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Mapping Austerity: Geographical Text Analysis of UK Place-Names in The Guardian and The Daily Telegraph

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Chapter 4 Mapping Austerity: Geographical Text Analysis of UK Place-Names in The Guardian and The Daily Telegraph

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Abstract

By analysing corpora of newspaper articles from The Guardian and The Daily Telegraph this chapter uses a modified form of geographical text analysis (GTA) to investigate whether (and in what form) mass media texts express a relationship between austerity and UK places. Concordance geoparsing is used to detect the use of place-names occurring within a set span of key terms, such as *austerity*, *policy, crisis, measures* and *spending*. The geoparsing process generates Place-Name Co-occurrences (PNCs), which are comprised of a search term, a place-name, its coordinates, and its surrounding co-text. The coordinates of PNCs can be plotted on maps using GIS (Geographical Information Systems) software, to show patterns in place-name mentions, while the co-text is well-suited to linguistic analysis. Ultimately, GTA facilitates the visualisation of corpora and adds the consideration of physical space to language analysis. The results of GTA show that coverage of UK austerity focuses overwhelmingly on England and that both newspapers are London-centric.

Introduction

Since the 2008 global financial crash, successive UK governments have looked to cut expenditure on public services and components of the welfare state under the guise of austerity. By definition, austerity refers to "Restraint in public spending; spec. a programme of government measures designed to reduce public spending and conserve resources, esp. during a time of economic hardship" (OED 2014). However, the ramifications of austerity as an abstract concept and in people's lived-experiences go beyond politics and economic policy. The overarching discourse of austerity – *discourse* encapsulating the notion that language is reflective of a society while simultaneously acting to constitute that society (Breit 2010, 621) – presents a dire view of (UK) economic conditions and places the burden for improving such conditions not only at the feet of government, but on the shoulders of UK-based individuals. Cuts to budgets and services, changes to the benefits system, and job losses are positioned as vital sacrifices that will impact (heavily) on a few to serve the needs of the many. Cuts are regarded as a "virtuous necessity" (Clarke and Newman 2012, 303) and in the UK "discourses of deservingness and entitlement have become highly pervasive" (Tuckett 2017, 24), as

evidenced in George Osbourne's (then Chancellor of the Exchequer) speech to the Conservative Party Conference in 2012:

> Where is the fairness, we ask, for the shift-worker, leaving home in the dark hours of the early morning, who looks up at the closed blinds of their next door neighbour sleeping off a life on benefits? When we say we're all in this together, we speak for that worker. We speak for all those who want to work hard and get on. This is the mission of the modern Conservative Party.
>
> (Osbourne 2012)

Despite the claim that "we're all in this together", UK government policies do not have a uniform impact across social, political, or geographical landscapes. Following Hall (2017: 303): "The experience of austerity, like all elements of social life, is characterised by difference; austerity impacts on individuals, families and communities in different ways". There is evidence to suggest that areas with high rates of unemployment or child poverty feel the impact of austerity more than areas of relative affluence, which see little direct impact of government cuts. For example, reporting on children's increased use of foodbanks in England and Wales in the age of austerity, Lambie-Mumford and Green (2017, 276) note that in 2013-14 the Trussell Trust provided for 302,594 children, 42% of whom lived in the "most deprived quintile" of foodbank locations. Given that such data suggests that where someone lives will have an impact on how they experience austerity, the aim of this paper is to foreground if and how geography, in the form of place-names, is associated with austerity by national UK newspapers. It analyses the use of place-names in The Daily Telegraph and The Guardian using the Texts and Images of Austerity in Britain corpus (Griebel, Evert and Heinrich, this volume, Chapter 1).

Place is often ignored in the critical analysis of texts (Paterson and Gregory 2019, 42), but references to place, especially at more local levels, can make the impact(s) of abstract concepts like austerity appear more concrete by situating them within definable geographical boundaries. To investigate how place is used in media texts discussing UK austerity, the paper describes a version of geographical text analysis (henceforth GTA) – a method which combines tools from corpus linguistics, the spatial humanities, and (critical) discourse analysis. The aim of GTA is to discover the relationship between place and a given topic, theme, or lexeme. To perform GTA one needs access to a corpus, a gazeteer (an "index of place-names and their corresponding coordinates" [Paterson and Gregory 2019, 42]), and specialist geoparsing software. One criticism, therefore, is that those without access to a geoparser cannot undertake GTA.[1] This issue is partially addressed here, as this paper briefly describes a method for concordance geoparsing which uses standard corpus software and Microsoft Excel. The next section situates this paper within the wider analysis of UK austerity. Afterwards readers will

get introduced to GTA and the method used here will be set out. The empirical part of the chapter reports the results of GTA, before the last section considers the main conclusions of analysing austerity and place.

Perspectives on austerity

In their exemplar paper on the "alchemy of austerity", Clarke and Newman (2012, 300) state that "austerity has become the dominant global wisdom for addressing the 'problem of public debt' (including the public debt that resulted from 'rescuing' private funds)", such as the UK government's bailout of the Royal Bank of Scotland and Northern Rock. They argue that "[t]he UK has taken something of a vanguard position on austerity […] cutting deeper and harder than most EU countries" (2012, 303). Furthermore, they posit that the UK's response to the 2008 global financial crash has been "ideologically reworked" from its roots as an economic issue – "how to 'rescue' the banks and restore market stability" – to one of responsibility – "how to allocate blame", a shift which Clarke and Newman (2012, 300) claim "has focused on the unwieldy and expensive welfare state and public sector" and not the banks at the heart of the financial crash. The justification for austerity – its "political rationalizations" – have moved from arguments about "economic necessity" towards more socially-orientated arguments about "responsibility", which Clarke and Newman (2012, 303) claim are "pushed through a series of localisation measures that deflect and decentralize responsibility for care and welfare".

