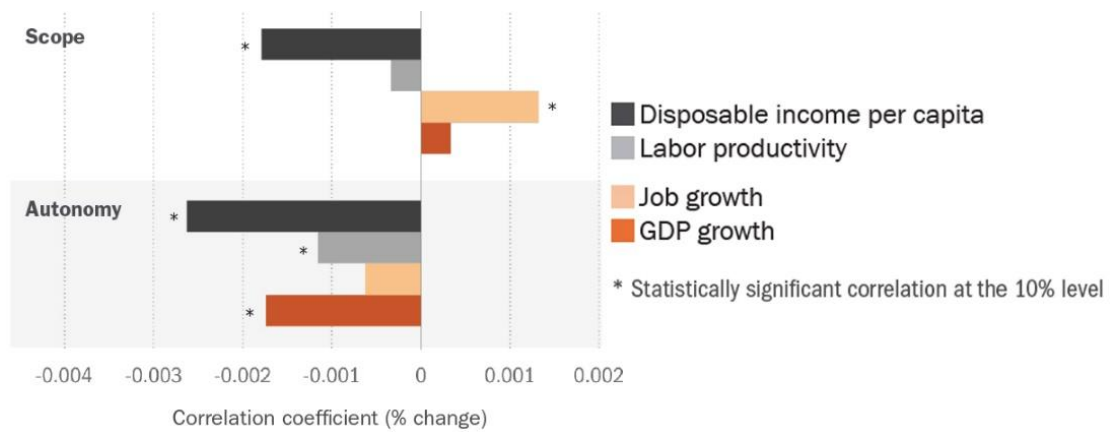


Figure 6: Diagram showing the impact of fiscal and administrative (scope) autonomy on the disposable income per capita, labour productivity, job growth, and GDP growth of different urban regions. The results indicate that while labour productivity and disposable income per capita are negatively influenced by both fiscal and administrative autonomy, GDP and job growth rates, albeit being negatively impacted by fiscal autonomy, are positively influenced by administrative autonomy. Source: (Modified from Fikri and Zhu, 2015).

Exploring more regionally-specific data regarding the relationship between autonomy, and GDP and job growth rates, it becomes apparent that the impact of administrative and fiscal autonomy on the GDP and job growth rates varies greatly between regions (Fikri and Zhu, 2015). When it comes to GDP growth rates, urban regions in OECD, and Middle Eastern and North African countries seem to benefit from both administrative and fiscal autonomy (Fikri and Zhu, 2015). On the other hand, urban regions in Latin American and Caribbean, European and Central Asian, and Sub-Saharan African countries don't exhibit many statically significant relationships between autonomy and GDP growth rates (Fikri and Zhu, 2015). Looking at job creation, it appears that urban regions in OECD countries benefit from both administrative and fiscal autonomy (Fikri and Zhu, 2015). Conversely, job creation in Sub-Saharan and African urban regions has a negative correlation with both administrative and fiscal autonomy (Fikri and Zhu, 2015). In the Middle East and North Africa, urban regions enjoy a positive association between fiscal autonomy and job creation but are negatively impacted by administrative autonomy (Fikri and Zhu, 2015). Contrarily, In Europe and Central Asian countries, although there is a negative correlation between fiscal autonomy and job creation, job growth is positively influenced by an increase in administrative autonomy (Fikri and Zhu, 2015).

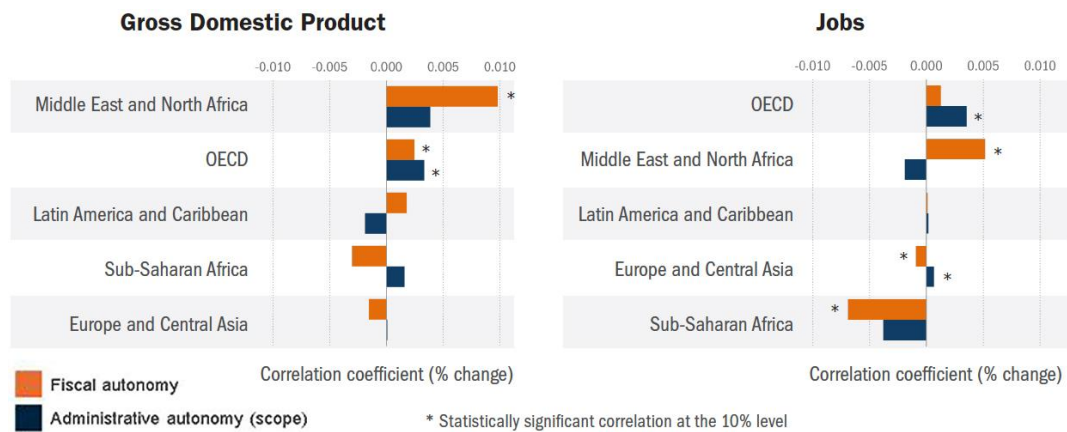


Figure 7: Diagram showing the impact of fiscal and administrative (scope) autonomy on the GDP and job growth rates of different urban regions based on their regional geographic location. The results indicate that increased autonomy influences urban regions differently based on their location. Source: (Modified from Fikri and Zhu, 2015).

Looking at the primacy and size of urban regions, as opposed to their regional geographic location, the evidence suggests that fiscal autonomy is positively associated with job creation but negatively associated with GDP growth rates for urban regions regardless of their primacy or size (Fikri and Zhu, 2015). On the other hand, although administrative autonomy has a negligible relationship with job growth for primary and large urban regions, it has a significant, negative impact on job growth for secondary and small urban regions (Fikri and Zhu, 2015). Moreover, when it comes to GDP growth rates, the only significant impact that administrative autonomy has is a positive one for primary and large urban regions (Fikri and Zhu, 2015).

