

Article

Rural Cohesion: Collective Efficacy and Leadership in the Territorial Governance of Inclusion

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Abstract

This article is a comparative study of the contextual conditions for collective efficacy and territorial governance of social cohesion in two different rural localities: West Dorset in England and Lemvig in Denmark. The objective is to understand the conditions for and relations between neo-endogenous development and rural social cohesion in two different national contexts. Common to both cases are problems of demographic change, particularly loss of young people, depopulation, economic challenges and their peripheral location vis-à-vis the rest of the country. However, in West Dorset, community identity is fragmented compared to Lemvig, and this has consequences for how well local ‘collective efficacy’ (Sampson, 2012) transfers to more strategic levels of local development. These include not only variations in welfare settings and governance, but also variations in settlement structure and place identity (Jørgensen, Knudsen, Fallov, & Skov, 2016), collective efficacy, and the role of local leadership (Beer & Clower, 2014), which structure the conditions for rural development. While Lemvig is characterized by close interlocking relations between local government, business and civil society, this is less the case in England where centralization of powers in tandem with a dramatic restructuring of service delivery forms (e.g., contracting out, privatisation) have had damaging effects on these types of interlocking relations. Comparing these cases through the lens of the combined concepts of collective efficacy and place-based leadership contribute to the understanding of rural development as not only relations between intra- and extra-local connections but also formal and informal forms of collective action and leadership.

Keywords

collective efficacy; Denmark; England; local leadership; rural cohesion; territorial cohesion; territorial governance

Issue

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1. Introduction

In this article we argue that the context and cultures for collective action and local leadership sets limitations on the mobilization of territorial capital (Camagni, 2017; Servillo, Atkinson, & Hamdouch, 2017; Servillo, Atkinson, & Russo, 2012) and what local communities can achieve vis-à-vis their interaction with local gov-

ernment, thus generating different learning spaces for addressing social cohesion and inclusion. Using a case study approach of two rural localities, West Dorset in England and Lemvig in Denmark, we examine how place identity reflects both settlement structures and relations to territorial governance at different spatial levels. Understanding place identity as a dimension of ‘collective efficacy’ (Sampson, 2011) we investigate the role col-

lective efficacy has for social and territorial cohesion in rural areas. Sampson has coined the concept Collective efficacy as a link between mutual trust, shared expectations among residents and willingness to intervene and interact (Sampson & Morenoff, 1997). This means actually lived social relations have an impact on neighbourhood and places (Sampson, 2011). Collective efficacy is a composite measure of activity patterns/routines, organizational infrastructure, social networks, and segregation/resource stratification. In contrast to endogenous notions of local development, which tended to emphasise the dominant role of external actors and powerful local actors and often excluded other local participants, neo-endogenous development emphasises participatory bottom-up development (Ray, 2006). Thus at local level a wider range of actors are involved in identifying and mobilizing local resources. This does not mean excluding the input of extra-local resources, but seeks to reduce dependence on extra-local actors in the form of economic structures and political and administrative networks at different scales. In this article we argue that it is important to understand the specific local dynamics of what communities can achieve vis-à-vis their interaction with local leadership and government as this interaction generates possibilities for addressing issues related to economic, social and territorial cohesion within the framework of neo-endogenous development (Ray, 2006). We show through the two case studies in West Dorset and Lemvig how the interaction between rural cohesion and local leadership vary in the two contexts generating varied conditions for neo-endogenous development.

Our two cases are different in size and population, West Dorset is much bigger than Lemvig. However, despite their differences they share a common set of challenges regarding settlement and economic structures. Thus, the comparative case study in this article illustrates the importance of looking at the character of local social infrastructures and how they are connected to or conditioned by non-local government structures to understand questions of economic growth and quality of life or cohesion (Bosworth et al., 2016).

We begin with a review of existing literature which frames our case studies, outlining the discussion on how to understand the rural, the importance of networks and social capital in neo-endogenous development, collective efficacy and leadership. Secondly, we describe national factors framing rural development in Denmark and England. In section three we outline our methodology before presenting the two cases. This is followed by two sections comparing the cases focusing on collective efficacy and identity, and forms of local leadership.

2. Rural Neo-Endogenous Development, Collective Efficacy and Place-Based Leadership

One of the first issues we are confronted with is what do we mean by rural. Some writers have questioned the relevance of rural as a meaningful category in modern

advanced industrial nations (e.g., Pahl, 1968). However, as has become increasingly clear, there are distinct patterns of social and economic relationships that distinguish urban from rural areas, albeit that these categories need to be treated with care as they entail within them a plurality of different relationships between and within the categories of urban and rural. “The rural is—just as the urban—not homogeneous and universal, it is highly socially and culturally differentiated” (Pahl, 1968). Moreover, the very definition of place entails a series of difficult choices (cf. Servillo et al., 2017). However, broadly speaking in this article we agree with the approach adopted by Copus and de Lima (2015, p. 3) who argue: “The concept of rural areas...is inherently socio-economic and has more to do with settlement patterns, ways of life and culture, than with land use, landscape, environment or particular economic activities” (Copus & de Lima, 2015).