This social/moral element to austerity involves framing cuts to services as "reducing the bills for social failure" where the welfare state has provided too much support for "Troubled Families" who need to act on their own agency and "turn themselves around and make something of themselves" (Department of Communities and Local Government 2014 as quoted in Jupp 2017, 269). Subsumed within discourses of austerity, and acting as justification for government-mandated cuts, are claims that the UK's welfare state has become bloated and is rife for abuse by unscrupulous individuals (see the quote from Osbourne, above) who are taken as representative of whole sections of society:

> For years an over-generous welfare system left people with no incentive to work. It left a colossal unemployment problem in our country and a culture of welfare dependency. Conservatives know the best way to help people out of poverty is not to hand them a benefit cheque; it's to help them get into work.
> (Cameron 2012)

The negative evaluation of benefits recipients implied in then-Prime Minister David Cameron's statement, and the related idea that there is a 'something for nothing' culture in the UK, are linked to wider negative evaluations of benefits recipients found perpetuated in the mass media

(Baker and McEnery 2015; van der Bom et al. 2018). For example, research on so-called "poverty porn" has shown that recipients of (means-tested) benefits are portrayed by the media as feckless (Biressi 2011; Paterson et al. 2016). A related "scrounger" or "idle poor" discourse (Baker and McEnery 2015) is linked to flawed consumerism (Bauman 2004) and ideas about the un/deserving poor (Katz 2013), which are perpetuated by the media and accepted and perpetuated by members of the general public (van der Bom et al. 2018). What is not present in much existing literature (Baker and McEnery [2015] is one exception) is media, political and/or public acknowledgement of the wider causes of the financial crash, which would recognise that global events cannot be caused solely by people receiving government support. Nevertheless, following Pantazis (2016, 4), the UK coalition government (2010-15) "prioritised individual explanations for poverty" while ignoring wider structural economic issues.

To return to Clarke and Newman, the shift from economic to local (and ultimately individual) responsibility can be investigated using GTA. By finding which place-names (if any) are associated with austerity it is possible to ascertain whether certain places are systematically linked to austerity, welfare, care budgets, or even individual narratives. Clarke and Newman suggest that the uneven distribution of the impacts of austerity policies "is likely to produce 'new landscapes of inequality'" (2012, 305). By their meaning, these landscapes are drawn on social lines (household income, gender, etc.), but by analysing the place-names associated with austerity, it is possible to see whether these landscapes are also presented in media texts in a more literal sense.

Locating abstract concepts in geographical space
One of the most recent large-scale attempts to interrogate the use of place-names in media texts is Paterson and Gregory's (2019) geographical text analysis of UK discourses of poverty and place. Using GTA they analysed two corpora of newspaper texts from The Guardian and The Daily Mail (2010-15) and demonstrated how each newspaper's coverage of UK poverty used place slightly differently. They found that The Daily Mail was more likely to focus on smaller industrial areas where there had been private sector job losses, while The Guardian was more likely to report government-imposed cuts to council-based jobs in major urban centres. Both newspapers were London-centric in their reporting, The Guardian more so, and The Daily Mail was more likely to draw attention to places where there were large numbers of (means-tested) benefits recipients, which it presented as evidence to support austerity-based Conservative Party policies.

Paterson and Gregory's version of GTA is the basis for the method of concordance geoparsing used here. They systematically generated quantifiable geographical data (i.e. coordinates) from their textual data by locating and assigning geospatial information to all the place-names in their dataset. This facilitated both statistical comparisons between places and the generation of maps. Thus, textual data could be visualised in a novel way. Indeed, the underlying aim of GTA – which has its foundations in the spatial humanities (see Paterson and Gregory [2019, 61-94] for details) – is to make links between qualitative and quantitative data insofar as the "identification and mapping of place-names, allows a general examination of the geographies within the texts […] opening up new ways of understanding and interpreting the texts" (Murrieta-Flores et al. 2015, 297). Indeed, Paterson and Gregory's work stands on the foundation of smaller-scale, yet methodologically significant research using geoparsing techniques, such as Murrieta-Flores et al.'s (2015) study of cholera reports in the 19th century and Gregory and Donaldson's (2016) application of GTA to lake district literature.

The process of geoparsing (either geoparsing a whole corpus or a set of concordance lines, as is the case here) involves the generation of place-name co-occurrences (PNCs) which are the "basic unit of analysis within GTA" (Paterson and Gregory 2019, 66). PNCs consist of a query hit, a place-name which occurs within a set span of tokens from the query node, the coordinates of that place-name, and the surrounding co-text (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Example PNC
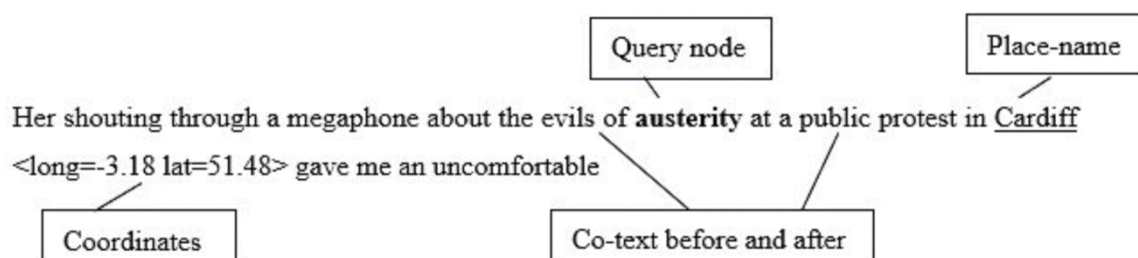
Because concordance geoparsing depends on place-names occurring within a set span of a query node, the method assumes a relationship between proximity of tokens and association in discourse. In this case, concordance geoparsing assumes that mentioning a place-name in within a ten-word span of *austerity* (and other related search terms, see below) implies a link between the concept of austerity and the geographical space identified by said place-name. This link may not always hold in practice, but Murrieta-Flores et al. (2015, 300) claim that work on

collocations "seems to suggest that simple proximity, with no explicit connection, if repeated consistently, is indeed enough to create an implicit link between two meanings in the mind of speakers and hearers". Nevertheless, proximity does not always signal a discourse-level relationship and, as such, the accuracy of concordance geoparsing depends on (some level of) manual data cleaning and analysis. To this end, the initial set of PNCs generated when concordance geoparsing are referred to here as only "potential PNCs". Only after the manual analysis is the term "PNCs" used, as it is at this point that a clear link between austerity and place has been established. Ultimately, GTA is used here to address the following:

1. Are links made between austerity and geographical locations in the UK?
2. What UK places are (repeatedly) mentioned in texts concerning UK austerity?
3. (How) do The Guardian and The Daily Telegraph use place differently?
4. What links are made between wider discourses (i.e. neoliberalism, the (un)deserving poor, flawed consumerism, etc.) and the places associated with austerity?