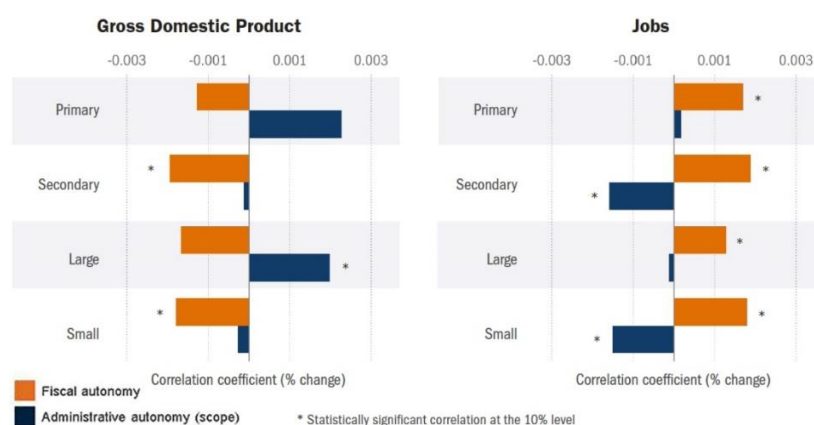


Figure 8: Diagram showing the impact of fiscal and administrative (scope) autonomy on the GDP and job growth rates of urban regions based on their primacy level and size. The results indicate that while fiscal autonomy has a relatively equivalent impact on urban regions regardless of their primacy and size, urban regions with varying primacy levels and sizes are influenced differently by administrative autonomy. Source: (Modified from Fikri and Zhu, 2015).

After looking at the detailed data, a complex relationship between autonomy and economic performance emerges (Fikri and Zhu, 2015). Although both administrative and fiscal autonomy negatively impact wages and productivity levels in most urban regions, the GDP and job growth rates of urban regions are influenced differently based on the location, primacy level and size of the urban region under study (Fikri and Zhu, 2015). For instance, fiscal autonomy enables urban regions, regardless of their primacy or size, to create more jobs (Fikri and Zhu, 2015). Yet, it has a negative impact on the GDP of those same urban regions (Fikri and Zhu, 2015). On the other hand, although secondary and small urban regions are negatively influenced by administrative autonomy, primary and large urban regions almost always benefit from increased levels of administrative autonomy, particularly if they belong to OECD countries (Fikri and Zhu, 2015). This showcases that the relationship between autonomy and economic performance is not at all conclusive, especially when data from other experiments indicates that fiscal devolution is vital to enabling economic growth (Iimi, 2005 and Rodriguez-Pose, Tijmstra and Bwire, 2009). Moreover, these experiments hint that the capabilities and capacity of urban-region authorities, whose legitimacy should be reinforced via elections, are crucial factors in determining whether urban regions benefit from autonomy, regardless of its type (Rodriguez-Pose, Tijmstra and Bwire, 2009; Centre for Cities, 2011; Cox, Henderson and Raikes, 2014; Fikri and Zhu, 2015 and Kerslake, 2016).

A closer glance at the UK reveals that the country has one of the most centralised systems of government among OECD countries (Gurr and King, 1987; Blond and Morrin, 2015; Whitney, Fenning, Clarence and Skalski, 2016 and Kerslake, 2016). The UK's over-centralisation has been reducing the competitiveness of its urban regions, increasing spatial inequality, and limiting public spending at a time when the demand for services in urban regions is growing (Core Cities, 2015b and Whitney, Fenning, Clarence and Skalski, 2016). As a consequence, the ability of the UK's urban regions to improve their economic performance has been handicapped (Cox, Henderson and Raikes, 2014; Whitney, Fenning, Clarence and Skalski, 2016 and Pike, MacKinnon, Coombes, Champion, Bradley, Cumbers, Robson and Wymer, 2016). Additionally, over-centralisation has prevented those regions from reducing the economic growth and productivity gaps between them and London or even other second-tier cities across the

world (Blond and Morrin, 2015). Moreover, over-centralisation explains why those regions, which have less control over their revenue raising and spending when compared to other global competitors, have been failing to keep up with national economic trends (Blond and Morrin, 2015; Whitney, Fenning, Clarence and Skalski, 2016 and Pike, MacKinnon, Coombes, Champion, Bradley, Cumbers, Robson and Wymer, 2016). This failure does not reflect the global norm, especially when similar urban regions were at the forefront of economic growth in several, more de-centralised countries both in Europe and across the world (Parkinson, Hutchins, Simmie, Clark and Verdonk, 2003; Cox, Henderson and Raikes, 2014 and Blond and Morrin, 2015). For example, while most urban regions in the UK performed below the national average, eight of the largest cities in Germany outside the capital out-performed the German national average in terms of GDP per capita (Whitney, Fenning, Clarence and Skalski, 2016). Furthermore, fourteen second-tier urban regions in Germany enjoyed better productivity growth rates than Berlin (Whitney, Fenning, Clarence and Skalski, 2016). The de-centralised nature of Germany enables cities like Munich and Frankfurt to enjoy an average productivity level per person that is higher than the average productivity level of the UK's core cities by 88% and 80.7% respectively (Core Cities, 2015b). While this is not exclusively caused by the different degrees of autonomy that each country grants its urban regions, it is important to note that the difference between the fiscal autonomy, which is enjoyed by German and UK urban regions, is huge (Whitney, Fenning, Clarence and Skalski, 2016). According to McKinsey, although the UK's 56 largest towns and cities generate 58% of the country's jobs and 61% of the national economy, the central government enjoys a share of public spending that exceeds 72% when Germany's government has a share of only 19% (Blond and Morrin, 2015). Additionally, while urban regions in the UK control 5-7% of their tax base, counterparts in the USA, Canada, and Germany enjoy 7.5x, 10x, and 6x more control of their taxes respectively (Core Cities, 2015b).