As Ray (2006) has argued, social capital is at the centre of neo-endogenous development, but also calls for critical research into how and in what ways social capital is a driver of territorial development. This is also supported by other studies emphasising variations in bonding and bridging capital and locally anchored place identity (Rivera, Knickel, Díaz-Puente, & Afonso, 2019; Winther & Svendsen, 2012). Similarly, Bosworth et al. (2016) place networks and their social capital at the heart of rural neo-endogenous development. However, most rural areas are not only defined by their territorial characteristics and culture, but by their extra-local contexts, their connections to the vertical politico-administrative planes (Ray, 2006).

The interaction between local culture, place attachment and character of local networks is similarly important to Sampson’s concept of collective efficacy (Sampson, 2011). For Sampson, the root of the collective efficacy of an area is “the intersection of practices and social meanings with a spatial context” (Sampson, 2011, p. 230). This aspect of face-to-face interaction is inherently better understood in small units where people recognise others than in large, anonymous units. Networks have to be activated in order to be meaningful and in this sense, collective efficacy can be defined as a link between mutual trust, shared expectations among residents and willingness to intervene and interact (Sampson & Morenoff, 1997).

Organisational density and levels of participation in relation to these organisations are crucial, as organisational density is not an equivalent to coordinated action for local interests (Sampson, 2011). Sampson and Morenoff (1997) have constructed a measure of collective efficacy combining informant ratings of the capacity for informal social control with social cohesion. This means that network-density, attachment to place, civic participation, disorder, organisational density, identity and capacity for collective action are variable and analytically separable from structural variables and possible consequences. In this way, the concept of collective efficacy is an answer to the most dominating critique of

social capital (Woolcock, 1998) as it manages to avoid both being a matter of morality and being per se something good and desirable. The composite (and complex) measure is composed of different dimensions and has to be investigated locally and in relation to a problem or a variable before it can be defined as desirable or not.

The conceptual framework of this article is focused on understanding place-based leadership as a combination of local leadership and collective efficacy. Local leadership has been addressed in different ways. Grillitsch and Sotarauta (2020) distinguish between innovative entrepreneurship, institutional entrepreneurship and place-based leadership as the main drivers of local and regional changes, highlighting that these dimensions might be of relevance in understanding why some regions diverge from what could be expected. Thus, they call for more research on agency, their embeddedness in multi-scalar networks and institutional contexts, which creates regional growth-paths (Grillitsch & Sotarauta, 2020). Potluka, Kalman, Musiałkowska, and Idczak (2017) point out that “successful local leadership must share power, have visions and good communication skills and finally have political support including funding and strategic networks” (Potluka et al., 2017, p. 298). Specifically, the authors point to the need for more research on the long-term impact that local governance mechanisms, and involvement of civil society and non-profit leaders have on economic development and governmental efficiency (Potluka et al., 2017). Beer et al. (2019) identify the features of place leadership as a system that directs but does not determine outcomes. This system guides actors and their behaviour and embraces deeply embedded cultural values, including attitudes to social inclusion, unions, the willingness to provide financial incentives to private enterprises and the perception of political risk (Beer et al., 2019). Leadership is seen as a matter of relationships and social interaction in the places that people actually live, work and play. Or as Collinge and Gibney (2010) argue building on Agnew (2005), the degree to which local leadership is able to draw on the different dimensions of place as locality, locale and sense of place are crucial dimensions of area development.

A consistent line in these contributions is an approach to leadership of rural development that emphasise it as a collective endeavour and social interaction, local networks, local cultures as soft factors that should be taken into account in combination with structural and institutional factors. Thus, we argue that the soft factors are combined in the concept of collective efficacy (Sampson, 2011), as this concept highlights both the role of place identity, collective organisations, the propensity for collective action and relations to vertical scales.

2.1. National Contexts for Rural Cohesion in Denmark and England

It is important to consider wider national factors as they place important structural limitations on the relative

autonomy of places. Both localities have experienced the impacts of varieties of neoliberal planning, while in the UK there has been a sustained period of austerity resulting in a significant reduction in resources from central government. Moreover, in Denmark there is a high level of local welfare services whereas the picture is very different in the English case. Furthermore, Denmark is characterized by close interlocking relations between local government, business and civil society, this is less so in England where centralization of powers in tandem with a dramatic restructuring of service delivery forms (e.g., contracting out, privatisation) have had damaging effects on these types of interlocking relations.