Method

The main components of concordance geoparsing (based on Paterson and Gregory [2019]) are given in Figure 2. The method presented here focuses on the generation and analysis of PNCs and does not detail the tools available in GIS software; readers interested in the cartographic components of GTA are directed to https://learn.arcgis.com.

Figure 2: The workflow of concordance geoparsing
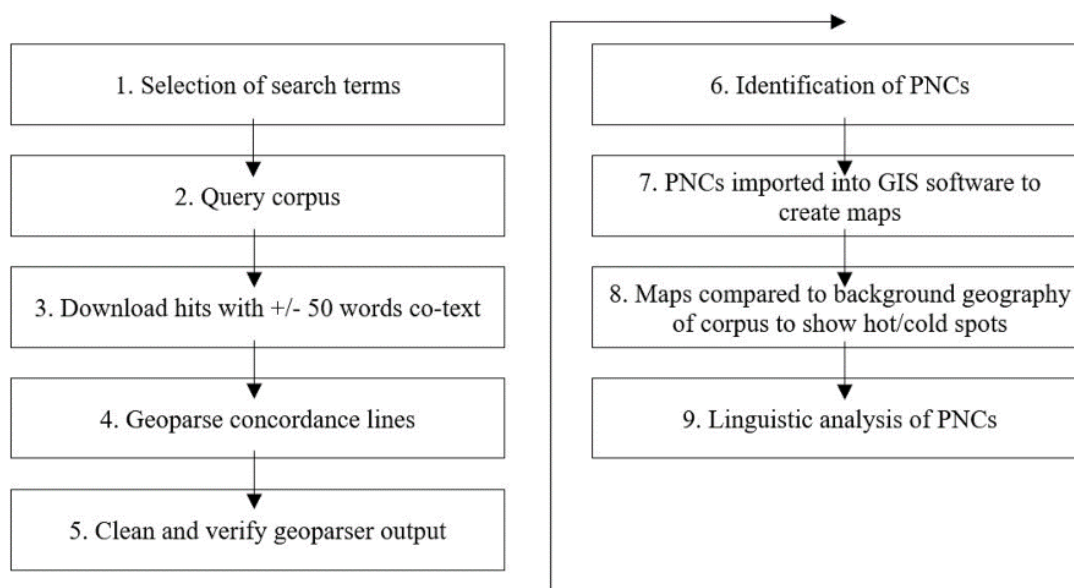
As noted in the introduction to this volume, the '*phenomenon* of austerity' goes beyond the use of the word *austerity* (Griebel, Evert and Heinrich, this volume, Chapter 1). Thus, to perform

GTA using only *austerity* as a search term would provide a partial picture of how austerity is located in geographical space. Additional terms were selected for analysis by determining which words were closely related to austerity in the newspapers. To do this, the texts from The Guardian and The Daily Telegraph were uploaded to Sketch Engine (Kilgarriff et al. 2004) as two separate corpora and the Sketch Thesaurus tool was used to identify those words which behaved in a similar way to *austerity* (see Rychlý and Kilgarriff [2007] for more details about the tool). Table 1 shows the top 20 thesaurus matches for each newspaper: 16 terms were shared by both newspapers, suggesting they had much in common in terms of their reporting of austerity. Notably, the thesaurus matches clustered into two main semantic fields: economics (*budget, debt, economy, inflation*, etc.) and politics (*government, plan, policy,* etc.). This indicates that the newspapers primarily focused on the mechanics of and justifications for austerity-based policies at a macro level, as opposed to micro-level experiences of austerity. As such, it may be that there are very few links to specific place-names in either newspaper.

Table 1: Top 20 thesaurus matches

Guardian only	Both	*Telegraph* only
change, Europe, Greece, labour	budget, crisis, cut, debt, economy, government, growth, measure, plan, policy, programme, rate, recession, reform, spending, tax	Britain, inflation, rise, deficit, union

The Sketch Thesaurus results were used as a foundation for generating the query which would be used as the basis for concordance geoparsing. The full query[2] – used on the textual component of the *AuBriN* corpus, held in CQPweb (Hardie 2012) – included 20 main search terms: *austerity, budget, crisis, cut, debt, deficit, economy, government, growth, inflation, measures, plan, policy, programme, rate, recession, reform, rise, spending,* and *tax*. Given that the corpus included only texts which were focused on austerity it was possible to keep the query quite broad, as the specialist nature of the corpus would decrease the amount of noise in the results. For example, <cut[s,]> was used to ensure that both *cut* and *cuts* were returned by the query, as a wider comparison of the thesaurus results indicated that The Guardian had a stylistic tendency to pluralise. Similarly, the query was not restricted by word class – *cut, measure, budget* could be used as a noun or verb – but most of the query hits were nouns.

The query returned 249,325 (149,795 in The Guardian and 99,531 in The Daily Telegraph), which were downloaded and saved as a .txt file. When using an established geoparser, it is customary to download the hits within a span of +/-50 tokens. However, for Excel geoparsing, this span is too large and will cause files to crash. While the +/-50 span was used to aid the

linguistic analysis (see below), the hits were also downloaded within a +/-10 token span. Initial analysis of the hits indicated that some irrelevant results had been returned by the query. For example, <tax*> returned *taxi, taxidermy* and *taxonomy*, but the wildcard was needed to return *tax, taxes, taxed, taxpayers,* etc., all of which were potentially related to austerity. The erroneous hits were removed from further analysis.

To prepare the downloaded concordance lines for geoparsing they were opened in Excel. They were split so that each word (more accurately *token*) in each concordance line appeared in its own cell. This facilitates the use of Excel's VLOOKUP function for matching cell values. The final step in preparing an Excel file for geoparsing is to download and import a gazeteer. This paper uses the UK component of Geonames (geonames.org) which has creative commons gazeteers for most countries. The gazeteer contains information about different types of place-names including populated areas, landmarks, and geographical features (i.e. lakes, mountains). Only populated places below country level were included in this analysis (that is *London, Bangor, Ayr,* etc. but not *England, Northern Ireland, UK*). The gazeteer data was imported into the Excel workbook containing the concordance lines.