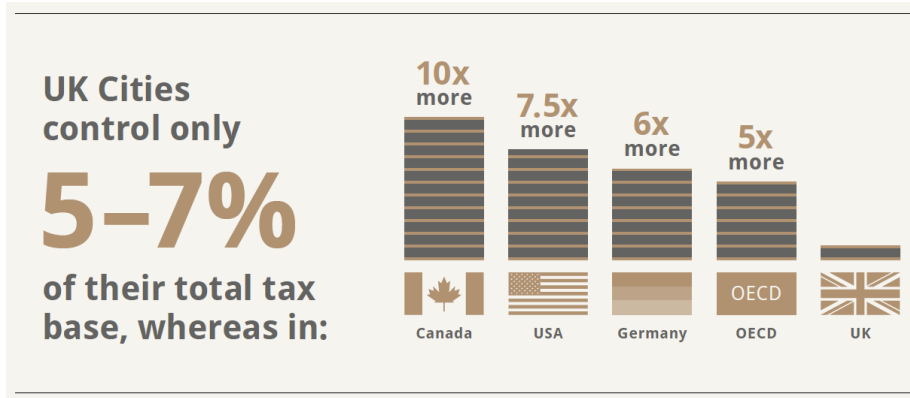


Figure 9: Diagram comparing the amount of control that UK cities have over their total tax base with the amount of control that other urban regions across the world enjoy. Source: (Core Cities, 2015b).

This implies that urban regions in the UK receive most of their funding from the national government making those regions overly-reliant on the national government when other cities, like Tokyo, receive as little as 8% of their income from the central government (Whitney, Fenning, Clarence and Skalski, 2016). With UK urban regions being subjected to austerity measures by the national government, it is vital for them to be granted more power to govern themselves in order to achieve economic growth while avoiding the consequences of being under-funded (OECD, 2006; United Cities and Local Government and Work Bank, 2009; Glaeser, 2012; IPPR, 2014a; Northern Correspondent, 2014; Cox, Henderson and Raikes, 2014; McFarland and Hoene, 2015 and Whitney, Fenning, Clarence and Skalski, 2016).

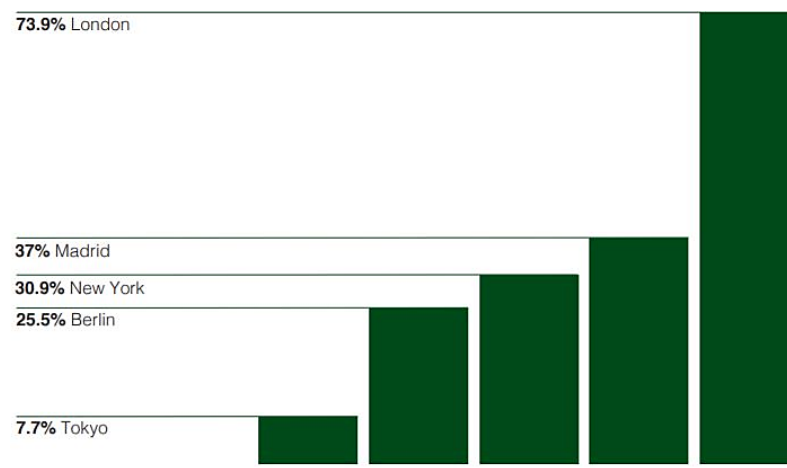


Figure 10: Diagram comparing the amount of funding that different urban regions across the world receive from their national governments. The diagram highlights that London, which is considered to be one of the most privileged cities in the UK, receives most of its funding from the central government. Source: (Kerslake, 2016).

Additionally, devolving political, administrative, and fiscal powers to urban regions in the UK would empower them to: become financially self-sustainable; design locally-inspired, inclusive policies; fund place-based public services; reduce the productivity gap; lessen spatial inequality; and increase their global competitiveness (Deas and Ward, 2000; United Cities and Local Government and World Bank, 2009; Local Government Association, 2014; RSA City Growth Commission, 2014; IPPR, 2014a ; Northern Correspondent, 2014; Cox, Henderson and Raikes, 2014; Core Cities, 2015a; Core Cities, 2015b; Martin, Pike, Tyler and Gardiner, 2015; The World Bank, 2015; CBRE, 2016 and Whitney, Fenning, Clarence and Skalski, 2016). The result of devolving power, if successful at empowering only England's core cities to perform at the national economic average, would translate to the addition of £1.3 billion to the national economy yearly (Blond and Morrin, 2015). This would add up to £222 billion GVA and 1.16 million jobs by 2030, which is equivalent to adding Denmark to the English economy (Blond and Morrin, 2015). Furthermore, according to Ernst & Young, allowing urban-region authorities to deliver place-based services by devolving power to them would save taxpayers between £9.4-20.5 billion in as little as five years (Blond and Morrin, 2015). As such, although the influence of increased autonomy on the economic performance of urban regions is not fully grasped, it is safe to conclude that granting additional autonomy to competent, capable urban-region authorities in over-centralised countries, like the UK, yields great benefits at the urban and national levels.

The main findings of this section are:

- The exact implications of increased autonomy on economic growth are not clear;
- Most urban regions would enjoy better economic growth when they are well-funded through stable revenue streams from their national governments. The rare exception is when fiscal devolution has been the result of a bottom-up process;
- The capabilities and capacity of urban-region authorities are vital factors that determine whether urban regions benefit from increased autonomy, regardless of its type; and
- Granting additional autonomy to competent, capable urban-region authorities in over-centralised countries, like the UK, could yield great benefits, particularly when they are being under-funded by their national governments.

4.2- The influence of devolution on sub-national governance and decision making

This section inspects the City Deals in general, and the Greater Manchester, and Glasgow and Clyde Valley City Deals in particular to assess how devolution impacts sub-national governance and decision making. Additionally, the section tries to suggest how devolutionary mechanisms, like the City Deals, could be better designed to boost good governance and inclusive decision-making processes.