2.1.1. National Context for Rural Cohesion in Denmark

The 2007 municipal reform (called the Structural Reform) reduced the number of Danish municipalities, all counties were abolished and the territorial administration went from a three-tier to a two-tier system between state and municipalities. The majority of tasks of territorial governance were transferred to the new and bigger municipalities (Andersen, Maloutas, Raco, & Tasan-Kok, 2008; Olesen, 2012). Five new regions were established to administer a number of remaining regional tasks (mainly health). With the 2015 revision of the Danish Planning Act there was an increased focus on planning for growth (Olesen & Carter, 2018). Regional growth forums were introduced as soft planning spaces (Olesen & Carter, 2018) later turning into business houses with the latest devolvement of growth planning to inter-municipal collaboration. This means that the Ministry of Business oversees rural development, while local authorities retain their autonomy in the implementation of rural development programmes. The existing framework of collaborative and participatory approaches to physical planning was retained. All physical plans are developed through a hearing process that gives the public the possibility to influence local planning. This means that a collaborative and participatory approach to territorial development is a natural framework for territorial governance in Denmark. Municipalities have within nationally-decided frames relative autonomy in setting tax rates and prioritizing between welfare services locally, and a complex inter-municipal reimbursement system ensures good quality welfare services even in more remote areas of the country, such as Lemvig. The consequence of this is that Lemvig, like other Danish municipalities, has a relatively high level of autonomy when it comes to developing territorial development strategies. Lemvig municipality is steeped in a form of national path dependency that favours balanced growth and a welfarist emphasis on equity and social inclusion.

The overall goal of the national rural development programme is to support balanced and smart growth in both economic and employment terms in rural areas. However, these more economic goals are explicitly intertwined with ambitions to generate spatial justice

through more balanced development and fair access to services—what they term framing conditions for living in the rural areas (Miljø-og Fødevarer ministeriet, Agency, 2014). The programme draws on EU rural development funds which, together with national funds, aims to improve territorial cohesion between urban and rural areas by making rural areas more attractive to live in and by supporting the development of culture and leisure services. The programme is organized as pools of funds, which stakeholders and local communities have to organize to apply to. Formally organized in the ‘local action groups,’ which covers several municipalities, Lemvig is part of the Lemvig Ringkøbing Skjern local action groups.

2.1.2. National Context for Rural Development UK

Local governance in England is divided between a unitary system (local government at a single level) and a ‘two-tier’ system of counties (upper tier) and districts (lower tier) with each tier responsible for different services. This split is reflected in the budgets and resources managed and controlled at these different spatial levels. Since reorganisation in 2019, when the Dorset County Council was abolished, West Dorset is part of Dorset Council which combines the powers of upper and lower tier authorities. Our case study falls within recent rounds of neoliberalism which is characterized by “a variety of market supportive state forms and modes of governance” (Allmendinger & Haughton, 2013, p. 11). At sub-national level, since 1979, these developments have significantly restructured and reduced the role of local government, entailing changes in the way services are delivered (e.g., through contracting out, developing delivery partnerships with a range of private, community and voluntary sector organisations). Moreover, post-2010 and under an austerity regime, there has been a significant reduction in local authority autonomy and budgets, leaving community/voluntary sector organisations to attempt to pick up the slack (see, for overviews, Gray & Barford, 2018; Laffin, 2016; McGimpsey, 2017).

In England, rural policy falls under the control of Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs and its Rural Development Programme for England provides funds for projects to improve agriculture, the environment and rural life. However, the major emphasis has been on agriculture with some projects on reviving/supporting rural market towns. Since 2011, sub-regional partnership arrangements existed with the establishment of Local Economic Partnerships (LEPs). These bodies were intended to be business led and reflect the functional economic geographies of their localities. Dorset has the Dorset Local Enterprise Partnership although its territorial scope incorporates more than one functional economic area. A House of Lords (2019) report argued for a more place-based rural strategy noting that successive governments lacked a coherent strategy on rural areas (see, also, Morris, 2017; Shucksmith, 2019). This is a new turn as the concept of

territorial cohesion has been more or less absent from UK policy discourse.

3. Methodological Considerations

The research for this article originates from an ongoing EU project COHSMO investigating the relationship between territorial cohesion, urbanization and inequality in seven countries. In each country case studies were carried out in a rural, suburban and urban area. The challenge of conducting cross-national comparison is that the definition of rural differs between countries, and that the administrative units vary greatly. Thus, in England, the local government districts are vastly greater than in Denmark, for example, and there is no regional government. However, the choice of case areas was made with emphasis on the following criteria:

- Low population density (below median for the considered region);
- Tendency for out-migration (perhaps depopulating character);
- Role of agriculture (measured by employment structure and land use) higher than median in the considered region.

Both case studies are representative of rural localities within their own national contexts. Our comparison is based on the differences and similarities in ‘conditions,’ ‘processes’ and ‘outputs’ that characterize those two localities despite their differences in size and population, with a particular focus on the interaction between place identity, culture for participation, collective efficacy and structures of local leadership.

