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The return of the local

Geoff Mulgan and **Perri 6** signal the local's homecoming with a proposal for **Decentralisation by degrees**

Tom Nairn on the **Incredible shrinking state**: could Andorra and Liechtenstein be the state of things to come?

Liz Greenhalgh and **Ken Worpole** on **The convivial city**. Most people feel uneasy about the cities in which they live. What can be done to make them more habitable?

Peter Hall looks at **Cities of people and cities of bits** and shows why, even in an age of information technology, cities haven't lost their edge

Tony Travers and **Jeroen Weimar** bid for **Syndicated taxes and a new policy to regenerate city centres**

Ian Christie throws **A green light on local power** and argues that environmental policy is now going local

The local's coming home: decentralisation by degrees

Geoff Mulgan and Perri 6†*

Everyone says they want to decentralise power, but how can it be done when there are such variations of competence and legitimacy?

The changing politics of localism

'Local' is an adjective that divides. For some, it is a term of unqualified approbation – 'local people', 'local services', 'local community'. For others, it signifies pettiness – 'parish pump politics' – introversion – 'purely local concerns' – or particularism and incompetence – 'aldermanly amateurism'.¹

Just now it matters a lot which view you take. Since the mid-1970s, local government in Britain has been on a roller coaster. Its revenue spending has increased, and it has acquired new responsibilities in community care and environmental protection. However, swingeing cuts in capital finance, especially for housing in the early 1980s have never been restored, both revenue and capital financing have been subject to more detailed central control, and more detailed specification than ever before

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has precipitated from Westminster and Whitehall about how local government should provide services.

Many in local government still hope the political pendulum will swing back to an era of local discretion, at least in how they might go about their tasks, and perhaps over the resources they can raise locally to do so. But just how much power should be devolved to local government, or to more specialised local agencies? How much should local government control its own revenues? Is the public really any more committed to the town hall than Whitehall?

The public's desire to be involved in decisions varied almost as much as local council capacities to take them. That is why this essay therefore takes a different tack to the usual run of blueprints. It argues that what local government needs is a new set of mechanisms for evolving new powers and legitimacy, rather than a single new settlement for every authority in the land. And it argues for a very different approach to the familiar clichés of subsidiarity, one which distinguishes between different services according to their role in shaping social cohesion.

The global interest in local power

Behind today's debates in Britain is a worldwide interest in decentralisation. Big government has lost its lustre. Distant institutions are felt to be less trusted than ones close at hand. Here, as elsewhere, people want clearly demarcated neighbourhoods, community, and a sense that power is responsive. The rise of communitarianism is one symptom of this, as are the assertion of states' rights in the USA, the free communes movement in the Nordic countries, the creation of more powerful regional authorities in France, and the renaissance of local government in east central Europe after the fall of communism. In much of the world, there is evidence that people want power and a sense of belonging brought right down to the level of the neighbourhood.

In the UK, attitudes to the local rarely fit into fixed political positions. Some on Labour's left hark back to Livingstone's GLC and Blunkett's Sheffield. On the Thatcherite right, there are still neo-Ridleyite Tories who dream of the gradual abolition of local government and its replacement

with contracted local administration. But between them, both Heseltine and Blair favour elected mayors to regalanise local leadership, and commentators ranging from Conservatives like Simon Jenkins to social democrats like David Marquand argue for the return of power to local government. To complicate matters further, the Labour Party may be rediscovering the virtues of central control, just as some on the Conservative Right, such as John Redwood, are abandoning Ridley's vision, scarred by the lesson that centralism means centralisation of blame and perhaps anticipating a period when Conservative-run local government will face a national Labour government.

Many in local government hope for a new and stable 'settlement', of almost constitutional status, in which local authorities will secure both greater autonomy and the status of local *government* as opposed to *administration*. We believe this is misguided.

The era of stable 'settlements' such as the Butskellite welfare state consensus is over. The future tasks and shape of the state will be in continuous flux. Second, there are limits to the local autonomy that is feasible or desirable. Third, myths of 'self-government' are as dangerous at the local level as they are at the level of the nation state. In a time of growing transnational interdependence and external constraint upon governance systems, claims of autonomy and governing power are not absolutes, but make sense only in complex and evershifting structures of interlocking power, competence and legitimacy.

