# Governing the Local: Sovereignty, Social Governance and Community Safety

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### Introduction: Governmentality and sovereignty – a realist perspective

There has been much commentary about the re-ordering of the relations between nation state government, geographical territory, and populations in the advanced liberal democracies. This is seen as a product of: increasing demographic and cultural diversity due to legal and illegal migration; economic, cultural, and political global interdependence; footloose mobility of capital and the outsourcing of jobs to poorer countries; the growing power of international corporations and financial markets; and the growth of supra-national bodies like the European Union and The North Atlantic Free Trade Association, the World Trade Organisation, and (debatably), the UN. These developments are held to be associated with the gradual demise of the model of the increasingly secular nation state first crystallised by the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648. This conception provided a mutual, guarantee of states' jurisdiction over territory and populations through their legitimated attempts to monopolise the use of force. Though, the relations between these states have always been asymmetrical and often challenged (Hunter 1998).

This article explores the continuum of commentary about these issues, including tensions between a cosmopolitan universalistic ideology deployed by liberal professional elites and the more communitarian and nationalist ideologies deployed by politicians of the right. The latter emphasise the struggle for sovereign control of populations and neighbourhoods at local level. In exploring these themes this article develops a realist version of Governmentality theory, highlighting the interaction between governance from above and below. This is applied in a grounded way to the analysis of the local governance of community safety in the UK Thames Valley region. It identifies the political economic shifts in the region, then examines the local governmental responses to these changes, emphasising how, notwithstanding the hegemony of the political right in the region, well organised liberal networks of crime control professionals. They created a protective shield of cosmopolitan, universalistic values and policies against deeper communitarian and nationalistic sensibilities and strategies of governance. This facilitated the pioneering of a range of liberal, holistic, community safety initiatives that reconstruct `social` governance at local levels. Finally, the wider implications of these governmental shifts are explored, and tensions in the struggles to maintain collective solidarity in the contested terrain of the nation state, represented at local level.

### Nation and the continuum of commentary

At one end of the continuum of commentary is the view that the reallocation of sovereign power involves a hollowing out of the nation state (an entity increasingly subordinate to market pressures), upwards to supra-national bodies and downwards to regional and local levels of increasingly pluralistic governance. These traverse the boundaries between statutory, voluntary and commercial sectors (Jessop 2000; Bobbitt 2002). It is also thought that the

culturally and ethnically diverse populations living within its borders are less likely to identify patriotically with it. Related to this is the concern that very high levels of immigration are empirically associated – at least in the short term - not just with a retreat of cultural groups into separate enclaves in the neighbourhoods most affected, but also with distrust of others and a retreat by individuals and families from collective life. This is associated with a diminution of social capital, in the forms that facilitate bridging across ethnic, religious, and other sensitive cultural and spatial boundaries. This is despite the economic and cultural vibrancy associated with demographic diversity. Furthermore, this is linked to concerns that for people from minority populations, loyalty to the nation of residence may conflict with loyalties to kinship, ethnic, religious and national identities and networks rooted in what are deemed `homelands` or globally scattered diaspora populations (Putnam 2007).

At the other end of the continuum of commentary, it is argued that claims about globalisation and the demise of the nation state are exaggerated. Behind the supposedly ascendant markets, the nation remains the key economic and political unit.In times of financial crisis commercial corporations cling to the protective legal and fiscal skirts of nation states and dependency on the increasingly important `sovereign` wealth funds accumulating in the state coffers of oil rich and new industrial economies of the middle east and the east Asia. Moreover, the nation state remains the principal agency authorising the reallocation of sovereign powers upwards and downwards. In this view, international law, the International Criminal Court, and other international bodies at best only function through delegated state powers. Some defenders of social democratic welfare states argue that only the nation state has the political and cultural solidarity and legitimacy to warrant `social` government understood as the sharing of life's risks by the broad actuarial pool of citizens funding state services. This enables the transfer, through taxation of the middling economically active classes, of resources that makes possible the infrastructure of re-distributive and welfare-oriented domestic public services and developmental aid to poor countries (Hirst and Thompson 1996; Stenson 1999; Lea and Stenson 2007).