In each area, we began our research with a desk based review of a range of general documents related to demographic and settlement structure, problems and challenges facing each area, key strategic policy documents and any associated documents. Having done this, we moved to the stage of carrying out interviews with key individuals from a range of public, private and community and voluntary organisations. We employed a snowballing technique to generate additional interviews. A total of 20 interviews were carried out in West Dorset. The sample included six community/voluntary actors, eight public sector actors and 6 business actors, each of whom held a senior position within their organisation (e.g., senior officer, project manager). The Danish case study of Lemvig included a total of 24 interviews. The sample included five business actors, five active citizens and 14 governance actors (spanning policy makers, civil servants and other key governance actors).

The interviews were semi-structured following the same guidelines in all seven countries based around common topics. These topics included exploring the role of territorial capital, how local actors would characterize life chances and possible segregation, the coordination and involvement of both local communities and busi-

ness actors in territorial governance, the adaptive competence of local government to changing conditions, and relations to other scales.

4. Rural Case Studies: Lemvig and West Dorset

Our research focuses on two rural case study areas, Lemvig municipality in Denmark and West Dorset in England, and explores the contextual conditions structuring the development of rural cohesion in these localities. Table 1 summarises the key characteristics of these two rural localities in relation to population, demographic, economic and political structure, territorial governance and territorial strengths and weaknesses.

4.1. Lemvig, Denmark

Lemvig is a rural area in the West Coast of Jutland with the town of Lemvig, the only town in the municipality with more than 2,500 inhabitants, being located at

the entry to the fjord named Limfjorden (see Figure 1). Lemvig is surrounded by the North Sea and Limfjorden. By land, Lemvig is peripherally located in terms of connectivity to major roads and airports.

Lemvig is a town struggling with a paradoxical problem of being a very well run municipality with a strong local economy, sufficient jobs and substantial services, on the one hand, and on the other experiencing a decline in population, with the total population expected to decrease by 9% in the next ten years. Young people move from Lemvig to larger cities of Denmark for further education and tend not to return to Lemvig after completing their studies. Environmental capital is high in Lemvig—farm land is of high quality; fish stocks are good; and the wind atlas of Lemvig shows the highest wind speed in the country, which is ideal for wind turbines. Lemvig is characterized by political stability, policy integration and economic cautiousness, and easy engagement of local community and businesses in development strategies. The town also works closely with other municipalities in

Table 1. Key characteristics of Lemvig and West Dorset.

Name	Lemvig (Municipality), Denmark	West Dorset (District Council), UK
Population	20,000 inhabitants	101,382 inhabitants
Density	39.30/km ²	94/km ²
Size	508.80km ²	1083.9 km ²
Geography	Peripheral rural area; low degree of urbanization (30% residents live in rural areas)	Peripheral rural area; low degree of urbanization (31% residents in isolated rural communities); dispersed settlement structure of small towns and villages
Demography	Declining and aging population (25.54% over 65)	Declining and aging population (29.8% over 65)
Economic structure	Good local economy with very high employment and productivity scores; predominance of jobs in the primary sector	Declining economy; large public sector workforce with many private sector SMEs; low GVA and productivity; affordability gap
Local electoral system	Proportional electoral system	Majoritarian electoral system for the council district (not individual towns)
Territorial assets	High levels of environmental capital—high quality farm land and coastal resources with potential for further tourism development; culture of entrepreneurialism	High levels of environmental capital—large areas of protected landscape, outstanding coastal area (Jurassic Coast) and cultural heritage with potential for further tourism development
Territorial weaknesses	Depopulation—loss of young people and labour shortage issues	Very fragmented spatial structure—issues of connectivity and accessibility
Territorial Governance	Strong territorial governance; high level of service and infrastructure; strong tradition of community involvement and partnership working	Weak and fragmented territorial governance; services shared between councils and a range of partnerships; lack of political leadership