Excel geoparsing uses the VLOOKUP function to compare the text in a cell to another specified list of cells (the list of place-names in the gazeteer worksheet). If the text matched one of the place-names in the gazeteer, the formula inserted the relevant place-name into the adjacent cell (Figure 3). If there was no match, the formula returned 'N/A'. To find all the place-names in the concordance lines this process was repeated for all tokens within a span +/-10 of the query node. The spreadsheet was then filtered to include only concordance lines containing a place-name and a modified VLOOKUP formula was used to assign coordinates to each place-name using the spatial information in the gazeteer.

Figure 3: An unsuccessful and a successful place-name match

	=VLOOKUP(H667,Lookup_values!$A$11:$F$18345,2,FALSE)		
G		H	I
Concordance		L10	Name10
countries . This could lead to another POUND 3 billion of taxpayer liability . Mr Osbourn		countries	N/A
London 's national interest that we have a stable Irish economy and banking system , " E		London	London
	=VLOOKUP(H668,Lookup_values!$A$11:$F$18345,2,FALSE)		

What Excel geoparsing lacks is the ability to disambiguate place-names from tokens which have the same form as place-names but are not actually toponyms. For example, personal names such as *Ms Hull*, surnames like *Cameron*, or proper nouns (*Burnley Football Club*) do not refer to geographical space, but there are entries for *Hull, Cameron,* and *Burnley* in the gazeteer as there are places in the UK with these names. A specialist geoparser can automatically discount hits like this by incorporating rules about the co-text of a potential place-name (i.e. it can eliminate any potential place-names preceded by an honorific). Excel geoparsing does not have such rules and relies on manual analysis. However, Excel's sort and filter functions can expedite data cleaning.

Once the VLOOKUP output has been cleaned, the remaining potential PNCs must be qualitatively analysed to determine whether they relate to the topic under analysis. For example, while *crisis* overwhelmingly referred to financial crises, there was an occasion where it was used as part of the term *mid-life crisis* and, as such, did not relate to austerity. There is no automatic way to find query hits which are semantically unrelated to the topic of enquiry; this must be done manually. As such, there is a level of subjectivity within the analysis, as one has to determine the boundaries of enquiry (see Paterson and Gregory [2009]). However, in this case, most hits either related directly to austerity (1) or a related issue, or they were not related to austerity (2).

1) Nicola Sturgeon will claim in a speech in Sheffield today that the UK Government's austerity agenda was one of the underlying reasons for the vote to leave the EU (*The Daily Telegraph*, November 7, 2016)
2) It has been a momentous year for the RSC, which finally moved into its transformed theatre complex in Stratford upon Avon. Finished on budget and on time (*The Daily Telegraph*, December 10, 2011)

Despite the time consuming and subjective nature of such manual analysis, one positive is that analysis of the potential PNCs gives the researcher the advantage of having engaged with a large amount of their data (a rarity when using corpus-based methods) and it can highlight issues which may be missed when using solely computational analyses. For example, one issue that arose during the manual analysis was that several place-names (particularly in The Daily Telegraph) were part of letters to the editor. Each letter typically signed off with the letter-writer's name and their location (i.e. *Margaret Rogers, Leeds*). These potential PNCs were eliminated from further analysis because, while they situate the letter-writers in geographical space, they provide no information about how the newspapers located austerity.

Once cleaned, the PNCs can be uploaded into cartographic software (ArcMap is used here) and plotted onto a map of the UK. At this stage it is important to check the correct coordinates have

been assigned to each place-name, especially when two (or more) places have the same name, as the VLOOKUP function will select the first value that matches a cell. Thus, Newcastle-upon-Tyne (in the north-east of England) was mistagged as Newcastle near the Welsh border. These coordinates were manually corrected using the geonames gazetteer cross referenced with Google maps.

The final component of GTA is the linguistic analysis. The form and content of such analyses will depend on the research questions, number of PNCs, and tools available to individual researchers. Paterson and Gregory (2019) used computational analyses and qualitative, discourse-based analyses, which involved close reading of the co-text of PNCs. Given the relatively low number of PNCs in the present set of concordances (see below), the co-text for each PNC was manually coded to identify the trends associated with the places most often mentioned in conjunction with austerity. The analysis thus sits under the umbrella of inductive thematic analysis[3] (Guest et al. 2012) as it foregrounds the most common components of austerity associated with different place-names. The analysis is discourse-based and "moves beyond counting explicit words or phrases and focuses on identifying and describing both implicit and explicit ideas within the data" (10). It acknowledges that an aspect of austerity (be it economic policy, cuts to services, etc.) can be expressed in a variety of different ways.

Results

Table 2 gives an overview of the results of Excel geoparsing all query hits in The Guardian and The Daily Telegraph. When erroneous hits were eliminated from the potential PNCs, neither newspaper systematically associated austerity with place-names. The final total of PNCs in The Guardian (1143) represents 28.18% of the potential PNCs identified in the first stages of geoparsing and just 0.77% of the total query hits returned for that newspaper. For The Daily Telegraph (311) the figures are 15.57% and 0.31%. The normalised frequencies show that The Guardian (86.17 pmw) was more likely than The Daily Telegraph (63.59 pmw) to associate austerity with place-names. This is similar to Paterson and Gregory's (2019) finding that The Guardian was more likely to associate poverty with place than The Daily Mail, suggesting that the use of place-names may be a stylistic feature of The Guardian reporting. However, despite evidence suggesting that austerity is experienced differently in different places considerations of geography are not central to newspaper coverage of UK austerity.

Table 2: Analysis of potential PNCs

	Guardian	Telegraph
Query hits	149,795	99531
Potential PNCs	4056	1997
PNCs post data-clean	1143 (28.18% of potential PNCs)	311 (15.57% of potential PNCs)
Final PNCs pmw	86.17	63.59

The final PNCs for each newspaper are shown in Figure 4. The dots show the location of the places mentioned while the shading indicates density (i.e. how many times a place-name was used). The maps show that The Guardian associated austerity with more places than The Daily Telegraph and that it was more likely to focus on the midlands and the north of England between Liverpool, Manchester, and Leeds. However, it is possible that Figure 4 merely represents how the two newspapers use place-names in a general sense, rather than showing how place-names were used to locate austerity. Perhaps The Guardian tends to report on issues in Manchester, while The Daily Telegraph is London-centric. One way to determine how the spatial pattern of a dataset differs from a source's general use of place-names is to compare the PNCs to the background geography of the source. Paterson and Gregory (2019, 85) achieved this by concordance geoparsing a 5% sample of all occurrences of *the* in their corpora and compared the PNCs for *the* to the PNCs in their dataset using the Kulldorf spatial scan statistic. This is not possible for Excel geoparsing, as the number of hits for *the* in most corpora (even using a 5% sample) would mean too many calculations in a single spreadsheet. As such, the present data must be treated with caution; it can show where each newspaper locates austerity, but it cannot determine whether the use of particular place-names is an artefact of wider patterns of place-name use in either newspaper.