This range of commentary raises deeper questions about public support for state policies. Who is the public and how is it given general cultural representation, given that citizenship is not simply defined in narrowly legal terms through membership of a national polity? In practice, it is claimed, nation states have always been dominated by particular (though evolving) ethnic groups (Smith 1986), and there are limits to the degree of demographic diversity and social inequality a majority population can tolerate before popular support for universal and re-distributive public services collapses. To work, a welfare state must feel like a `We`, an extended family or community willing to share life's risks and provide mutual support. It becomes difficult to maintain this public mood to the extent that people lose faith in the equity of and rationales for the distribution of social housing and other scarce public services and goods.These concerns used to be confined largely to the parties of the racist right in Europe, but are now salient in the liberal centre ground, indeed may be associated with the attempts to defend liberal, western freedoms and welfare systems (Goodhart 2004; Dench et al 2006). The neo-conservative variant of this theme, while downplaying the welfare function of the state views the shoring up of the legal, military and other physical security apparatuses of nation states as vital for domestic order, the war against terror and the global promotion of American-style market liberal democracy (Fukuyama 2004). Clearly, forms of Westphalian, liberal democratic polity vary. In Europe, for example, state formations and their corresponding forms of citizenship range from the radically de-confessionalised, secular republicanism of France to the forms of multiculturalism historically found in Britain and the

Netherlands (Esping-Andersen 1990; Delanty 2000; Cavadino and Dignan 2006). These models are protean; they evolve and borrow from each other. In the UK, for example, there is a shift from tolerating culturally separate minorities (loosely defined under the heading of multiculturalism) and the old reliance on implicitly defined identities of citizenship and nationality. The shift is towards more explicit ways to define and promote an inclusive Britishness. This occurs amidst a resurgence of a narrowly `English`, rather than British nationalism and a resurgent Celtic nationalism, with devolved parliaments in Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland.

However, under these conditions, how is social order maintained, and how are links maintained between the nation state and populations within its borders, defined in terms of particularistic criteria, such as region, city, ethnicity, religion, class, sexuality, and lifestyle? Nation building in the 19th and 20th centuries tried to unify and discipline populations through identities transcending local religious and other particularistic identities. This opened the door to liberal, universalistic values and identities that, ultimately, transformed into the institutions and rhetoric of universal human rights. Yet, nation states have always remained particularistic and exclusive in relation to each other. In practice, the emotive themes and symbols of nation usually involve an uneasy mix of civic and ethnic nationalism. The former is open to all including immigrant newcomers and characterises great, demographically diverse metropolises like Paris, London, Sydney, and New York. The latter, and probably dominant, mode among the general population, located in smaller settlements, is more responsive to those who feel a centuries old attachment with blood, soil, and geographical place. In practice, ethnic and civic nationalism bleed into each other (Dench 1986; Gellner 1983; Stenson 1998).

This is especially pertinent in European countries, which do not yet define themselves as countries of mass immigration. In turn, philosophically, these debates are manifest in the generations old arguments between the proponents of universalist, human rights based liberalism and variants of communitarianism. The latter emphasises the need for policy makers to prioritise the needs, security, culture and rights of majority populations over those of individuals, minorities and non-citizens (Hughes 2007; Tan 2005). This is manifest in the newspapers of the right dominating the print media market at national and local levels, reflecting and reinforcing popular opinion in the middle mass of working and commercial (if not always public sector) middle classes (Hitchens 2004; Phillips 2006; Stenson 2008).