Therefore, the important task for policy-makers who can take a long view is not so much to develop blueprints for a grand settlement, based on empirically fleshing out such theological ideas as 'subsidiarity', but rather to start from where we are and describe desirable and achievable strategies for long term change.

That starting point is a highly centralised system. Centralisation has long been a tradition in British public management. Although the case for a substantial devolution of power to Scotland, Wales and (at least) the North East is overwhelming, much of the centralisation neither can, nor should, be reversed too quickly. Rather, we must gradually shift the terms of trade between the central state and a local tier that will never be truly government, nor merely administration.

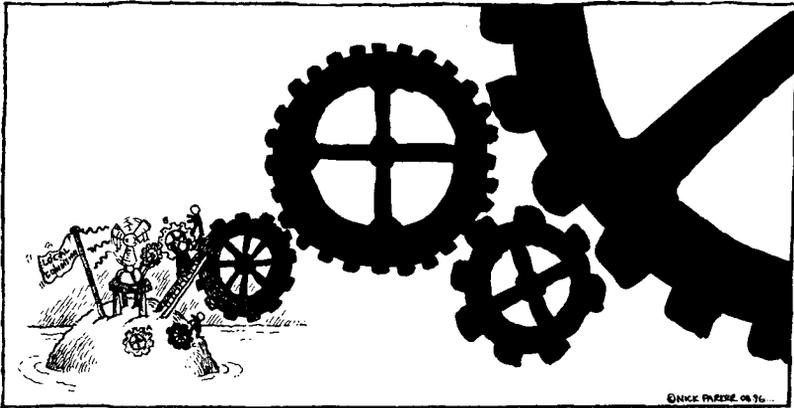
Rethinking the terms of trade between centre and locality

'The era of stable "settlements" such as the Butskellite welfare state consensus is over. The future tasks and shape of the state will be in continuous flux'

Most people want mutually conflicting things for local government. They want more local power, but not councillors elected on a turnout of as little as 20 per cent with unsupervised powers who run things incompetently. People may want more say for local democracy, but they also want national minimum standards for some services. There is no necessary correlation between the geographical unit that is most efficient for the provision of, say, personal social services and the unit that is most efficient for highway maintenance. As technologies change, so too will the economies of scale and scope. Still less is there any necessary correlation between either of those units of efficient service organisation and the unit that can command the most legitimacy to bolster willingness to pay local taxes, or the boundaries of which best respect local identity in order to engender a feeling of 'community governance'. It is for this reason that 'subsidiarity' blueprints about the 'lowest feasible level' are doomed to fail. Indeed, the term often does little more than restate the problem. We therefore consider how the terms of trade might be nudged, in respect of services, organisation, finance and governance.

Services

Because we cannot know in advance what geographical unit will be the most *efficient* for public services as they change in future, it is generally more appropriate to think about the unit of *legitimacy*. More precisely, in asking 'over the financing and organisation of which services should local bodies – councils, local offices of central departments, QUANGOs, etc – have greater local political autonomy, and on what terms?', we need to pay attention to public attitudes about those services which



play an essential role in the *creation of social cohesion across local boundaries* and perhaps even nationally. We identify the following four categories of services. Naturally, our examples are neither exhaustive nor unarguable, but taxonomy is useful in any case:

- *Entitlements seen as baselines of national social cohesion.* These are matters, entitlement to which defines the most elementary level of citizenship of the nation, below which no one should fall, and over which local autonomy should be minimal. For these, local autonomy is not appropriate, not only in the content of what is provided, but even in the financing or organisation. In this category, we might include civil and political voting rights for local representatives, and access to systems of complaint and redress about local services.
- *Services making an essential contribution to inter-territorial social cohesion, but over which there can legitimately be local autonomy in organisation, if not in the scope of entitlement or minimum quality standards.* For these, the public typically expects some common standards to be achieved across the nation. But it is willing to see local initiative and innovation

in *how* those standards are achieved, and by what organisations they are delivered. Into this category we might put social care of elderly people, much of primary and secondary education, job training, taking children into care, coerced detention of mentally ill people causing a danger to others, basic accident and emergency clinical care, trunk road and motorway maintenance, control of contagious diseases and food poisoning risks, perhaps education for basic literacy and numeracy, and riot control. In some cases, there is often a role for local or regional experimentation. For example, Switzerland and Germany allow Cantons and Lander to vary levels of cash benefits locally according to local conditions.