Figure 4 (overleaf) shows that the PNCs cluster in large urban areas; there is no relationship between austerity and rural areas or small towns. The Guardian names more places than The Daily Telegraph, but is dominated by references to cities (as indicated by density in Figure 4). It is rare for a place-name to occur only once – 79 (6.91%) of The Guardian's PNCs and 43 (13.83%) of The Daily Telegraph's include unique place-names. London is the place most frequently associated with austerity by both newspapers, with 448 PNCs in The Guardian (39.20%) and 147 (44.41%) in The Daily Telegraph. Furthermore, the top ten place-names in each newspaper include areas like Hackney, Knightsbridge, Tottenham, and Lambeth, all of which are within London. Given that several of the search terms in the original query related to government (and the fact that London is the UK capital), this is perhaps unsurprising. However, these results confirm other reports of (disproportionate) London-centric reporting in national UK newspapers (Paterson and Gregory 2019). Given the dominance of London, the next section

determines the key themes associated with UK austerity as situated in the capital by analysing the PNCs for London and its districts. This is followed by the close analysis of other large urban areas in England. The final section considers how austerity is located (or not) within Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland. As noted above, the linguistic analysis sits at the discourse-level and is thematic; the aim is to identify repeated concepts, themes, or ideas which are associated with specific places.
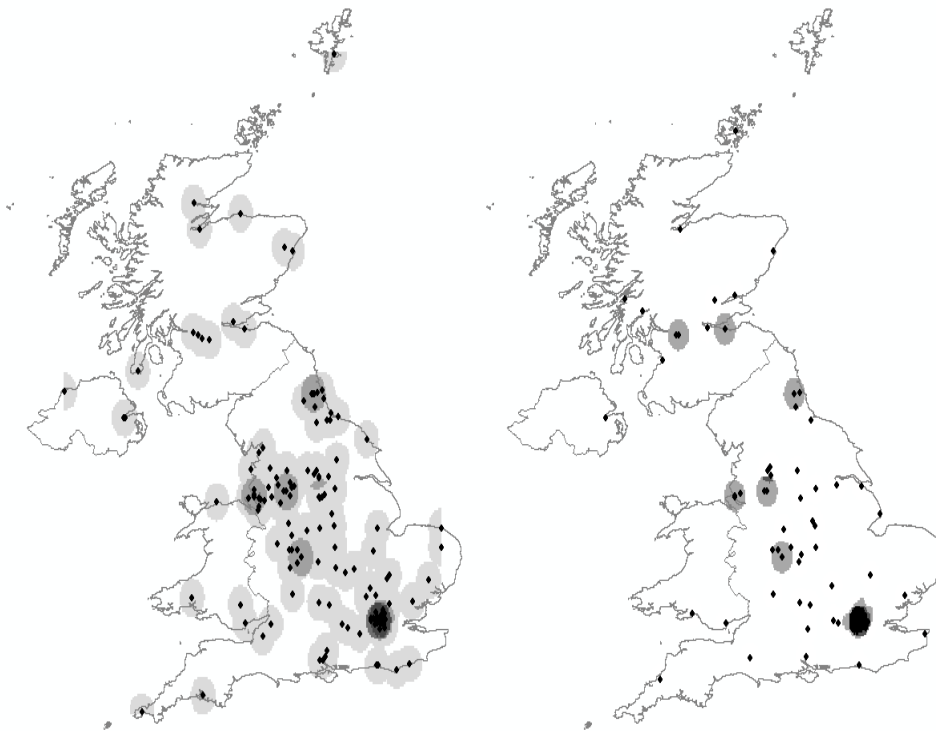

Figure 4: Dot maps with indication of density a) *Guardian*, **b)** *Telegraph*

London (and its districts)

The main themes in the London PNCs in The Daily Telegraph were tax rises and inflation, housing, and finance/business (including reference to the FTSE100 and mining stocks). Housing was linked to personal debt (3) and 'rapid house price growth in London' and there were infrequent references to protests in the capital, which tended to include reports of violence/crime (4).

3) Homeowners in south-west <u>London</u> have more mortgage debt than the whole of Wales (*The Daily Telegraph*, April 9, 2014)
4) The incident was the biggest disturbance on a day when about 10,000 people marched in <u>London</u> in protest at public sector cuts. In east London, 37 people were arrested after a Police Community Support Officer was attacked (*The Daily Telegraph*, December 1, 2011)

Austerity was contextualised historically through reference to the 1948 Olympic Games (also known as the 'austerity games') and London was positioned as both the epicentre of UK

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austerity and the place where 'too much wealth was concentrated'. In (5), London is conceptualised as an entity whose actions can influence how the impacts of austerity are felt elsewhere. *London* is used somewhat metonymically here as the place-name refers to the UK government (and its London base).

5) Mr Swinney also targeted George Osborne for criticism, arguing that Scotland's double-dip recession has 'Made in <u>London</u> stamped all over it' thanks to the Coalition's austerity programme (*The Daily Telegraph*, October 20, 2012)

The only London district that received attention in The Daily Telegraph was Tottenham, which was associated with high unemployment rates, austerity-based cuts, and the riots that took place in the area in 2011. Following Clarke and Newman (2012, 308) the Tottenham riots, as well as protests more generally (see below), are realisations of public "disaffection" with austerity. While Clarke and Newman associate this disaffection with "persistent outrage about bankers' bonuses and MP's expenses" (308) neither The Daily Telegraph nor The Guardian mentions these topics in the PNCs.

The Guardian's PNCs for London and its districts account for most PNCs overall. Major trends included references to finance/business, job cuts, welfare cuts, housing, protests, the poorest areas, the arts, the Olympics, and London as the epicentre of austerity. PNCs that focus on London as a financial hub reference "money markets" and the FTSE100. There are also reports of (and protests against) proposed cuts to London Underground staff and "large-scale" redundancies at local councils, and there are reports of "700,000 jobs lost as part of austerity cuts to public services" (*The Guardian*, August 16, 2012). The benefit cuts most closely associated with London are those relating to changes in housing benefits which lead to people relocating outside London and "leaving their communities behind" (*The Guardian*, December 18, 2013). The Bedroom Tax (a name given to the Removal of Spare Room Subsidy) is mentioned, as well as council tax and tax credit cuts. The Guardian makes it clear that it blames Conservative Party policies for the potential difficulties people' face, claiming that such policies disproportionately affect the poor (6).