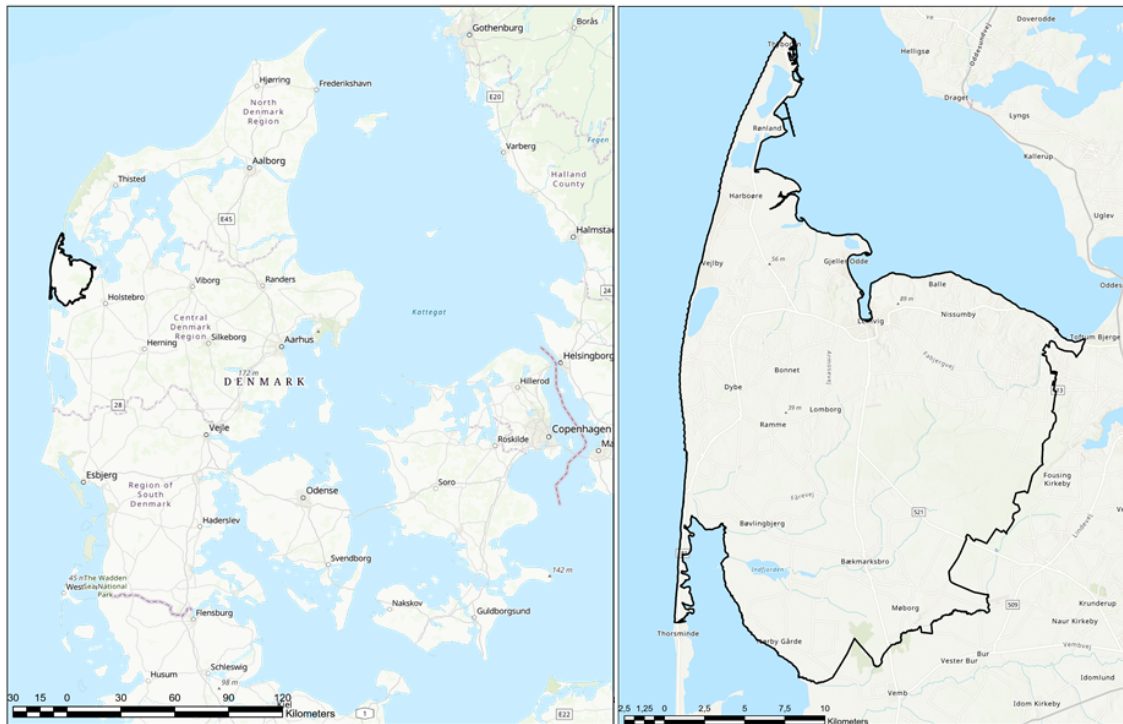


Figure 1. Location of the Municipality of Lemvig, Denmark. Source: The Danish Agency for Data Supply and Efficiency (2020).

Western Jutland as there is an awareness that everyone gains from cooperation rather than competition. This is formalised in the Business Region MidtVest, and in the municipal coordination council, both with advisory competencies rather than decision making power.

4.2. West Dorset

West Dorset is a diverse rural area largely made up of small towns, villages and hamlets. The largest town is Dorchester with a population of almost 20,000 while the remaining towns have populations under 10,000. Overall, the degree of urbanization in West Dorset is low with a highly dispersed settlement structure and a low population density.

As noted in Table 1 in demographic terms West Dorset has an aging population and is also losing qualified young people (a brain drain), it is considered to be a retirement area. In economic terms, West Dorset is characterized by a predominance of public sector jobs and a large proportion of SME's, and although 40% of employed residents in the district are classified as high skill occupations there is a reported shortage of labour with relevant skills or training. Furthermore, productivity and wage levels are lower than the national average.

West Dorset is rich in environmental capital related to its rural and cultural heritage. However, West Dorset faces problems as a result of a declining economy with low levels of pay, connectivity and service accessibility, and a very fragmented spatial structure, which translates into inequalities across the area.

A significant weakness in the area is the lack of political leadership which has inhibited the emergence of effective forms of territorial governance. This is partly a result of a lack of capacity within local government. But it also reflects divisions within the business sector due to its atomized structure that make it difficult for it to collectively represent its interests, the locally organised focus of much of the community and voluntary sector that means they cannot take a strategic view of how they fit into the wider needs of the area, combined with a fragmented settlement structure and the prevalence of local identities. Together, these factors have worked to hinder the strategic development of the area in a way that addresses its collective problems. This has been compounded by the fact that coordination and collaboration within local government and with other stakeholders was/is often limited, intermittent and vertical and horizontal partnerships and joint working is relatively weak.

5. Collective Efficacy, Identity and Leadership in Lemvig and West Dorset

A central element in linkages among groups in rural locations is that they cut across organisations, actor types and differences in power, providing opportunities for crosscutting interaction and coordination. The way this crosscutting interaction takes place in the specific, rural locations are related to the local degree of collective efficacy, local identity and local strategies for addressing issues and problems.



Figure 2. Location of West Dorset, United Kingdom. Source: The Danish Agency for Data Supply and Efficiency (2020).