- *Services playing a strategic, systemic role in determining the character of a territory, in which citizens from other regions have an interest but not so overriding as to require national determination in detail of how they are provided and financed.* In this category, we may put such services as C-road maintenance, planning permission for home extensions and minor changes of use and provision of public road transport. Some would argue the provision of social rented housing fits this category.
- *Services mainly of interest to local recipients, for which local autonomy and discretion over service content, quality, financing and organisation have no consequences for inter-territorial social cohesion.* This category includes such services as refuse collection and disposal, amenities and leisure facilities, local law and order, some health services such as the division of labour between out-patient clinics in cottage hospitals and GP-led primary care centres.

The DELFI scheme: Devolving Local Finance Initiative

It is neither desirable nor feasible to grant local authorities, health authorities, TECs and other bodies greater fiscal autonomy wholesale. Central government grants powers to tax and spend, and must bear

the consequences for total public sector levels of spending and borrowing, both at the ballot box and in the gilts markets. Therefore it has the right and duty, *in some measure* to control levels of local spending, tax raising and borrowing, and to specify *in some part* what services are purchased with local taxpayers' money. Lifting capping completely would not be sustainable either fiscally or politically. Recognising this, many authorities would raise taxes and spending to very high levels, and hoard as much as possible before controls came down again, while all taxpayers paid the bill in the form of higher interest rates as well as local and national taxes. Nor are all local authorities equally deserving of equal autonomy in all their activities.

Therefore, it seems sensible to experiment incrementally with greater autonomy on a service-by-service basis, beginning with our last category, and, if this is successful, to move up the scale.

We suggest piloting a scheme for devolving local financing gradually – DELFI, or Devolving Local Finance Initiative. The aim of the scheme is not to empower local government for its own sake, but only to empower the competent authorities to make specific and locally legitimate improvements.

'The aim of the scheme is not to empower local government for its own sake, but only to empower the competent authorities to make specific and locally legitimate improvements.'

Local authorities with council tax levels close to the point at which they risk capping would put proposals to central government, perhaps initially on a competitive basis for up to, say, five licences for increases in budgets and Council Tax levels to finance growth in spending on up to five particular services in the pilot scheme. A licence would permit them to increase their budget level up to a maximum of, say, 115 per cent of the level at which they would otherwise be capped, specifically in order to finance the services for which licences would be granted. Because the Council Tax currently supports only about 15 percent of

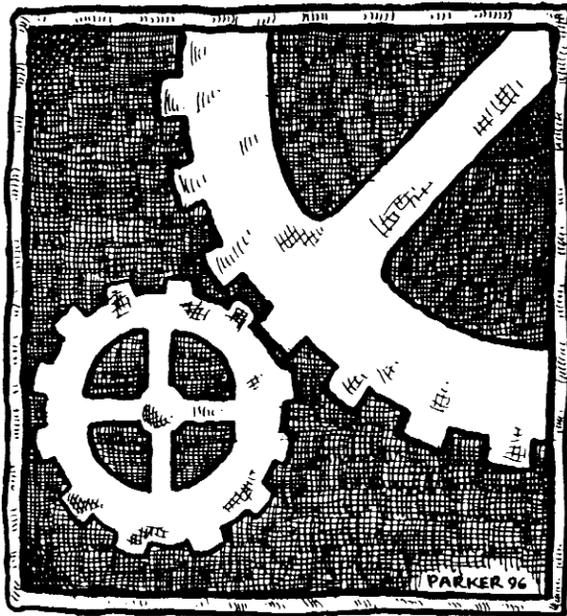
total local government spending, there is a very high gearing effect: in some areas, and for some council tax bands, a 15 per cent budget increase could produce tax increases of up to 30 per cent. Increases of this kind clearly require specific popular mandates. Therefore, if the bid was successful, the proposal for any consequent increase year-on-year in local taxation above a certain absolute level (initially, say, £40 per year per Council Tax bill for a property in band D) would have to be put to the local electors in a referendum (either to coincide with local elections or to stand alone). The tax revenue above what would have been the capping level would then be earmarked for expenditure on the licensed services only. A new licence for the same service could not be granted until four years had expired from the date on which the tax increase authorised by the last one came into effect. An important medium term goal of DELFI would be to lower the gearing ratio.