6) <u>London</u>'s poorest boroughs cope with some of the biggest spending cuts and Cameron's treasury renews its inexplicable assault on the supply of housing that low and middle income Londoners can afford (*The Guardian*, July 21, 2015)

But there are contrasting reports that since the Conservative-led benefits cap (part of Welfare Reform) "nearly 35% of all London households capped since the policy introduced have taken jobs" (*The Guardian*, November 10, 2016).

London is the primary site for protests against housing costs, tuition fees, austerity in general (7), welfare cuts for people with disabilities, and public sector cuts, many of which were explicitly linked to opposition from groups such as UK Uncut.

7) Your editorial (Unthinkable? Revive the Plebs League, 20 October) appeared on the day that over 100,000 marchers against austerity cuts joined trade union demonstrations in London, with tens of thousands more in Glasgow and Belfast (*The Guardian*, October 23, 2012)

Given that London is the seat of government, it is not surprising that it is the hub for large-scale protests against a variety of different issues. However, it is worth noting that the number of protesters is highlighted. Potts et al. (2015, 152) note that *superlativeness*, where something is "discursively constructed as being of high intensity or large scope/scale", is one of several components that can make an issue newsworthy (see also "700,000 jobs" above). Relatedly, it is also interesting that protests are overwhelmingly located in London by The Guardian (with fewer references to other locations such as Glasgow and Belfast). By contrast, The Daily Telegraph makes hardly any links between austerity protests and place, tending only to report on protests if they are linked to violence and/or criminality. Criminality is reported in The Guardian, but this is rare.

By far the most prominent trend in the London PNCs relates to the conceptualisation of London as the epicentre of austerity. It is reported that "London is booming again" (*The Guardian*, February 25, 2013) with an "economy on which the whole nation depends" (*The Guardian*, September 4, 2015) and that London "accounts for the lion's share of UK tax revenues" (*The Guardian*, July 10, 2016). While the importance of London to austerity sometimes took the form of metonymic references to government, it more often occurred in comparisons between London and other areas (8-9), with the conclusion that "Provincial spending is bad; London spending is good" (*The Guardian*, February 15, 2016).

8) London's overheated economy is the results of the government favouring the south-east with jobs and infrastructure (*The Guardian*, June 27, 2014)
9) McDonnell [Shadow Chancellor] called for more geographically equitable government investment, saying the sum spent per person in London was 12 times that seen in the north-east (*The Guardian*, November 15, 2016)

There are dual claims that the south-east is privileged by government policies, while areas in the north of England (there are no direct comparisons with parts of Scotland, Wales, or Northern Ireland) suffered more severely from the fallout of the 2008 financial crisis.

The comparison between London and other areas of the UK is also manifest in terms of spending on the arts. Given The Guardian's wider focus on job cuts, the welfare state, and anti-

austerity protests, the prominence of PNCs relating to the arts was not expected. Nevertheless, it is reported that "Arts spending is heavily weighted towards London" (*The Guardian*, March 14, 2014), a claim that contrasts with the PNCs for Newcastle (see below). The Guardian also reports on several London-based plays and events which are focused on austerity and, much like The Daily Telegraph, the 1948 and 2012 Olympics are used to contextualise twenty-first century austerity.

The prominence of London in The Guardian's coverage of austerity is reinforced by the fact that several London districts (especially Hackney and Lambeth, with 11 and 24 PNCs each) generated more PNCS than many larger urban areas outside the capital. In contrast to The Daily Telegraph, Tottenham is not associated with riots, but high unemployment. Hackney, one of the poorest boroughs in the UK, is associated with "an 800% rise in house prices" (*The Guardian*, June 5, 2015) over the previous thirty years, as well as rising unemployment. Haringey – labelled as "the 11th most deprived local authority in Britain" (*The Guardian*, November 14, 2012) – is linked to "significant funding cuts up to 2020" (*The Guardian*, February 25, 2015) and Lambeth, also "one of the UK's most deprived boroughs" (*The Guardian*, May 5, 2015), is repeatedly associated with a hammer metaphor (10), where cuts to council budgets 'hit hard'. It is also associated with plans to raise council tax to a rate three times higher than nearby Westminster.

10) Lambeth council's campaign to hammer home the reality of cuts (*The Guardian*, February 26, 2016)

This overview shows that there are similarities in the two newspapers' treatment of London (especially the references to finance/business and the Olympics) and some overlap in terms of housing, and the idea that London is the ground zero of austerity. However, there were more topics systematically associated with London and its districts by The Guardian, including references to job cuts and (peaceful) anti-austerity protests. Thus, there is evidence that the two newspapers do link austerity to place in different ways. To see whether each newspapers' treatment of London is representative of how it locates austerity elsewhere, the following section focuses on the PNCs for large urban areas outside the capital.

Large urban areas in England
In The Daily Telegraph there are three major urban centres with multiple (although still relatively few) PNCs: Birmingham (7 PNCs), Liverpool (6 PNCs), and Manchester (15 PNCs). Birmingham is associated with consumer spending – with austerity branded as part of a broader "spending squeeze" – and a speech by David Cameron. Liverpool is also associated with

speeches, and there are references to a north/south divide due to the "unfairness of cuts". Most Manchester PNCs refer to the fact that it hosted the Labour and Conservative Party conferences in 2012 and 2015 respectively. The latter is associated with protests against government cuts (11) and, as The Daily Telegraph did not tend to draw links between protest and place, the presence of reports about "violent protests" must be understood within this context.

> 11) It came as the first day of the Conservative Party conference in <u>Manchester</u> was marred by violent protests by Left-wing anti-austerity campaigners (*The Daily Telegraph*, October 5, 2015)

There are more urban centres in The Guardian's PNCs. Birmingham, Nottingham, Oxford, and Sheffield are associated with generic "cuts" while other areas are associated with more specific issues. For example, Bristol, Derby, Leeds and Stoke are associated with housing, including high house prices, crises (12) and decreased funding for social housing (13).