These debates generate alternative positions. For example, the universal human rights position, sometimes termed `cosmopolitan universalism` (or cosmopolitan justice), highlights the allegedly universal human rights of individuals and minorities, as opposed to the interests of the rich and powerful and/or potentially tyrannical majority populations (Loader and Walker 2007: 256-8). This human rights ideology downplays the particularistic features of the nation that may command allegiance among the majority population. It argues that the glue binding the population and authorising government may include a blend of particularistic, communal and civic identities based on ethnicity, religion, lifestyle and so on, and notions of universalistic and human rights, derived from the liberal values of the 18th c Enlightenment and enshrined in the UN declaration of human rights and other key texts. The nation is, hence, at most, a `community of communities` (Parekh 2000). Yet, it remains unclear how such a volatile, intellectual mix, stripped of the proven power of flag-draped, nationalism, could win and maintain the support of majority populations. How can it persuade them to acknowledge the reality of `human rights`, and consent to funding universal public services and providing

safety nets for the poor, the vulnerable, those outside labour markets, and non-citizens, entering through perceivably porous national borders (Stenson and Edwards 2003, 2004)?

**Governmentality, from discourse to realism**
The work of the Governmentality school can provide a narrative for these changes. The dominant versions of this approach eschew detailed realist, institutional analysis, and, relying on analyses of key texts, chart the shifting mentalities, or rationalities of liberal rule (Rose et al 2006). Their narrative traces shifts from early, free market models, sceptical about the role of the state, to variants of social, welfarist, governments. In these, philanthropic movements and states extended the agendas of government into biopolitics: the fostering of the health, wealth, discipline, and well-being of populations. The narrative then moves to New Right models from the late 1970's that have created `advanced liberalism`. Through the fostering of self-governance, deregulation, targeted social interventions, privatisation, introduction of market disciplines into the public services and so on, this has transformed the relations between state and civil society, and indeed blurred the conceptual distinction between them. They emphasise the shift beyond `social` modes of government to the logic of risk management, government beyond the state, and fostering the governance and risk sharing by smaller communities. These are understood, not as ready-made social groups, but as rhetorical devices deployed to encourage people to mobilise locally. This approach shows how changing modes of expertise and knowledge make populations thinkable, map-able, measurable, and sorted into hierarchies for the purposes of government (Stenson 2000a).

This article provides a realist version of this perspective, applied to a grounded analysis of liberal rule focussing on the promotion of community safety, encapsulating concerns ranging from incivilities, fear, crime, and its causes. This approach emphasises not just discourses, but also their linkages with governmental institutions and practices, and also formal and informal local political relations (Stenson 1998, 2005). It is illustrated by reference to research in a part of predominantly affluent middle England, neglected by social science. It focuses on variations in re-ordering government at these levels, and the enduring centrality of the processes involved in the struggle for sovereignty, re-allocated by central nation state ministries to local agencies. At root, this refers to the use or threat of use of coercion to maintain control over geographical territory and populations in the name of sovereign law. However, it also includes `soft power`, the efforts to weld populations, for some purposes, into a common, authoritative culture of sovereign nationhood. We should recognise that debates about sovereignty usually refer to the workings of the central state or inter-state relations, yet for most citizens the key issues of sovereignty are linked with community safety and concern who is in control of the town centres, highways, malls, transport hubs, residential neighbourhoods and other spaces that they inhabit and move between (Stenson 2005).

Strengthening sovereign control includes building collective solidarity through nation-building and other means at different spatial scales, including the reinforcement of solidarity by demonising deviant minorities as `other` to the respectable mainstream (Young 1999). For example, the UK New Labour administration have, through anti-social behaviour and control orders, curfews and other measures of crime prevention and reduction, emphasised retaking sovereign control over perceivably disorderly inner city and social housing areas (Stenson and Edwards 2003; Gilling 2007). Thus, New Labour aims to reconnect with its core constituency via law and order policies. The Government's Social Exclusion Unit in its first two terms of office orchestrated much of this strategy. Targeted provision has worked through a plethora of initiatives, ranging from working family tax credits to Health and Education Action Zones to urban regeneration, or `sustainable communities` strategies targeting marginal