So far, the City Deals have succeeded at increasing the levels of collaboration between local authorities, building trust between different layers of government, and establishing a variety of partnerships between public-sector institutions as well as public-sector and private-sector entities (Brenner, 2011; HM Government, 2012; Storper, 2014; RSA, 2014; HM Treasury, Prime Minister's Office, Alexander and Cameron, 2014; Blond and Morrin, 2015 and O'Brien and Pike, 2015). For example, the Greater Manchester City Deal enabled the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) to embrace new approaches, like 'Our Manchester', which changed the relationship between residents and the public sector (Core Cities, 2017). Through these approaches the GMCA allowed residents to voice their needs and aspirations, get involved, and get creative when trying to address local challenges, which effectively increased good governance at the urban-region level (HM Government, 2012 and Core Cities, 2017). However, the deals also raised the levels of inter-urban competition by forcing authorities to compete with one another for funding from the national government, and increased spatial inequality, especially between rural areas and urban regions (Larkin, 2010; Brenner, 2011 and Cox, Henderson and Raikes, 2014; O'Brien and Pike, 2014; Bailey and Pill, 2015; Whitney, Fenning, Clarence and Skalski, 2016 and O'Brien and Pike, 2018). Additionally, without granting urban regions enough fiscal autonomy to raise revenues, the deals might drive urban-region authorities to become overly-dependent on private-sector finances at the detriment of public interest, especially as the national government adopts strict austerity measures (Harvey, 1989; O'Brien, Pike and Tomaney, 2004; United Cities and Local Government and Work Bank, 2009 and Brenner, 2011). Moreover, by increasing the number of complex, inter-governmental networks, which typically weaken the central government's ability to regulate services, the deals might alienate the public and erode accountability by

impeding the citizen’s ability to know who is responsible for what (Rhodes, 1996; Pierre, 1999; Bache and Flinders, 2009 and O’Brien and Pike, 2014). This runs counter to the purpose of devolution, which is meant to help increase the well-being of citizens (Rhodes, 1996; Cox, Henderson and Raikes, 2014; Blond and Morrin, 2015; OECD, 2015 and Rumbach, 2016).

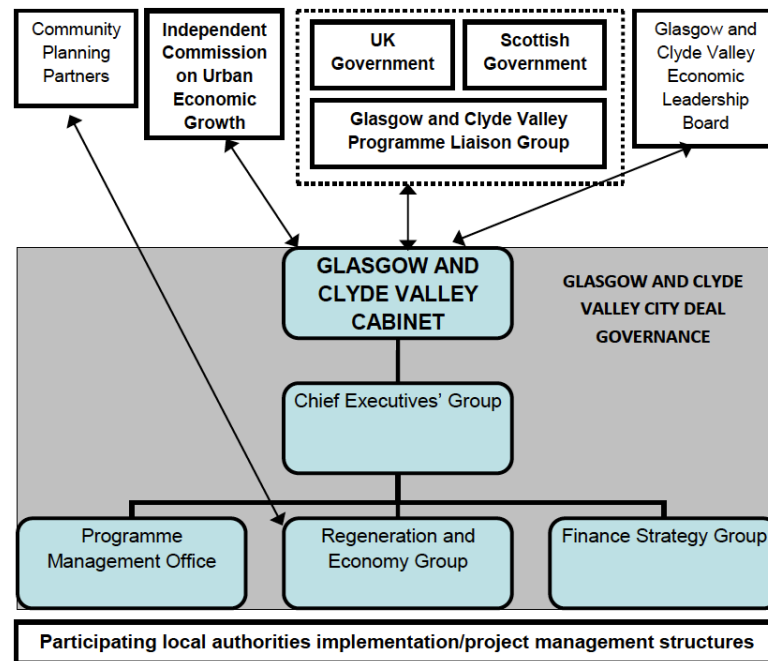


Figure 11: Diagram illustrating the complex governance model that has been established as part of the Glasgow and Clyde Valley City Deal in order to allow the UK government and Scottish government to monitor, mostly unelected, sub-national authorities. Source: (Cabinet Office and Deputy Prime Minister’s Office, 2014).

As such, although devolutionary processes, like the City Deals, help boost sub-national governance, unless they include mechanisms that support democratic accountability and public participation, they are likely to fail at promoting good governance and inclusive decision making (Bardhan, 2002; United Cities and Local Government and Work Bank, 2009; Larkin, 2010; Cabinet Office and Deputy Prime Minister’s Office, 2012a; O’Brien and Pike, 2015; Blond and Morrin, 2015; PwC, 2016a; PwC, 2016b; Walport and Wilson 2016; House of Commons Committee of Public Accounts, 2016; Kerslake, 2016 and Rumbach, 2016). To increase the likelihood that devolution will result in good, sub-national governance and inclusive decision-making processes across the UK, the national government should: (1) require sub-national tiers of government to develop mechanisms that enable individuals to participate in decision making and empower citizens to hold representatives, like elected mayors, accountable as increased

autonomy is granted to them (UNDP, 2002; Bardhan, 2002; Kettl, 2002; Purcell, 2006; Northern Correspondent, 2014; Blond and Morrin, 2015; Becker, Beveridge and Naumann, 2015; Kerslake, 2016 and Walport and Wilson 2016); (2) help citizens better identify where accountability lies (Kerslake, 2016); (3) recognise that successful governance structures are not necessarily transferable, and that unique models for governance should be developed based on local capacities and conditions; (OECD, 2015 and Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, 2016) (4) incentivise emerging urban regions to include neighbouring rural areas as the national government develops infrastructure projects that better connect rural areas to nearby cities to mitigate spatial inequality (Hall, 2005; Khanna, 2016 and Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, 2016); (5) consider devolving power to economically-self-sufficient rural regions to ensure that the residents of those areas do not feel incapable of shaping the policies that affect them (Van den Dool, Hendriks, Gianoli and Schaap, 2015 and Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, 2016); and (6) encourage urban-region authorities to collaborate with one another to reduce inter-urban competition, and the inefficient, over-fragmentation of policies and services (United Cities and Local Government and World Bank, 2009; Pike and Tomaney, 2009 and RSA City Growth Commission, 2014).