> 12) A new mayor for <u>Bristol</u> is a chance to finally tackle its housing crisis; Six years of austerity, service cuts, redundancies (*The Guardian*, June 2, 2016)
> 13) <u>Derby</u> city council cuts its supported housing budgets by an astonishing 82% (The Guardian, February 12, 2014)

Durham is linked to cuts to council budgets, but unlike other locations, it is associated with a wide range of specific cuts rather than just *cuts* more generally. The council reported to be cutting "1,950 jobs" (*The Guardian*, October 20, 2014), as well as "free transport for 16-18-year-olds from home to college" (*The Guardian*, October 19, 2011) and "universal free school meals" (*The Guardian*, July 12, 2013). Such specificity makes the PNCs for Durham anomalous when compared to PNCs for other urban areas (outside London). While other locations may be associated with more than one type of cut (such as Newcastle, below) Durham is associated with the most different types of cuts despite generating only 12 PNCs. The reasons for this are unclear.

The PNCs for Newcastle include references to cuts to swimming pools and libraries (as do PNCs for Swindon), but they are dominated by reports of council proposals for "cutting its arts budget by 100%" (*The Guardian*, February 12, 2013). This story accounts for multiple PNCs and is reported from January to June 2013, with articles reporting on celebrity opposition to the cuts and quoting theatre representatives and councilors. The proposed cuts led to protests outside council buildings and were reportedly only stopped after direct intervention from London-based politician Harriet Harman (then shadow Culture Secretary). Thus, one of the consequences of austerity-based cuts situated in Newcastle had a solution that was London-based.

To contrast the apparent centrality of London, the PNCs for Leeds, Liverpool and Sheffield make reference to the northern powerhouse – a government proposal announced in 2014 by George Osbourne to boost economic growth in northern cities. The PNCs for Leeds paint a mixed picture, with negative consequences of austerity such as job cuts and closing playgrounds ("Leeds playgrounds face axe" [*The Guardian*, August 12, 2010]) contrasted with job creation and claims that "It's as if the recession never happened" (*The Guardian*, 20 July 2011). The apparent contradictions in the PNCs for Leeds can potentially be explained by the fact that it is described as "a major economic hub" (*The Guardian*, October 19, 2010) in the north of England. Thus, it can be seen to be affected by austerity-based cuts, but because of its relatively strong economy (compared with other similar urban centres and other locations in the north more generally) the effects of austerity are not depicted to be as severe as they are in other locations.

The two other major northern cities in The Guardian's PNCs are Manchester and Liverpool. Manchester is associated with protests, political speeches, and Party conferences, as in The Daily Telegraph. There are also reports of council cuts and devolved budgets, which relates to the northern powerhouse proposal, references to NHS cuts and job cuts in the police force. In Liverpool, PNCs include reports of library closures and UK-wide protests against austerity. But what makes the Liverpool PNCs unique (outside London) is their focus on the impacts of austerity on Liverpool in comparison to elsewhere. Liverpool is home to the "poorest". It is described as the "hardest hit" and facing large cuts in per-person government spending (14-15).

14) Cuts, what cuts? <u>Dorset</u> is almost untouched while <u>Liverpool</u> is hardest hit (*The Guardian*, June 15, 2013)
15) How can it be right that in <u>Liverpool</u> we face a £252 cut per person, while others face cuts of only £30 per person? (*The Guardian*, January 1, 2013)

The depiction of Liverpool in The Guardian's PNCs is thus in direct contrast to its association with the northern powerhouse.

Two smaller urban areas are worthy of note for their anomalous nature. Bradford (12 PNCs) is characterised, like Liverpool, as being "battered by austerity cuts" (*The Guardian*, December 6, 2016) and having "the fastest-growing unemployment rate in the country" (*The Guardian*, October 15, 2012), but there are also mentions of Bradford residents living "ordinary lives" (*The Guardian*, April 2, 2012) and the government being out of touch. Furthermore, the PNCs for Bradford include quotations from people who live in the area and have direct experiences of the impacts of austerity-based policies. Finally, Brighton's 15 PNCs include references to an

anti-austerity budget, framed by quotes from Green Party members as "Brighton and Hove versus this government" (*The Guardian*, December 16, 2013).

To summarise, there are several areas, particularly in the north of England, associated with specific ramifications of austerity policies. The depth of cuts is illustrated by Newcastle's proposed 100% cut to its arts budget, while the range of cuts is illustrated by the PNCs for Durham. While several areas are associated with specific cuts, some urban areas, despite generating many PNCs, are associated only with generic cuts to services – usually services for which local councils control the budget. This more generic reference was particularly characteristic of the Birmingham PNCs, with *Birmingham* tending to be used as a metonym for (the actions of) Birmingham City Council. Generic references to local council cuts treat austerity as an abstract idea imposed upon institutions (by the London-based government), which these institutions then impose on others. There is little evidence that either newspaper focuses on austerity as lived experience.

Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland
The final section of the analysis examines the PNCs outside England, thus moving geographically and conceptually further away from London. In The Daily Telegraph there were 49 PNCs (15.76%) for areas in Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland. Of these, 44 PNCs refer to places within Scotland, with the majority generated by *Edinburgh* (16 PNCs) and *Glasgow* (12 PNCs). They tended towards reports of political speeches or the use of *Edinburgh* as a metonym for the devolved Scottish government (16).

> 16) Its calculations assume that <u>Edinburgh</u> implements all of the tax increases and spending cuts already announced by the UK Government (*The Daily Telegraph*, March 5, 2014)

Wales and Northern Ireland are not associated with austerity at a local level in The Daily Telegraph. There are only three PNCs in Wales (one for Cardiff, two for Swansea) and two PNCs in Northern Ireland (both Belfast) which cannot be generalised from.

There are more PNCs for locations in Scotland (55 PNCs), Northern Ireland (14), and Wales (15) in The Guardian, but proportionally, the 84 PNCs for places outside England account for just 7.35% of The Guardian's PNCs: 8.41 percentage points lower than the same figure for The Daily Telegraph. This shows that The Guardian is more England-centric than The Daily Telegraph in its localisation of austerity; it was five times more likely to refer to London than places in Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland combined.