neighbourhoods and decaying or disorderly urban centres. However, these policies have not stopped the gulf of inequality widening (Thomas and Dorling 2007; Raco 2007). In part, this is because the notions of exclusion embedded in policy have tended to highlight issues of crime, anti-social behaviour and other behavioural characteristics, rather more than issues of poor housing, low pay, and others relating to inequality (Watt and Jacobs 2000). This emphasis on sovereignty forms part of the shift towards the targeting of policy and resources towards poor areas and marginal groups and away from universalistic, egalitarian policies. This stems from the meta-dilemma of centre ground governments, which provides a frame for crime control and other areas of policy: they reach out to the disaffected `excluded` populations while not unduly hurting the pockets of the economically comfortable majority. Central to this is the construction of knowledge about high-risk populations through the use of risk assessment and management strategies (Feeley and Simon 1994). This includes attempts to discourage welfare dependency, and encourage and reward those willing to help themselves through improving their marketability to employers.

Furthermore, the struggle for sovereignty, involving attempts to govern from above in the name of sovereign law and the state and major corporate interests, interacts with sites of `governance from below`. The pressures to strengthen sovereign control come from groupings `below` in civil society, as well as from economically dominant institutions and networks. This involves recognising the eternal struggle for territorial dominance, or governing from below, which operates even in the absence of a sovereign state. These phenomena have been relatively neglected by Governmentality theorists. Networks and other sites of governance from below aim to control their territories with a range of cognitive, persuasive, coercive, and other tools. They include mobilised `communities` ranging from ethnic, religious, lifestyle groupings, to youths struggling over the dominance of street turf, to paramilitary and organised crime networks which can offer fundamental challenges to, and sometimes accommodation with sovereign authorities (Stenson 2005; Lea and Stenson 2007).

This Realist Governmentality perspective emphasises the role of politics, local culture, and habitus – including shared emotional and cognitive dispositions - in restructuring governance. These operate in everyday thinking and form part of shared oral cultures at every social level (Bourdieu 1990). This approach escapes over-reliance on archives and policy texts as evidence of the existence and effects of liberal mentalities. Within local political cultures, there is discretion and choice, in which political leadership and decision-making are crucial in shaping policy-making and practice. Global economic influences are interpreted differentially in the light of different cultural dispositions and political coalitions at international, national, regional, and local spatial scales (Hirst and Thompson 1996). In Western Europe, the British occupy the neo-liberal and neo-conservative end of the continuum of political culture and choice. To a greater extent, other western European governments have continued to apply Keynesian policies, supporting the public services, `smokestack` industries, and the working class constituencies that depend on them (Hutton 1995). This analysis deploys a range of data sources and methods, including ethnographic exploration of mentalities and practices in oral culture. In political and policy-making processes, key discourses unfold in the interplay between talk and text. Policy documents are intelligible within the practical contexts in which they are produced and have an impact. Hence, this approach to governance avoids narrow discourse analysis and integrates the field into mainstream realist social science (in its non-Marxist forms), using a mix of methods and data sources (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007).

The need for this was evident to this author and his colleagues in studying attempts by statutory authorities to govern unpopular and stigmatised areas of social housing in the

Thames Valley (Stenson and Watt 1999a and b). We analysed shifts in local economic and community development policy through focusing on key texts. However, this was also informed by our knowledge of local social history, interviews, and our close relationships with a range of local government and other key players in the statutory services, and also, by our attendance at meetings where disputes and compromises were ironed out before the production of tidy policy texts. We also attended public meetings, interviewed residents, conducted questionnaire-based surveys, asked respondents to draw cognitive maps of their neighbourhoods and other significant places, and observed patterns of interaction and the built environments in key areas. In our study of young people's perception and use of public spaces and their patterns of informal governance, in addition to semi-structured interviews we employed ethnographic observation. This approach facilitates examination of the interaction between general trends and local settings (Stenson 1998, 1999; Stenson and Watt 1999a; Stenson and Edwards 2001; Stenson 2002). Let us now illustrate these themes and methods by examining community safety in the Thames Valley.

