

Inclusive innovation as urban policy

A review and critique

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Department of
**Geography and
Environment**

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Commission**
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STRATEGY**

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Economy Work
for Everyone

+



+



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**Belfast
City Council**

**Innovation and inclusive growth
commission**



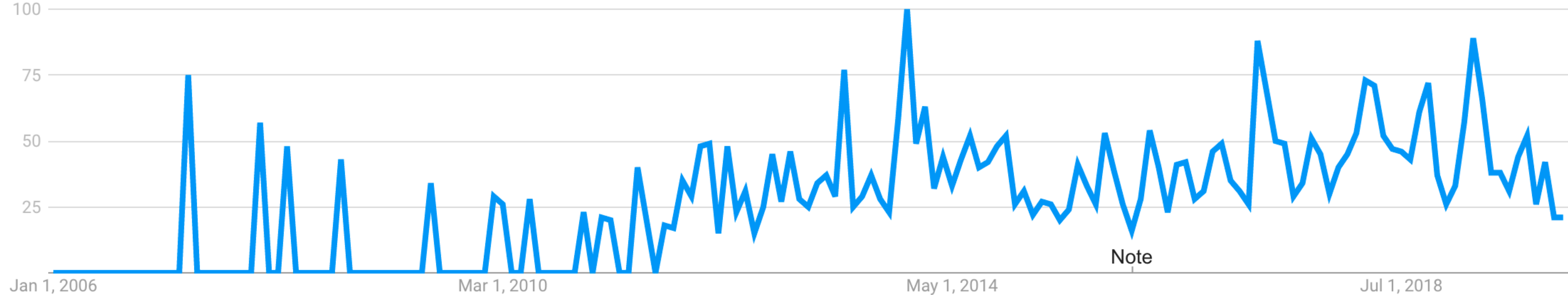
The Inclusive Innovation Agenda

- Governments invest significant sums on innovation: in the UK ~ £19bn p.a. + . Yet innovation is **inherently disruptive** - creating winners and losers
- In response, the notion of **Inclusive Innovation** is rapidly becoming a new buzzword in economic development - particular in advanced democracies
- The social impact of innovation now forms part of most national innovation strategies (Stanley et al., 2019). Now it has become important for cities
- This presentation presents a critical survey of policy in this area