In Scotland, much as with The Daily Telegraph, The Guardian reports on speeches made by politicians, particularly concerning devolution and the powers of the Scottish government to control taxes, with *Edinburgh* (12 PNCs) being used as a metonym. The prominence of references to speeches suggests that places outside England only become relevant to austerity debates when visited by politicians providing sound bites. In Glasgow (30 PNCs) the PNCs tended to focus on protests against cuts (17) and austerity in general, but these were characterised as just one site of UK-wide collective action. While focusing on the widespread nature of the protests, The Guardian is still focused on London, as it only reports attendance figures for the capital.

> 17) Meanwhile the biggest under-reported story of the weekend was surely the <u>London</u>, <u>Glasgow</u> and <u>Belfast</u> marches and rallies against the cuts, which saw nurses, teachers, doctors, community groups, pensioners and others coming onto the streets in big numbers – at least 100,000 in London (*The Guardian*, October 22, 2012)

Wales is also associated with anti-austerity protests, with five of the 12 PNCs for Cardiff referring to one march in May 2015 which was newsworthy because Welsh singer Charlotte Church participated. As with *Edinburgh* (discussed above) *Cardiff* is a metonym for the Welsh government and there were also references to a report on Welsh poverty rates. Finally, for Northern Ireland, 12 of the 14 PNCs were generated by Belfast, with the majority focusing on disagreements about austerity-related welfare reform policies within the Northern Irish government and their potential impact on the relationship between Belfast and Westminster. Thus, except for Glasgow, The Guardian's reports of austerity outside England tended to focus on politics, with place-names occurring as metonyms for governments and ultimately relating to the top-down imposition of austerity-based policies decided in London.

Discussion and Conclusions

To answer the research questions directly, links are made between austerity and geographical locations by both newspapers. However, such links are very infrequent, accounting for only 0.77% and 0.31% of the original query hits in The Guardian and The Daily Telegraph, respectively. This may be explained by the fact that austerity and its impacts are difficult to pinpoint directly. In this sense, austerity is similar to poverty, which can only be measured by proxy (i.e. through reference to income or unemployment statistics). However, in contrast to the present findings, Paterson and Gregory's (2019, 78) analysis of poverty and place showed that newspapers did include stories about individuals, which tied poverty to specific lived experiences, something which does not occur in relation to austerity. It may be worth

investigating whether austerity becomes more localised in media texts (or other texts) over time, as austerity-based policies are relatively recent. As such, it may take time for newspapers to report on their impact at local levels. As discussed above, it is the headline figures which make austerity newsworthy for The Guardian, and it focuses on austerity at a macro as opposed to micro level.

Nevertheless, there are some place-names which are repeated in the PNCs. The PNCs for both newspapers are dominated by references to London (39.20% of The Guardian's PNCs and 44.41% of The Daily Telegraph's) and its districts. Most of the other place-names repeatedly mentioned refer to large urban cities such as Birmingham, Edinburgh, Leeds, Liverpool, and Manchester. Thus, cities in northern England were much more likely to be associated with austerity (in some capacity or other) than cities in southern England of a similar size and/or population density. What the PNCs do not show, however, was a tendency for either newspaper to focus on particularly deprived areas (outside London), as the PNCs clustered at city level, rather than focusing on smaller districts or towns with statistically high levels of deprivation (c.f. the discussion of foodbanks, above).

The two newspapers link austerity and place somewhat differently. The Guardian was more likely to locate anti-austerity protests within geographical space; the existence of protests was enough to generate numerous PNCs in The Guardian, but protests only became newsworthy for The Daily Telegraph when criminality/violence was reported. The Guardian was more likely to label particular areas as home to the poorest in society and focus on public-sector job cuts. The latter reinforces Paterson and Gregory's (2019) finding that The Guardian was more likely to associate public sector redundancies place than The Daily Mail. The Guardian was also more likely to locate austerity temporally as well as geographically, making more reference to the 1948 Olympics and the historical context of UK austerity, although some such references also occurred in The Daily Telegraph. The Guardian and The Daily Telegraph see London as the epicentre of austerity – with the former doing this most systematically – drawing on the ideas that it is both deeply affected and "the engine room of growth".

Unexpectedly, the PNCs did not include references to wider discourses surrounding austerity. There were no references to the systematic abuse of the welfare state (as suggested by George Osbourne, above), nor were there mentions of flawed consumerism, which could easily be applied to the notion that austerity is effectively reining in frivolous spending. Similarly, neither

newspaper engaged with the notion that "we're all in this together". Rather, London was both the primary site of austerity and a metonymic institution with the power to impose austerity elsewhere. This somewhat contradicts Clarke and Newman's position that pro-austerity arguments have shifted to local responsibilities; the analysis of the PNCs shows that when austerity is localised, it is likely to be associated with the top-down imposition of cuts, rather than local areas taking more responsibility for welfare (with Brighton as one potential exception). The use of metonymy served to position place-names as acting upon people rather than situating events or lived experiences in geographical space. Thus, there is scope for future GTA to analyse the role of metonymy in establishing conceptual place.

While The Guardian appears to take the overarching position that austerity (policies) are ultimately negative, it does not use place to challenge – in the present dataset at least – the underlying neoliberalism which informed government cuts to the welfare state. As expressed by David Cameron (above) the Conservative Party sees individuals using their agency to gain employment as the answer to austerity. There is no discussion in the co-text of the PNCs of the fact that cuts to jobs and services resulting from austerity stand in direct contrast to Cameron's position. Thus, the present findings sit somewhat outside the wider literature on austerity (and related topics such as poverty and benefits receipt) as they do not provide evidence for often-found discourses, such as the contrast between the deserving and undeserving poor or references to scroungers and/or benefits fraud (Baker and McEnery 2015; van der Bom et al. 2018). This absence of wider debate or reference to established discourses is likely due to the newspapers' macro-level focus on "austerity as imposed by London" as opposed to the micro-level lived experiences of (groups of) individuals easily located in geographical space.

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Notes

[1] The simplest solution is to encourage collaboration between scholars with access to geoparsing software and those who are interested to learn.

[2] (*austerit*|budget[s,]|crisis|cut[s,]|debt[s,]|deficit[s,]|economy|economies|government[s,]|growth|inflation|measure[s,]|plan[s,]|policy|policies|programme[s,]|rate[s,]|recession[s,]|reform[s,]|rise|spending|tax*)

[3] *Theme* is used here in its general sense (in relation to topic, subject, etc.) rather than in the narrower definition used in systemic functional linguistics.