**Thames Valley: restructuring and relative deprivation**
The Thames Valley police service serves three affluent, mostly Conservative voting, English counties, Oxfordshire, Berkshire, and Buckinghamshire. This includes 2.1 million people (and rising) in 2,200 square miles of predominantly rural, beguiling, landscape populated by some of the wealthiest people in Europe. The picturesque rural imagery has become globally familiar via the hugely popular Inspector Morse detective TV series, set here, and with a high count of murder victims in the prettiest locations. This prime beneficiary of Thatcherite neo-liberalism attracted new corporations at the cutting edge of the global economy, enjoying rising employment levels and prosperity, and – notwithstanding Morse's work-load - falling aggregate rates of officially recorded crime. The region is associated not only with farming and rural tourism but also the rapid expansion of hi-tech based, and financial and other new service industries. The corridors around the M25, M4, and M40 motorways are where Thames meets Silicon Valley. Local managers of global corporations carry clout with local statutory authorities and central ministries and the region's economy is a driver of growth for the region and the UK.

In 2006, 29% of its employees worked in the knowledge economy against a national average of 17% and 80.3% of its eligible population were employed, against a UK average of 74.3%. One third of the political wards of this sub-region fall in the 10% least deprived areas in the UK and one third of workers had a university degree against a national average of a quarter. Reinforcing a long-term trend between April 2007 and January 2008 there was a 7.5% overall reduction in reported crime (Deloitte 2006). Its settlements do not score high enough on the standard measures of deprivation in order to have attracted more than minimal EU or central government grants for urban, regeneration `Sure Start` and other family support and youth services targeted towards the poor and perceivably risky. Moreover, neither Conservative nor New Labour administrations have provided much assistance to declining industries here, and the populations that depended on them. Hence, in social Darwinist mode, markets found their own levels to the material – if not always spiritual - benefit of the majority. Nevertheless, another side to this picture is concealed by benign aggregate statistics for the region and particular local authorities and other public agencies. To mix the standard metaphors, there are significant pockets, threads, and hotspots of deprivation, crime, physical and mental ill-health, unemployment, welfare dependency, illegal drug and alcohol abuse, housing need, and other inter-related social problems in this region. This affects those who have gained little

from economic growth, and those migrating from other regions, and abroad, to work in low paid economic sectors.

This region illustrates white flight. Through rapid internal UK migration, large numbers of educated, skilled middle and affluent working class people have joined the longer settled affluent rural and suburban populations. In addition to seeking employment, they could be seen as fleeing the ethnic and cultural diversity, social problems, and conflicts of the cities, seeking secure work, and the dream of a white, English rural idyll. The sale of rural social housing and the invasion of villages by wealthy commuters have increased property values and pushed the rural poor into nearby urban areas and into deprived, isolated, rural and semi-rural locations (Stenson and Watt 1999b). In the more isolated areas the police and other governing agents seldom visit and police, council and other agencies struggle to exercise sovereign authority. In such neighbourhoods, troubles are rarely reported to officialdom and informal modes of *governance from below* over local territory, in the forms of vigilantism, organised crime, and patriarchal domestic violence partially fill the vacuum. With only around 4000 officers for over two million residents in a large area with clogged roads hampering response times to incidents, the Thames Valley has one of the worst ratios of officers per citizen in the UK. Despite the region's rural image, towns and cities, notably, Oxford, Reading, Slough, Aylesbury, Milton Keynes and High Wycombe, account for a high proportion of officially recorded, and un-reported, crime and related social problems, including the most visible and concentrated areas of deprivation.