Growing interest in the idea of Inclusive Innovation

Google Searches

Interest over time 

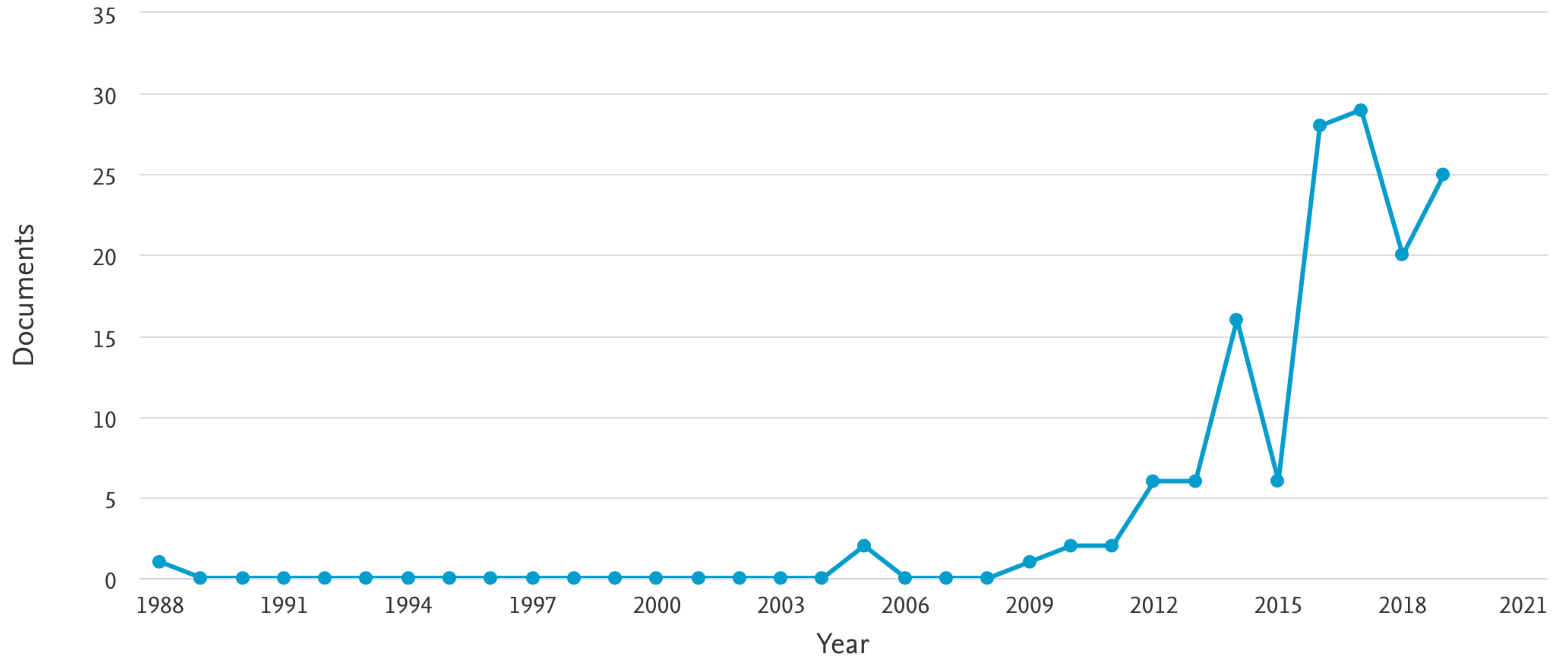


Note

Growing interest in the idea of Inclusive Innovation

Scopus Searches

Documents by year

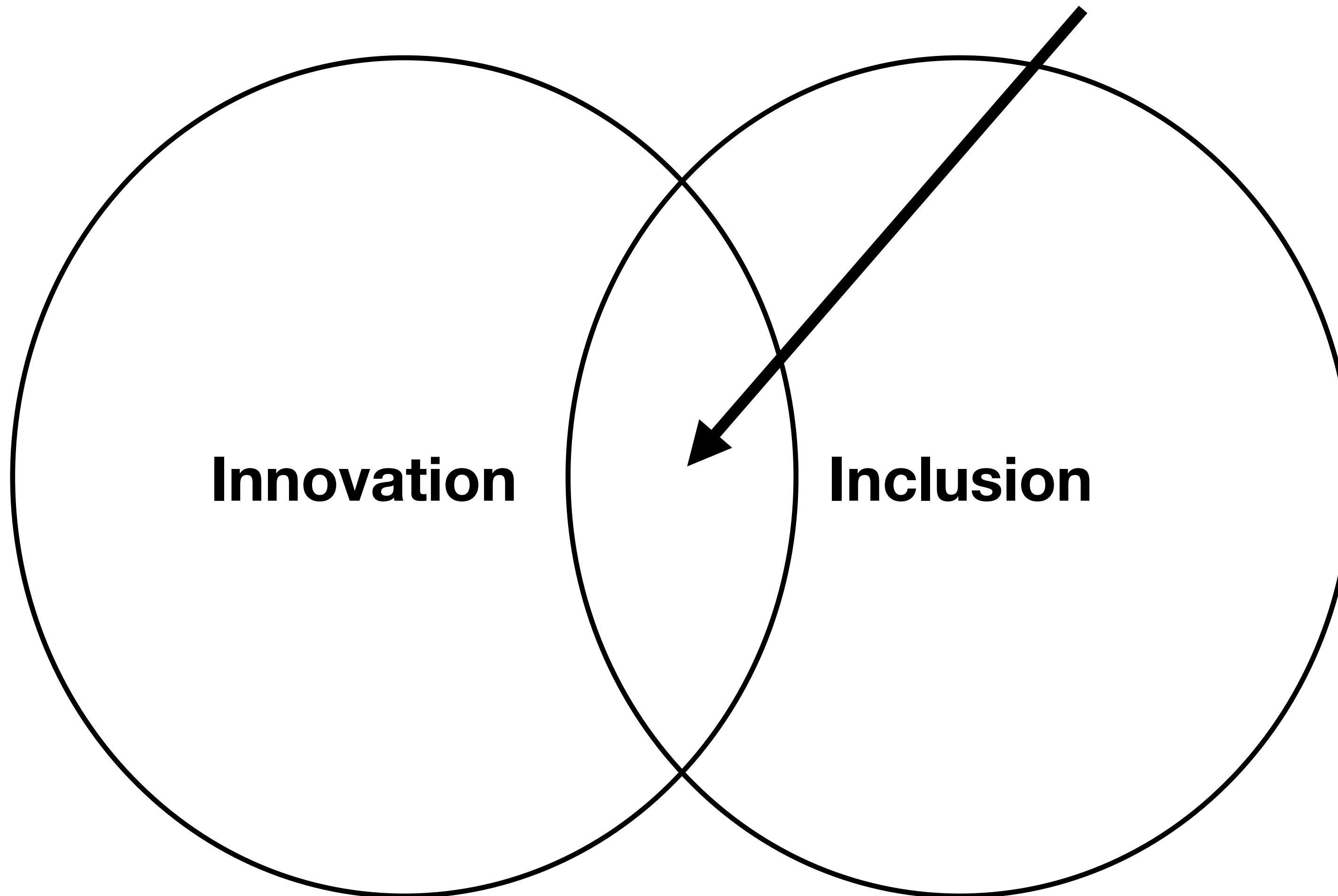


Relevant literatures

- **Inclusive growth** - synergies between growth and inclusion policy (Lupton and Hughes, 2018; Lee, 2019; Green et al., 2019)
- **Management studies** - George et al.'s (2019) Handbook
- **Innovation studies:** Distribution sensitive innovation policies (Zehavi & Breznitz, 2017)
- **Development studies** - Inclusive Innovation in the global south (Heeks et al., 2014; Chataway et al., 2015)

Similar 'buzzwords' - “Base of the Pyramid innovation”, “below-the-radar innovation”, “grassroots innovation”, “innovation for inclusive growth” - and Responsible Research and Innovation (Fitjar et al, 2019)

Criteria for inclusion



We are primarily interested in policies which use the phrase **'inclusive innovation'** or similar

Imprecise definitions so this is art not science

Criteria / aims

- * Sub-national
- * 'Advanced democracy'
- * Geographical diversity

We cannot sample, so are aiming for diversity

Methodology: Building our database

Our methodology involved an RA and the lead author:

- **Phase 1: Long list.** Long-list of strategies
- **Phase 2: Categorisation and classification** → definition and classification of **20 strategies / initiatives so far**
- **Phase 3: Interviews** with policymakers (underway)

We are still searching ... this is work in progress



What is 'Inclusivity'?

What is inclusive innovation?

George et al. (2012) “Innovation that **benefits the disenfranchised**”

OECD (2015) “Inclusive innovation projects are initiatives that directly **serve the welfare of lower-income and excluded groups**”

NESTA (2019) “Inclusive innovation policies are directed towards ensuring that the **benefits and the risks of innovation are more equally shared**. These policies will actively consider whose needs are met by innovation and how excluded social groups could be better served, focus on initiatives that promote broad participation in innovation, and take a democratic and participatory approach to priority-setting and the governance of innovation.”



Appendix A – Proposed draft structure for London’s Local Industrial Strategy

Aim 2: Supporting inclusive innovation in London

Recognising that innovation has been a crucial driver of productivity growth and improved living standards over the longer term, and that London is uniquely well-placed to realise this given the wealth of world-class innovation assets at its disposal.

Developing an approach that supports and encourages innovation to drive productivity growth, especially where it is directed at solving London’s social, environmental and economic challenges, and where it benefits Londoners, SMEs and parts of the city that have not typically shared in the benefits of innovation. This will also include investigating the potential to apply next generation technologies to improve productivity and job quality across the economy.