Nonetheless, the pursuit of higher levels of good, sub-national governance can only be achieved if different tiers of government as well as individuals are willing to actively be part of the multi-layered system of governance that form after power is devolved (UNDP, 2002 and Wachhaus, 2013). Furthermore, the different tiers of government must continuously engage in a process of learning and knowledge exchange in order to regularly adapt their structures of governance to reflect the ever-changing nature and challenges of the areas that they are governing (OECD, 2015 and Van den Dool, Hendriks, Gianoli and Schaap, 2015). Moreover, for devolutionary processes, like the City Deals, to be inclusive, bottom-up mechanisms for devolution, individuals and their communities should be invited to not only participate in the governance of their regions, but also in the negotiations that determine how those processes, or deals, are formed and delivered (House of Commons Committee of Public Accounts, 2016; Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, 2016 and Waite, McGregor and McNulty, 2018).

The main findings of this section are:

- Devolution does boost sub-national governance; and
- For devolution to result in good, sub-national governance and inclusive decision-making processes, sub-national authorities should introduce mechanisms that increase democratic accountability and public participation as additional power is devolved to them.

4.3- The impact of City Deals on the delivery of services

This section examines the Greater Manchester, and Glasgow and Clyde Valley City Deals in an attempt to determine how they impacted the delivery of public services and, as a result, the lives of citizens.

The Glasgow and Clyde Valley City Deal is meant to empower authorities to provide programs that will increase the skills of residents, reduce unemployment, support businesses, and improve the region's infrastructure (Cabinet Office and Deputy Prime Minister's Office, 2014; HM Treasury, Prime Minister's Office, Alexander and Cameron, 2014 and Waite, McGregor and McNulty, 2018). To achieve that, the deal allows the urban region's authorities to: (1) offer targeted support to 16-24 year olds as well as vulnerable residents in order to help them find employment; (2) provide business incubators to enable the creation and growth of start-ups, particularly those in high-tech, high growth sectors; (3) establish world class research, development, and commercialisation facilities; (4) put together £130 million of investments that will be complimented by £1 billion of Scottish government and UK government funding to form a £1.1 billion infrastructure fund. The fund, which will be released in five-year blocks subject to the region meeting the agreed on outputs and outcomes, will help finance infrastructure projects in the region, like the city centre-airport rail link; (5) lever up to £3.3 billion of private-sector investment into the proposed infrastructure projects; and (6) re-distribute the generated revenues across the region to help empower deprived areas (HM Treasury, Prime Minister's Office, Alexander and Cameron, 2014; Cabinet Office and Deputy Prime Minister's Office, 2014; Core Cities, 2017 and Glasgow City Region, 2018). After helping Glasgow's urban-region authorities

accomplish several socio-economic targets, like reducing temporary accommodation to its lowest rate since the 1980s, the deal is expected to allow the region's authorities to further improve the well-being of residents (Core Cities, 2017). Additionally, the deal, over its lifetime, will enable the region to develop 20 infrastructure projects, create more than 30,000 jobs, and deliver an additional £2.2 billion GVA per annum (HM Treasury, Prime Minister's Office, Alexander and Cameron, 2014; Cabinet Office and Deputy Prime Minister's Office, 2014 and Core Cities, 2017).

On the other hand, the Greater Manchester City Deal was successfully agreed on after the 10 local authorities that cover the Manchester metro area collaborated on creating the GMCA (Cabinet Office and Deputy Prime Minister's Office, 2012b; HM Government, 2012; IPPR, 2014b; The World Bank, 2015; HM Treasury and GMCA, 2016?; Sandford, 2017; Leese, 2017 and Shaw and Tewdwr-Jones, 2017). The deal not only made Greater Manchester the first urban region in the UK outside of London to have a directly-elected mayor, but also allows the urban region's authorities to have more control over transport, economic development, and regeneration functions (The World Bank, 2015; HM Treasury and GMCA, 2016? and Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, 2017). To grant additional powers to Manchester's authorities, the deal: (1) enables the GMCA to expand its Working Well pilot, which helps support disabled individuals find jobs; (2) devolves business support budgets that are being used for initiatives, like a growth accelerator, which will not only safeguard 2,300 jobs, but also create 3,800 new ones; (3) establishes the Greater Manchester Investment Framework, which serves to attract a multitude of private-sector and public-sector funding to increase economic growth; (4) devolves an Apprenticeship Grant for employers to re-design certain aspects of the Further Education (FE) provision within the urban region; (5) allows for the creation of a single leadership for public health across the urban region; (6) devolves an NHS budget of £6 billion for health and social care services to the Greater Manchester Board, which is expected to deliver better services to patients more efficiently; (7) establishes the Greater Manchester Land Commission, which oversees the use of public sector estate across the urban region; (8) devolves a £300 million Housing Investment Fund over a ten-year period to develop 5,000-7,000 homes; (9) devolves and consolidates a transport budget that enables the GMCA to deliver more integrated infrastructure projects; (10) devolves the

responsibility of franchising bus services, integrating smart ticketing across all modes of transports, and exploring the possibility of rail stations across the urban region; (11) provides the directly-elected mayor powers that used to be held by the Greater Fire and Rescue Authority; (12) merges the role of the police and crime commissioner with that of the mayor, which makes the mayor the police and crime commissioner for Greater Manchester; (13) devolves planning powers to the Mayor; (14) transfers the Greater Manchester Fire Service and the Greater Manchester Disposal Authority to the GMCA; (15) allows for the creation of a Joint Venture Company (Greater Manchester Green Development Ltd) with the UK Green Investments to develop a portfolio of investment projects, which will create 34,800 jobs and add £1.4 billion GVA. This is one of many collaboration efforts that the urban region will embark on to reduce emissions by as much as 48% by 2020; (16) enables the GMCA to earn back, based on increases in GVA growth rates that result from infrastructure investments, which will be financed by a £1.2 billion infrastructure fund, a return of up to £30 million per year from the national tax take for 30 years; and (17) make way for the national government to explore the possibility of drastically increasing the percentage of business rates that local authorities retain (HM Government, 2012; Sergeant, 2012; Marlow, 2012; Cabinet Office and Deputy Prime Minister's Office, 2012b ; O'Brien and Pike, 2014; Blond and Morrin, 2015; The World Bank, 2015; HM Treasury and GMCA, 2016?; LGA, 2018 and Sandford, 2018). The deal has, so far, been successful at empowering the urban region to address several social and economic issues (Cabinet Office and Deputy Prime Minister's Office, 2012b and Core Cities, 2017). For instance, according to Core Cities (2017), the deal has helped:

- reduce the number of families with domestic abuse problems by 48%;
- decrease the number of families that reported anti-social behaviour by 60%;
- support 64% of families with mental-health challenges;
- 16% of families with unemployed members who claimed benefits find work; and
- 76% of families with school attendance issues return to good school attendance.