Ancient `town and gown` tensions between the academic community and other citizens in Oxford have been exacerbated by the rapid expansion of a wealthy professional class. Their lifestyles contrast sharply with those who rely on the shrinking manufacturing base clustering around the car industry, the low paid reaches of the service sector, and welfare dependency. This was manifested in public order disturbances on the city's Blackbird Leys social housing estate during the 1990's. Oxford and its surrounding villages, like the other major towns in the region, have experienced a rapid expansion in illegal drugs economies and related crime patterns (Rose 2001). Similarly, the concentration of social problems in the poorer areas of Reading reflect the contraction of employment in traditional manufacturing in, for example, food production and transport, while hosting some of the most significant corporate players in the new economy: Microsoft, IBM, and Cisco Systems.

In Slough, the industries clustering around Mars, the confectionery giant, have contracted, but IT-based and chemical industries have expanded. Adult residents with no qualifications are above the national average and only 21.1% have degrees against a UK average of 26.2% (Deloitte 2006). Research with colleagues on street populations and police stop and search practice revealed that significant white flight from the town resulted in an urban street population more strongly skewed towards the presence of visible ethnic minorities than would be predicted by the residential population profile of the 1991 and 2001 censuses (Waddington et al 2004). With an officially recognised 37% immigrant population, as in other UK urban centres, there were misgivings about significant under-counting of legal and illegal immigrants resident in the town during the census.

These gained national prominence in 2006 when Slough's town council, joined by other local authorities facing similar problems, lobbied central Government to recognise - from a perspective claiming to represent the longer settled population groups - the dramatic escalation in immigration, the strain this placed on schools, health, social housing and other local public services, the threat to social cohesion this posed, and the need for increased

central government grant aid to the local authority. For example, according to the UK Office of National Statistics figures 300 international migrants settled in Slough in 2004. Yet, according to the council in that year 9000 new National Insurance numbers were issued to new employees, only 150 of whom were British nationals (BBC News 24, 02/06/06). This enhanced the potential for tension in police-minority, and inter-communal relations, presenting a significant challenge for community policing and community safety policies.

Wycombe District includes a ring of wealthy, white commuter villages around the historic town of High Wycombe, a major industrial centre that had been the centre of the UK furniture and allied industries. About 20% of the town's population are from the visible ethnic minorities, mainly those of Pakistani Muslim origin. These groups and the poorer white people living in the three major areas of social housing were the principal casualties of the sharp decline in large-scale furniture manufacturing, paper mills and allied industries. By UK standards, there were high levels (hidden within aggregates) of deprivation, crime and victimisation in particular areas and among both poor white and ethnic minority populations. These disproportionately provided referrals to stretched children's services, social work teams, drugs action, and other ameliorative and regulatory agencies. Echoing other Thames Valley towns, these groups lacked the education and skills that would enable them to adapt to the burgeoning hi-tech and services-based labour markets.(Stenson and Watt 1999a).

Given that living costs were higher and transport and other public services more threadbare than in poorer parts of the country, the conditions of deprived people – away from the eyes of the affluent - were grim and fear of crime and incivility widespread in urban areas. Furthermore, the presence of great wealth can create a profound sense of relative deprivation. Schools polarised along class and ethnic lines. A study of the perceptions and uses of public space by young people of different ethnicities demonstrated how this reinforced social differentiation and conflict between groups of young people (Watt and Stenson 1998). Predictably, in addition to hot spots of volume crime, the town centre experienced public order disturbances, as did one of the estates with high levels of crime and deprivation, attracting national publicity (BBC2, 1998). This was reinforced by global media attention in 2006 after the arrest of four young Moslem men and the evacuation of a house in one of our research location neighbourhoods, as part of a major police investigation of a plot to blow up aircraft. This followed local concern about the activities of extremist Jihadi groups trying to recruit young local residents (BBC News 24, 10/08/06).

Fear and anxiety that focus on crime and incivilities crystallise shared concerns within local cultures about inter-related social changes and problems, poorly, or only partially, articulated and represented within the formal political process. Furthermore, targeting resources nationally to the most marginal has meant that this growing region has attracted scant research funding for social problems research.