INCLUSIVE INNOVATION FUND

[← Back to Initiatives](#)

Establish a fund or fund(s) aimed at growing business activity in DC's opportunity areas (i.e. impact economy, urban innovation/smart cities, hospitality & professional services innovation, data, security tech) and enabling access to capital by underrepresented entrepreneurs. Awards could be made via pitch competition and/or matching fund over the course of several months and would require applicants to have an inclusive growth plan. Explore opportunities for public-private partnership and, over time, ways to maximize the impact of District investments via alternative fund structures.

PITTSBURGH ROADMAP for Inclusive Innovation



Pittsburgh's agenda

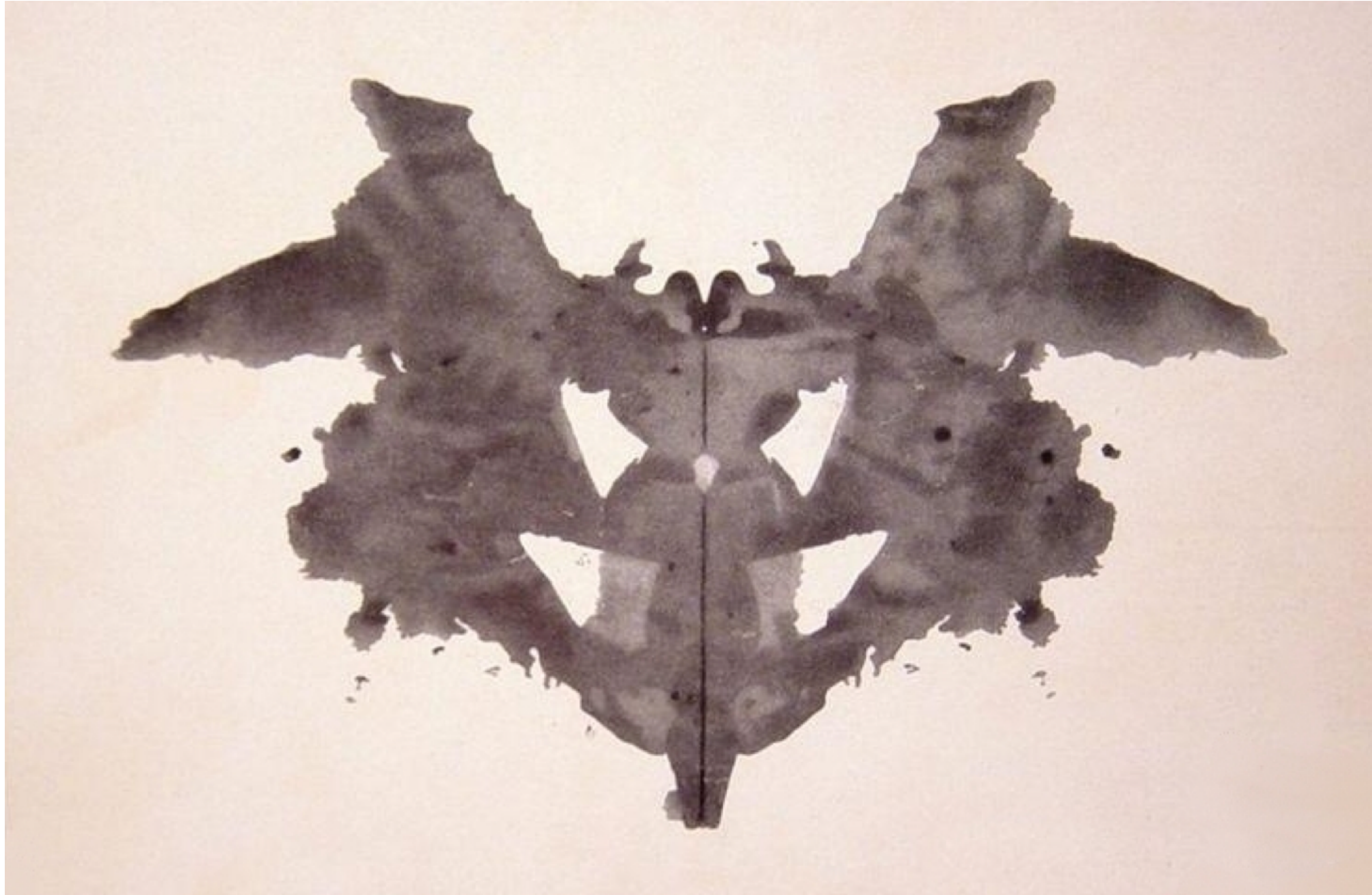
- Address the digital divide
- Empower city to citizen engagement
- Provide open data to Pittsburgh
- Improve internal operations and capacity of the city
- Advance the clean tech sector
- Promote the local business environment