Furthermore, it is expected that the deal will continue to enable the urban region to increasingly deliver effective, targeted services efficiently, which will further improve the well-being of residents (HM Government, 2012; Cabinet Office and Deputy Prime

Minister's Office, 2012b and Core Cities, 2017). Additionally, the deal is predicted to allow the region to create up to 40,000 jobs and 6,000 apprenticeships while continuing to generate a GVA uplift after managing a GVA increase from £48 billion to £56 billion since 2008 (Cabinet Office and Deputy Prime Minister's Office, 2012b; HM Government, 2012 and Leese, 2017).

Given the early stage of most City Deals, it is still too early to determine the exact impact that they will have on the delivery of services (O'Brien and Pike, 2014; Clayton and McGough, 2015; Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, 2016; PwC, 2016a and PwC, 2016b). Regardless, based on their performance thus far, the deals are expected to, albeit unevenly, allow urban regions across the UK to improve the quality of life for their residents by delivering better, place-based services while yielding considerable economic benefits (RSA, 2014; Blond and Morrin, 2015; Clayton and McGough, 2015 and Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, 2016). For example, by 2030, the deals are forecasted to have the potential to enable the UK's 15 largest urban regions to generate an additional £79 billion per year (RSA, 2014). As such, although the City Deals still involve a lot of management by the national government, they seem to represent a good first step towards re-distributing power and enhancing the delivery of public services (O'Brien and Pike, 2014; Blond and Morrin, 2015; Martin, Pike, Tyler and Gardiner, 2015 and O'Brien and Pike, 2018). However, the deals should, as inter-governmental trust and local-authority capabilities grow, be built on to develop more radical devolutionary approaches that would allow urban-region authorities to operate outside the strict, top-down strategies that are designed by the national government (Harrison, 2007; World Bank, 2009; Harrison, 2010; O'Brien and Pike, 2014; Wilcox, Nohrova and Williams, 2014; Martin, Pike, Tyler and Gardiner, 2015; Blond and Morrin, 2015; Emmerich, 2015; Kerslake, 2016 and Shaw and Tewdwr-Jones, 2017).

The main findings of this section are:

- The UK City Deals have been successful at enhancing the delivery of services; and
- As inter-governmental trust and local-authority capabilities grow, the deals should be built on to develop more radical devolutionary approaches.

5- Conclusion

This dissertation contributes to current debates regarding devolution by attempting to achieve a better understanding of how urban autonomy influences economic growth. Moreover, the dissertation observes, through the lens of the UK City Deals, how devolution impacts sub-national governance and decision-making processes before assessing whether the City Deals have succeeded at enhancing the delivery of public services. To do that, the dissertation strives to answer the following questions:

- (1) What are the implications of urban autonomy on economic performance?
- (2) Can devolution boost sub-national governance and improve decision-making processes?
- (3) Have the UK City Deals succeeded at enhancing the delivery of public services?

5.1- Summary and findings

Globalisation, coupled with technological advancements, catalysed the formation, intensification, and expansion of trans-national networks, which connect urban regions, firms, and markets with one another globally (Graafland and Hauptmann, 2001; Taylor, Derudder and Saey, 2006 and Sassen, 2012). This led to the establishment of a global urban hierarchy within which urban regions are continuously competing with one another to change their status, attracting, as a result, global firms, capital, and talent (Mollenkopf, 1993; Hall, 2005; Taylor, Derudder and Saey, 2006; OECD, 2006; Mionel, Mionel and Mihăescu, 2014 and Ács, 2015). By attracting and agglomerating the headquarters of global firms, urban regions not only increase their connectedness, wealth, and influence, but also their productivity, which enables them to progressively drive faster economic growth at the urban and national levels (Taylor, Derudder and Saey, 2006; OECD, 2006; World Bank, 2009; Feine and Manning, 2013; Mionel, Mionel and Mihăescu, 2014; Ács, 2015 and Office for National Statistics, 2018). However, to successfully increase their global competitiveness, it is believed that urban regions should be granted more autonomy to better control the factors that would make them attractive places to invest, live, and work in (Deas and Ward, 2000; OECD, 2006; United Cities and Local Government and World Bank, 2009; RSA City Growth Commission, 2014; Cox, Henderson and Raikes, 2014; The World Bank, 2015;

McFarland and Hoene, 2015; Blond and Morrin, 2015; Whitney, Fenning, Clarence and Skalski, 2016 and Norman, 2018).

After examining the data in order to achieve a better understanding of how urban autonomy impacts economic growth, a complex relationship between increased autonomy and the economic performance of urban regions emerges (Fikri and Zhu, 2015). For instance, although fiscal autonomy generally appears to have a negative influence on labour productivity, wages, job growth, and GDP growth, some urban regions, especially those in OECD, and Middle Eastern and North African countries, seem to benefit from this type of autonomy (Fikri and Zhu, 2015). This is especially true in countries where urban regions are under-funded and in cases where fiscal devolution has been a bottom-up process (Rodriguez-Pose, Tijmstra and Bwire, 2009 and Fikri and Zhu, 2015). On the other hand, administrative autonomy impacts urban regions differently based on their regional geographic location, primacy, and size with primary and large urban regions benefiting most out of this type of autonomy, particularly if they are located in OECD countries (Fikri and Zhu, 2015). As such, a clear link between increased autonomy and economic growth has not yet been drawn (Iimi, 2005; Rodriguez-Pose, Tijmstra and Bwire, 2009 and Fikri and Zhu, 2015). Nonetheless, the findings suggest that granting additional autonomy to competent, capable urban-region authorities could yield great benefits, especially in over-centralised countries, like the UK, where centralisation is causing increased spatial inequality, low productivity levels, and sluggish economic growth (Rodriguez-Pose, Tijmstra and Bwire, 2009; Centre for Cities, 2011; Cox, Henderson and Raikes, 2014; Martin, Pike, Tyler and Gardiner, 2015; Blond and Morrin, 2015; Core Cities, 2015b; Fikri and Zhu, 2015; Whitney, Fenning, Clarence and Skalski, 2016 and Kerslake, 2016 and Kerslake, 2016).