**Local political culture and managing social dislocation: liberal enclaves and the protective shield of the social**
There is much agreement on the critical left of social science that, particularly in Anglophone countries enthusiastically endorsing the shift from `social` to neo-liberal/neo-conservative government, there has been a toughening of crime control and criminal justice policies, and a re-coding of others under their heading. This ranges from the diminishing tolerance of minor, youthful incivilities, to zero tolerance policing, to punitive sentencing and expanding prison populations (Pratt et al. 2005). At the level of local community safety policies co-ordinated by public authorities this means a disproportionate focus on controlling the conduct of those seen

as `other` to `respectable` workers and consumers with good credit ratings: the poor, the marginal and poorer ethnic minorities, rather than the crimes of the privileged and the corporations (Gilling 2007). There is much force in this argument, especially in the UK, where since the 1980's local government has had diminished tax raising powers and scope to challenge central state policies. It could be seen as particularly so in this overwhelmingly Conservative region, a major market for right wing national newspapers, where many local councillors and media outlets promoted punitive policies and attendant explanations of crime highlighting moral failings rather than poverty. Much of this crime and community safety rhetoric reproduced the themes of communitarian/majoritarian, and ethnic rather than civic nationalist ideology. Problem populations were deemed `other` to the `respectable`, mainstream majority, whose security and attachment to place should be prioritised (Stenson 2002).

Yet, emphasising political culture and agency, there is no mechanistic link between the nature of the local economic, demographic, and social patterns and diverse local political cultures. These filter perceptions of social problems, the local interpretation of central government policy, and local policy responses. With historic roots, political cultures vary richly at the levels of county and local district and borough, in addition to the particular cultural milieux one finds in voluntary sector, police, and other statutory sector agencies, occasioning turf wars and misunderstandings between them. In addition, the development of multi-agency partnerships has created additional discretionary space for relatively autonomous and unifying professional perspectives across agency and district boundaries (Edwards and Benyon 2000).

Local shifts in political coalitions, involving political negotiation, contingency, and chance, can make a significant difference. The collation and presentation of data, beyond what is statutorily required, are political issues. Local authorities, like central governments, prefer to gather data on issues to which they are willing to devote resources. This reflects the local balance of political forces and the effectiveness of political representation for different population groups and neighbourhoods. Research can help shift the local governmental, intellectual and policy climate.and help lever in extra resources, particularly where poor and marginal groups are better represented.

Tension between targeting the poor and risky, and the commitment to a `social` form of universalism, in equitable service provision, can nonetheless remain central to professional identities and statutory requirements. Let us highlight three overlapping networks which powerfully carried and reproduced liberal, universalistic, `social` ideologies and helped insulate against conservative, communitarian, nationalist moral agendas in the Thames Valley area. Firstly, there were local government officers, including community safety officers. Recent research with the emerging ranks of the latter in local authorities demonstrates considerable commitment to more holistic, `social` approaches to community safety, and resistance to the narrowness and superficiality of central government crime reduction targets. It also emphasises the importance attributed by these personnel to balancing these conflicting demands in the light of diagnoses of local conditions (Hughes and Gilling 2004; Stenson and Watt 1999a).

Secondly, there were progressive police officers accountable to the Queen's law, as manifesting transcendent sovereign authority in relation to sectional local interests, apposite with the Queen's Windsor Castle within the region. Thames Valley Police has long had a liberal culture, hostile to zero tolerance policing rhetoric. It is committed to problem solving, `reassurance`, community, and intelligence-led policing, gender sensitivity in dealing with

rape and domestic violence and involved in experiments in tailored, Australian versions of restorative justice and mediation schemes (Pollard 1997; Stenson 2002; Innes 2004). Low deprivation scores in the region limit central Government funding and the tough reactive policing strategies favoured by many councillors would require dramatic increases in police numbers. This remains politically unlikely. So liberal policing virtue, financed by Home Office funds for progressive pilot, benchmarking schemes, has been partly sculpted from financial necessity.