5.1. Collective Efficacy and Identity

Lemvig ranks among the municipalities with the highest share of locally active residents in Denmark (Jakobsen, Sørensen, & Johansen, 2014). Our research identified a high degree of interlocking and interdependent relations between entrepreneurs, business stakeholders, community stakeholders, NGO’s and local public authorities. There is a mentality of taking care of problems in these varied and local webs of social relations—something that is described as built on “the mentality of being self-employed farmers or fishermen located in a remote part of the country where you are not used to getting help” (interview with community actor, 24 August 2018). Another factor is the long history of associational culture. The area is the birthplace of the co-op movement in Denmark, which has not only resulted in benefits for the farmers and many educational facilities along the West Coast but has also been a key condition for the Danish wind industry more recently. This historical identity of the area is presented as a reason for the taking responsibility mentality and for participating in local affairs. This explanation is linked to a certain culture of necessity related to the geographical remoteness of the municipality: They have to manage things themselves as no one will come and help because the municipality is too small and too remote. Many narratives in the interviews centred on a capability to fend for oneself and the local community, and related this to historical path dependencies conditioned by the material surroundings and dependence on natural conditions, which is exacerbated by recent climate challenges. This becomes an incorporated part of habitus in the areas along the West Coast, and result in

an attitude of “if we want to get something done then we have to do it ourselves”:

There is sort of a self-enforcing power, which I think is interesting, because where there is will, there is ability. There has to be an institutional foundation, but at the same time this institutional foundation should not be driven, if there are passionate and engaged actors in it. I think this area has succeeded in gathering all the public and private actors in different types of network groups, which there are many of in this area, and where there is a surprisingly good turnout. We are not talking about the exclusive network groups you might see in other locations. (Interview with local business actor, 27 September 2018)

There is a danger these types of networks result either in exclusive old-boys clubs or clientelism. However, the interview material counters both such tendencies. The mind-set of self-reliance and the widespread preferences for an informal and open character of local social life is explained as an outcome of several local circumstances. One explanation is the culture of necessity outlined above. Another is the lack of pronounced social divisions or class differences with only a few very rich people. Everyone seems interested in investing in the local area with rich citizens being no exception. A third explanation is the informal and proactive way the local authority acts towards difficult issues. Authorities reach out to other sectors and central actors, thus contributing to the maintenance of local networks. In Lemvig, there is a strong preference for an informal, open and dynamic character of local networks. The informal way of networking and

the limited size of the population is of vital importance for the development of a wide range of interlocking relations between business, community and public authority actors.

The short distances between central actors and different sectors as well as the informal character of collaboration give local networks a sense of familiarity. Everyone knows everyone, and it is a core value to act for the common good of the locality. The local mind-set is marked by shared expectations and mutual trust, even between individuals that are of different political orientations:

There are not that many farmers left in the municipality but the old culture of the co-operative movement, non-profit organisations and the whole associational life still plays a role—it is like a generation or just half a generation closer in the memory than in many other places. It also has to do with the low residential density in the sense that you cannot hide or skive. It is a transparent milieu and it is easy to distinguish between the ones that who are doing the hard work and the ones that are not. (Interview with local head of school, 26 September 2018)

A strong tradition for participation in local associations and in non-profit organisations persists and many local attractions and cultural institutions are mainly run by volunteers. For example, the volunteer society around Bovbjerg Lighthouse (with 150 volunteers), which is a thriving cultural centre and beacon for the area. Here the active resident heading Bovbjerg Lighthouse explains how the success depends not only on the amount of volunteers, but that intermediaries (Bosworth et al., 2016) with connections to local decisions makers were able to lobby national and local authorities so that buying and preserving the old lighthouse building became a possibility:

There are three factors involved in its success from my perspective. That it was locally engaged residents who saw the potential and put things in motion, that there are social relations running all the way through the municipality and which you can mobilize and activate, and the interplay between political authorities, municipality, state, and region. Those three factors: entrepreneurs, the social capital and the interplay with the authorities, were crucial for its success. (Interview active resident, 23 August 2018)

In this way it was not only the entrepreneurial ideas of local residents, but their interlocking networks to decision makers who provided the legal and financial backup that was crucial for its success. Place narratives and place identities become prominent features in explaining the high level of collective efficacy. Moreover, when the narratives of engagement become the dominant cultural narratives of place, people also align themselves with these narratives. Thus the ability to mobilize this

form of meaning-making and entrepreneurial peasant culture and broadening this into something that is an identity of the Lemvig community (Kumpulainen & Soini, 2019) is central to why Lemvig has managed to prosper despite depopulation and difficulties in attracting businesses; something they have in common with other coastal regions with the same natural conditions.

While there are large numbers of community organisations and stakeholders in West Dorset, their focus is very local and the lack of a collective West Dorset identity makes it difficult to identify common interests around which more over-arching forms of collective mobilisation can be organised. Thus, the overall levels of collective efficacy are relatively low and this has impacts on the life chances of the more disadvantaged sectors of the area's population and creates inequalities in terms of service access for the more disadvantaged groups in the area. These have been accentuated by the impacts of long-term austerity policies that have seen a dramatic reduction in the budgets of local service providers and a focus by local authorities on statutory service provision. These reductions in support for local government has negatively impacted on collective efficacy, not only in terms of local government's own capacity, but also through reductions in support to community organisations making it difficult for this sector to work with both local government and other community organisations.