The argument for additional autonomy is not only about economics (Blond and Morrin, 2015). In the UK, devolutionary mechanisms, like the City Deals, have been adopted to enable the combined authorities of urban regions to boost sub-national governance, design targeted policies, integrate strategies, and deliver place-based services more efficiently (O'Brien and Pike, 2015; Pike, MacKinnon, Coombes, Champion, Bradley, Cumbers, Robson and Wymer, 2016; Shaw and Tewdwr-Jones, 2017). Additionally,

the deals are meant to help re-distribute power among different tiers of government, which would then interact through the emerging multi-layer, multi-actor system of governance (Mollenkopf, 1993; O'Brien, Pike and Tomaney, 2004; Wachhaus, 2013; Van den Dool, Hendriks, Gianoli and Schaap, 2015 and Blond and Morrin, 2015). This is ever-more important in a globalised world that is increasingly subjecting urban regions to a growing set of challenges, which require those regions to have higher levels of autonomy to address local and global issues effectively (Brenner, 1999; Lefèvre, 2010; Brenner, 2011; Clayton and McGough, 2015; Coughlan, 2016; Hoolachan, 2017 and Rode, Heeckt, Ahrend, Melchor, Robert, Badstuber, Hoolachan and Kwami, 2017).

A thorough investigation of different reports indicates that the City Deals have, so far, been a good example of how devolution can help boost sub-national governance by encouraging higher levels of collaboration between private-sector and public-sector entities (Brenner, 2011; HM Government, 2012; Storper, 2014; RSA, 2014; HM Treasury, Prime Minister's Office, Alexander and Cameron, 2014; Blond and Morrin, 2015; O'Brien and Pike, 2015 and Core Cities, 2017). Moreover, the deals have been successful at empowering urban regions, like the Greater Manchester, and Glasgow and Clyde Valley urban regions, to design effective policies and deliver better, place-based services efficiently (Cabinet Office and Deputy Prime Minister's Office, 2012b; HM Treasury, Prime Minister's Office, Alexander and Cameron, 2014; Cabinet Office and Deputy Prime Minister's Office, 2014; Martin, Pike, Tyler and Gardiner, 2015; Kerslake, 2016 and Core Cities, 2017). This is not only allowing urban regions to improve the well-being of citizens, but also enjoy substantial economic benefits (HM Government, 2012; Cabinet Office and Deputy Prime Minister's Office, 2012b; HM Treasury, Prime Minister's Office, Alexander and Cameron, 2014; Cabinet Office and Deputy Prime Minister's Office, 2014 and Core Cities, 2017). However, as inter-governmental trust and local-authority capabilities grow, those deals should be built on to develop more radical devolutionary approaches that would allow urban-region authorities to operate without restrictions from the national government (Harrison, 2007; World Bank, 2009; Harrison, 2010; O'Brien and Pike, 2014; Wilcox, Nohrova and Williams, 2014; Martin, Pike, Tyler and Gardiner, 2015; Blond and Morrin, 2015; Emmerich, 2015; Kerslake, 2016 and Shaw and Tewdwr-Jones, 2017). Moreover, to increase good, sub-national governance and further improve the well-being of residents,

future devolution deals should include mechanisms that increase democratic accountability and enable individuals to take part in decision-making processes (Bardhan, 2002; United Cities and Local Government and World Bank, 2009; Larkin, 2010; Blond and Morrin, 2015; PwC, 2016a; PwC, 2016b; Rumbach, 2016; Walport and Wilson 2016; House of Commons Committee of Public Accounts, 2016 and Kerslake, 2016). Additionally, to ensure that devolution comes as a result of an inclusive, bottom-up process, public participation should not only be encouraged after devolution occurs, but also in the negotiations that determine how devolution deals are formed and delivered (House of Commons Committee of Public Accounts, 2016; Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, 2016 and Waite, McGregor and McNulty, 2018). Furthermore, the resultant governance structures should be based on local capacities and conditions while being adaptable to allow different tiers of government to re-shape those structures to reflect the ever-changing nature and challenges of the regions that they are governing (OECD, 2015 and Van den Dool, Hendriks, Gianoli and Schaap, 2015).

5.1- Policy implications

To successfully stimulate faster economic growth; reduce spatial inequality; boost good, sub-national governance; support inclusive decision-making processes; and help deliver better, place-based services efficiently, it is recommended that:

- Supra-national, national, and sub-national authorities should operate and integrate their strategies within adaptable, economically-functional borders, as opposed to political or administrative ones (Wirth, 1937; Ratti, Sobolevsky, Calabrese, Andris, Reades, Martino, Claxton and Strogatz, 2010; Centre for Cities, 2011; Wilcox, Nohrova and Williams, 2014 and Khanna, 2016);