Thirdly, a major role linking statutory, commercial, and voluntary agencies in the region was played by the Thames Valley Partnership, a progressive multi-agency lobby dedicated to a progressive, holistic, `social`, demographically inclusive approach to community safety. Under the charismatic leadership of its director, it provides regular fora facilitating direct contact and bonding between key players, commissioning research and co-ordinating a variety of interventions. These range from `early interventions` targeted at families and communities at risk to work with offenders.

However, as Partnership personnel have recognised, New Labour's emphasis on targeted crime reduction and strengthening local sovereignty in troubled areas through curfews, anti-social behaviour orders and other measures threaten to dent the protective liberal shield of local, holistic community safety policies emphasising prevention (Thames Valley Partnership 2001: 3; Stenson and Edwards 2003). This signifies limits to the discretionary power of local government and related networks promoting versions of what was earlier described as `cosmopolitan universalism` In addition to exclusion of the poor, the rich may also exclude themselves from the public realm. Their moral withdrawal in the region is symbolised by their diminished involvement in public spaces and services, and a `re-territorialising` of their home spaces in the form of gated communities with twenty-four hour commercial security.

## Conclusion

Realist Governmentality theory integrates political economy with an emphasis on politics, governance, and choice in sub-national settings. Here, a dominant neo-liberal approach to economic policy has allowed a rapid, Darwinian form of economic growth, with minimal help from central government or the EU, for losers in the game. Locally, this has involved a partial shift away from universal, equitable service delivery in favour of attempts to target resources to people and areas representing high needs and risks. This has been orchestrated, in large measure and somewhat independently of, (predominantly Conservative), elected councillors, by the protective, liberal shield of networked governing personnel. Despite the inherent tensions involved in targeting this represents a way of reconstituting holistic, inclusive, cosmopolitan universalistic values and policies that reach out to those who may not be readily included in more traditional conceptions of nation and community. We should recognise that without the liberal protective shield, there would be powerful pressure to define community safety narrowly in terms of a communitarian defence of the middling and better off neighbourhoods, seen as having a deep connection to kin, blood, soil, and place. Outside of this local face of English or British, sovereign nationhood – Inspector Morse's beautiful rural Arcadian back-cloth - are those threatening outsiders living in the poorest areas, viewed as benighted and feral.

It is important to recognise that the struggle for sovereignty at these local levels involves ongoing negotiation with a variety of mobilised `communities`, sites of government from below. These may involve a range of imagined dreams of national and both local and communal solidarity, based on international links between people who identify with diaspora,

emigrant populations. Yet, the broader context within which these political processes occur is fraught with ambiguities and tensions over the meaning and legitimacy of the nature, and contested cultural sources, of sovereignty: in whose name and on which value base is the land and the people on it being ruled? Given this, it usually includes constructions, in both majority and minority populations, of threatening `others` (Young 1999; Stenson 2000b). At micro level, especially with the rapid growth of urban Moslem populations, these tensions can be influenced by post 9/11 tensions about security, also visible in the relations between sovereign nation states. Growing ethnic and religious complexity in these urban areas undermine older, received notions of shared, national, and local identities. This weakens local solidarities, respect for sovereign government and law, and exacerbates mutual suspicion and fear across the boundaries of age, gender, class, and ethnicity (Modood et. al. 1997; Stenson et al. 1999). These populations include significant proportions of disaffected, deprived young men from poor white and black and minority ethnic backgrounds. Many are vulnerable to both criminal victimisation and involvement in offending (Ousley 2001). These interact directly, or indirectly with people in adjoining, more affluent areas, many of whose residents have fled from their perceived urban nightmares to what they hope to be an ethnically and culturally, more traditional picture of Englishness and national life. Constructing a sense of collective civic solidarity in these conditions will present urgent political challenges.

## Acknowledgements

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