There are a few positive examples of local collective action in some towns (e.g., Bridport) where mobilisation has taken place around local forms of development and the preparation of Neighbourhood Plans. These local attempts at developing place-based strategies have influenced local government policy resulting in improved partnership working in some towns. However, these initiatives have often been led by resourceful and well connected individuals who might be described as social entrepreneurs (e.g., Bridport) with some Town Council support, but they are the exception rather than the rule.

In Bridport's case I'd put it down to one particular character who was involved in a number of different groups and was very, very passionate and very driven and, actually, I see his footprint in, not only Bridport, but in a number of other initiatives that happen in the area. (Interview with Local government economic regeneration officer, 9 September 2018)

Generally speaking, the community sector finds it difficult to agree on common issues/problems, develop collective responses to them that transcend particular localities and collectively represent their interests to local government, thus undermining collective efficacy.

Regarding identity, a fragmented settlement structure and the prevalence of local identities have translated into a lack of cohesiveness and collective identity in West Dorset. There are a multitude of community organisations but these tend to be based on towns, villages and hamlets with an overwhelming focus on the issues and

problems of the locality: “If...I had to really characterise Dorset, you’ve got enormously independent towns with a great sense of self-identity, but not necessarily pulling in the same direction” (interview with community leader, 9 September 2018).

What this implies is that despite the high levels of institutional capital in small places there is a rather inward looking climate that mitigates against wider cooperation and joint working between smaller places as part of the territorial governance of this largely rural area.

The above descriptions of the degree of collective efficacy can be summarized in the table below. Because collective efficacy is a composite measure, West Dorset is characterized as having a low level of collective efficacy. This is because the high number of active organizations is fragmented leading to a lack of collective vision and collective connections to local and regional governance. Reversely, Lemvig is characterized by a high level of collective efficacy as the interlocking relations facilitate collective action for local development. Different compositions of the elements of collective efficacy set different contexts for how forms of local leadership can mobilize territorial capital in order to improve territorial cohesion.

5.2. Forms of Local Leadership

Mobilizing local leadership is, as Beer and Clower (2014) note, a matter of focusing on leadership rather than on leaders. Further, this is connected closely to collaboration, power sharing and trust in the formation of horizontally based leadership coalitions (Beer & Clower, 2014). Nations marked by strong centralized systems of government are more likely to experience local leadership deficits (Beer & Clower, 2014). The latter is very relevant in the case of West Dorset. The centralized system of government focuses on specified outputs and outcomes at the expense of a strategic approach to the challenges and opportunities confronting West Dorset. Places where power is centralized are less likely to accom-

modate the emergence of local leaders and more likely to follow modes of government that hinder local initiatives (Beer & Clower, 2014). This is critical in relation to West Dorset being subject to the UK New Public Management mode of government preoccupied with rules and regulations because it does not function well in the rapid changing, information rich, knowledge intensive society and economy (Stimson, Stough, & Salazar, 2009)

There is a pragmatic approach to strategic governance in Lemvig focusing on doing things and solving problems rather than producing a lot of policy strategies. Overall, the strategy is related to the refusal to be peripheral. Lemvig wants to use its location and size proactively emphasising the advantages of being small and agile. The municipal council of Lemvig is highly engaged in territorial development of the municipality. For example, the municipality has been the catalyst for generating relations between local businesses and universities in bigger cities. They have invited people from higher education as pathfinders in order to generate common knowledge of the university systems. According to our interview with the local government chief executive, the aim is to attract employees with higher education to the area and to show young local people that there are jobs to return to. Moreover, the municipality has a proactive planning policy when it comes to the attraction of new businesses and securing high quality services for the villages they believe will continue to thrive. Another example is in relation to the climate industry and sustainability. Here, the visionary ideas of the former mayor together with a group of entrepreneurs creating one of the first biogas plants and support from the wind power entrepreneurs has meant that the municipality can brand itself as an important area for the industry and development related to climate change. According to our interview with a local business actor, the proactive stance on these issues has resulted in the municipality being part of the regional EU funded Coast2Coast project and has secured the location of a Klimatorium, a centre for research and development of climate issues, at the Harbour in Lemvig.

Table 2. Outlining characteristics of collective efficacy.