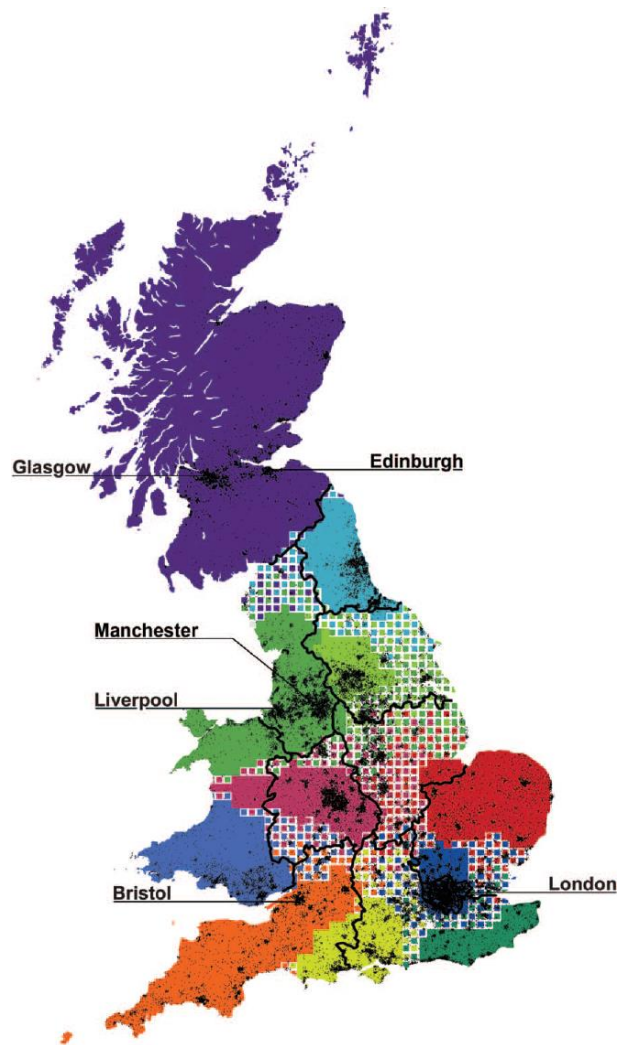


Figure 12: Map overlapping the UK's official Government Office Regions as well as Scotland and Wales (defined by the black boundary lines) with the country's functional regions (in colour). The map illustrates how administrative borders sometimes fail to accurately represent the areas within which people live their lives, which could lead to the design of ineffective strategies and services. Source: (Ratti, Sobolevsky, Calabrese, Andris, Reades, Martino, Claxton and Strogatz, 2010).

- Different tiers of government should embrace the principle of subsidiarity to remove unnecessary layers of government that only increase the gap between citizens and decision makers (TEDx, 2012; Taleb, 2014; Cox, Henderson and Raikes, 2014 and Kerslake, 2016);
- National governments, especially in over-centralised countries, should gradually grant sub-national authorities, particularly the authorities of economically-functional urban regions additional autonomy (RSA City Growth Commission, 2014; Wilcox, Nohrova and Williams, 2014; Swanson, 2016; Khanna, 2016; Kerslake, 2016 and Rode, Heeckt, Ahrend, Melchor, Robert, Badstuber, Hoolachan and Kwami, 2017);

- As national governments devolve power, they should endeavour to increase the capabilities and capacity of sub-national authorities and their residents to prepare them for their new powers and responsibilities (Kettl, 2002; Blond and Morrin, 2015; Whitney, Fenning, Clarence and Skalski, 2016; House of Commons Committee of Public Accounts, 2016 and Rode, Heeckt, Ahrend, Melchor, Robert, Badstuber, Hoolachan and Kwami, 2017);
- Given that the right amount and type of autonomy as well as speed of devolution varied from place to place based on local capabilities, capacities, and ambitions, devolutionary deals should be the outcomes of inclusive, bottom-up processes, as opposed to one-size-fits-all initiatives (Cox, Henderson and Raikes, 2014; OECD, 2015; Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, 2016 and Kerslake, 2016);
- In the UK, the national government should build on the experience of the City Deals to develop more radical mechanisms for devolution (Harrison, 2007; World Bank, 2009; Harrison, 2010; Wilcox, Nohrova and Williams, 2014 and O'Brien and Pike, 2014);
- The national government should, as it develops infrastructure projects that connect rural areas to nearby urban centres and urban centres to the global economy, incentivise emerging urban regions to include neighbouring rural areas (Hall, 2005; Taylor, Derudder and Saey, 2006; Khanna, 2016; Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, 2016 and Shaw and Tewdwr-Jones, 2017);
- The national government should consider devolving power to economically-self-sufficient rural regions (Van den Dool, Hendriks, Gianoli and Schaap, 2015 and Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, 2016);
- After devolving power to urban-region authorities, national governments should encourage those authorities to collaborate with one another to reduce inter-urban competition, and the over-fragmentation of policies and services (United Cities and Local Government and Work Bank, 2009; Pike and Tomaney, 2009; RSA City Growth Commission, 2014; Kerslake, 2016; House of Commons Committee of Public Accounts, 2016; Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, 2016 and Rode, Heeckt, Ahrend, Melchor, Robert, Badstuber, Hoolachan and Kwami, 2017);

- As power is devolved to sub-national authorities, the national government should require those authorities to develop mechanisms that increase democratic accountability and public participation in decision-making processes (UNDP, 2002; Bardhan, 2002; Kettl, 2002; Purcell, 2006; Northern Correspondent, 2014; Blond and Morrin, 2015; Becker, Beveridge and Naumann, 2015; Kerslake, 2016 and Walport and Wilson 2016); and
- Local authorities should, after collaborating on forming capable, economically-functional regions, be more ambitious when negotiating the national government for devolved powers (Wilcox, Nohrova and Williams, 2014; Emmerich, 2015; Blond and Morrin, 2015 and Kerslake, 2016).

5.3- Recommendations for further study

- Develop a place-based understanding regarding which aspects of a place should be considered when trying to define economically-functional regions at the supra-national, national, and sub-national levels.
- Undertake a location-specific study to determine the responsibilities that supra-national, national, and sub-national tiers of government can deliver most effectively.
- Identify what powers would enable different tiers of government to best deliver their responsibilities.
- Attempt to better understand the relationship between the capabilities and capacity of urban-region authorities, and their ability to benefit from increased autonomy.
- Assess which measures would be most successful at increasing the capabilities and capacity of urban-region authorities.
- Try to identify how sub-national tiers of government can increase democratic accountability and public participation in decision making, especially at the urban-region level.

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