Pittsburgh's agenda

- Address the digital divide 👍
- Empower city to citizen engagement 👍
- Provide open data to Pittsburgh 🙋
- Improve internal operations and capacity of the city 🙋
- Advance the clean tech sector 👍
- Promote the local business environment 🤔

“Branding
Pittsburgh an
Inclusive
Innovation city”

Problem 1: Fuzzy concepts



“fuzzy concepts”

“researchers may believe they are addressing the same phenomena but may actually be targeting quite different ones”

Markusen (1999: 702)

What do we mean by 'inclusive innovation'?

1. **Inclusive decision making for innovation** - Who chooses priorities for innovation
2. **Innovation in Inclusive Sectors** - shifting innovation funding from high-tech to low-wage
3. **Geographically diversifying innovation** - to peripheral areas
4. **Inclusivity in entrepreneurship** - gender, ethnicity etc in new firm starts
5. **Inclusivity in innovation workforce** - gender, ethnicity etc in STEM sectors
6. **Inclusive *innovations*** - e.g. Tata Nano
7. **Innovation for Inclusive Growth** - Fund lagging places → 'trickle-down'
8. **Innovation in inclusion** - new forms of public services or social enterprise
9. **Inclusive innovation responses**- policies which aim to deal with the consequences of innovation
10. **Diffusion of innovation** - for example, addressing regional divides

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Buzzwords in economic development policy

- The defence: **fuzziness makes Inclusive Innovation politically acceptable**
- But it is problematic:
 - Clarity of definition → learning
 - Measurement focuses policy agendas
 - Clarity keeps people honest
- Without clear definitions, useful concepts can become buzzwords – applied to any progressive goal without achieving anything e.g. ‘participatory development’ (Cornwall & Brock, 2005)

Problem 2: Solutionism

- Technology provides ‘easy solution’ to complex social problem
 - **“Solutionism”** of new technology (Morozov, 2013)
 - **“Humanitarian Neophilia”** in the development process (Scott-Smith, 2015)
- Inequality in cities and regions is (a) complex, (b) the product of global economic trends, (c) due to problems in the the welfare state, not innovation
- Where inequality is low this is often little to do with differences in technology, but about the difficult matter of the tax and benefits system

Problem 3: Powers

Cities and regions rarely have the powers to fully shape their economies

Big forces matter - the China shock and technological change

Urban policy important, but oversold



The case for Inclusive Innovation

The **problems** faced by West Wales or Oxford are different - the response must be as well

- Place based policy can **ensure funding goes to places** that don't matter - accepting **trade-offs** (Growth in West Wales should be a higher priority than in Oxford)
- Addressing **barriers to inclusion** at a local level: this will have a positive impact on the local economy (finding lost Einsteins)
- Deal with **localised consequences**

Conclusions

The 'dark side' of innovation should be central to any modern regional innovation policy (McCann and Ortega Argiles, 2014)

The inclusive innovation agenda moves towards this goal

But we need to be careful: **policy agendas** which work for nations do not align with sub-national powers, **policy frameworks** are nascent, and there is a long history of **solutionism and neophilia**

“Inclusive innovation” can only go so far - inclusion will require boring old policies as well