	Lemvig	West Dorset
Place identity	Strong collective	Locally strong but focussed on particular places—thus overall fragmented and particularised
Activity patterns	High and pragmatic, goal oriented	Highly localized activity based on particular places
Organizational infrastructure	Densely organized but informal	Highly localized and inward looking
% Social networks	Social networks are interlocked	High number of organizations with local focus
Segregation	Limited segregation	Limited segregation with hidden micro-pockets of isolated deprivation
Collective efficacy	High	Low

Based on the studies in Lemvig on the importance of territorial ties and heterogeneous networks, Jørgensen, Fallov and Nielsen (in press) have termed this certain type of local governance that is interwoven with local business life and local civil society in handling territorial challenges as governance efficacy. The interactions between the locally specific culture for participation (collective efficacy), the facilitation of networks and the pragmatic governance attitude are the main ingredients. The term governance efficacy is in this way a concept that focus on the ability of local government to instrumentalize collective efficacy (Sampson, 2011) towards territorial development. This governance efficacy enables the mobilization of territorial capital in the most effective way through changing local networks of central actors within business, civil society and local government. The policy strategy narrative relayed in our interviews with local government officials and business actors is that the municipality can utilize the high degree of efficacy displayed by local public servants and infrastructural investment in key welfare services as a means to maintain a high level of local services, which can then attract new families to the area. Nevertheless, the structural pull of metropole centres and the lack of jobs locally for women still counteract this proactive strategy.

West Dorset lacks bodies that transcend local boundaries. This could facilitate the creation of collective organisations bringing together a range of stakeholders and forming the basis for the creation of mechanisms to support territorial governance. The Dorset LEP seeks to work with employers, private providers, Further Education Colleges and schools, in relation to the organisation of Vocational Training and Labour Market policies and has sought to address these policy fields in its Local Industrial Strategy (LIS; Dorset Local Enterprise Partnership, 2018). A key aim being to improve the opportunities for investment in broad-based and targeted regeneration activity in the southern and western part of the county, to protect local strengths, generate jobs and growth and help to reduce economic deprivation. The plan was organised around four key themes—competitive Dorset, talented Dorset, connected Dorset and responsive Dorset—and it seek to integrate Vocational Training, Labour Market policies and regeneration into the overall strategy.

The LIS builds on the national government's Industrial Strategy document (H.M. Government, 2017), and attempts to identify key industrial sectors to support in order to facilitate the growth in productivity and to enhance the area's competitiveness. However, the LIS has been criticized for the lack of a clear place-based approach to address the diversity of Dorset and for being weak on implementation, making it difficult to identify the particular policy bundles that would be developed and deployed to mobilise the forms of territorial capital present and address perceived weaknesses. Other criticisms included the restricted process of engagement and consultation with stakeholders and the lack of any notions of inclusive growth and thus of social

inclusion/cohesion in the strategy document: "It's not joined up and in my humble opinion the LEP is actually the grit in the oyster here because the LEP almost works against all the initiatives that people are trying to get together" (interview with business leader, 13 December 2018). More generally, our interviews revealed a general lack of confidence in the effectiveness of the LEP and both its ability and capacity to provide strategic leadership and action.

6. Conclusion

Lemvig and West Dorset are areas struggling with demographic decline and particularly the loss of young people, due to their remote locations and lack of connectivity. At the same time, they are both places with a potential to develop the tourist industry due to their environmental capital. What the comparison of Lemvig and West Dorset have shown is that the rural varies socially, economically and in terms of government, leadership and territorial cohesion. Variations in rural areas foster different conditions for stimulating both growth and territorial cohesion. Based on the two case studies we argue that the relationship between collective efficacy and local leadership is a crucial factor in neo-endogenous development. Peters (2012, as cited in Beer & Clower, 2014, p. 14) has distinguished between "leading by doing" and "leading by talking," the first is related to bonding social capital and the latter to bridging capital. In relation to how the dimensions of collective efficacy are operationalised in the present study, they refer to the character of the organizational infrastructure and social networks. Lemvig is led by "doing the things that needs to be done" (interview with Mayor, 24 August 2018) and in this sense lead by doing. At the same time, Lemvig is densely organised both with informal (bonding social capital) relations and interlocking connections to local government (bridging capital). Conversely, the organizational activity in West Dorset is particularly hampered/vulnerable by a lack of connections to other scales of government. Local networks become more inward looking, which results in localized and fragmented local development. Low collective efficacy is in the English case of West Dorset coupled with a limited room for manoeuvre for local government, as the national context is structured by centralized strategies emphasizing business partnerships rather than broader efforts regarding civil society engagement and how to bring it closer to the local governance system.

The way Sampson (2011) has defined collective efficacy as a composite measure of activity patterns/routines, organizational infrastructure, social networks and segregation/resource stratification provides a means to specify the soft-aspects of local contexts. In place leadership literature, this soft content is referred to as an important dimension of local leadership for development (Beer & Clower, 2014; Beer et al., 2019; Collinge & Gibney, 2010; Grillitsch & Sotarauta, 2020; Potluka et al., 2017). Our effort through this compara-

tive case study has been to put empirical flesh on the bones of the conditions for neo-endogenous development and its relation to social cohesion. We have shown how rural development and the governance of rural cohesion, understood as a combination of local leadership and collective efficacy, contribute to a clearer understanding of how this soft dimension plays a key role in carving out local variations on the ground.

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Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

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