In many areas, tax increases of this sort carry political risks local politicians would prefer to avoid, and in this form, the scheme might not find many takers. It makes sense, therefore, to look again at the National Non Domestic Rate (NNDR), or business tax which is currently collected and redistributed by central government. Returning the control of whole revenues of business tax to local authorities where it is collected is not politically acceptable in Westminster nor with many businesses. However, local increments of the same 15 per cent order to NNDR could be licensed on the same basis as council tax to provide an earmarked fund for capital spending projects in the local authority of the collection area, subject to a successful poll of local business tax payers and similar service criteria.

In order to be considered, the authority would have already fulfilled certain criteria. Authorities with such educational licences would already have shown they reached certain standards in their processes, and the value added in outcome terms over the previous, say, five years, wherever that can meaningfully be measured. The proposals would have to show the authority had already exhausted the scope for efficiency savings, and that it had – as with the Single Regeneration Budget today – arranged partnerships with the private and voluntary sectors to enhance the service, should the bid for the licence be

successful. If the proposal were approved and went ahead, continuation would be subject to performance gains in value-added outcome for the whole service category, and not only for that proportion financed by the licensed budget increase. Finally, unless there were compelling local reasons otherwise, licences would require that services included were purchased externally or by public-private partnership arrangements. Licensing should not become a charter for municipal enterprise. However, there may be a case for a revision of Treasury rules to allow spending by at least some such joint bodies to be treated, like that of TECs, as private rather than public expenditure.

The licence scheme would treat differently each of the categories of services identified above. In respect of the fourth category of services, performance indicators might be largely locally determined, but when the scheme was extended to the third category, there would be a greater role for nationally set indicators, and the Audit Commission would have a role in setting the range of indicators to be used. Where appropriate,



those indicators should be consulted upon. After a period of some years, an initial limit on the number of services for which such a waiver could be sought by any one local authority would be lifted, provided that all those currently in operation were successful. The consequence would be a rolling devolution of fiscal autonomy, clearly linked to quality.

Many local authorities will complain that this kind of fiscal autonomy is useless to them because their tax bases are too weak to sustain significant increases. This may be true. However, the element of redistribution through equalisation in revenue support grant will remain underneath the DELFI revenue. More fundamentally though, independence implies responsibility. If local government wants some fiscal autonomy, it must accept some measure of the financial self-reliance and responsibility that goes with it.

The scheme would need to be adapted for local agencies such as DHAs and TECs. There is a case that at least some of their income could be raised locally, in addition to central grant aid, where it is for projects of particular local importance, and where the central state has less reason to be concerned with them.

'We need to pay attention to public attitudes about those services which play an essential role in the creation of social cohesion across local boundaries, and perhaps even nationally'

We envisage a modified scheme that would enable them, subject to specific approval by a vote in the full council of the relevant local authority, to raise resources by precepting up to, say, the equivalent to the product of £5.00 per household to be levied upon Council Tax in the same proportions as the local authority uses for its Council Tax banding. Alternatively, the modified scheme would enable them to raise local bonds to the same amount for small capital projects. The same sorts of requirements for prior quality improvements and local referendum support would be imposed as for local authorities. This sort of scheme presupposes a more formal relationship between local appointed bodies and local authorities, and would ensure local

government gained some share of the credit for the success of the quangos' projects, and took fair share of blame for failure. The DELFI scheme would create a programme of rolling fiscal devolution that would empower only the competent authority with popular support for its service plans.

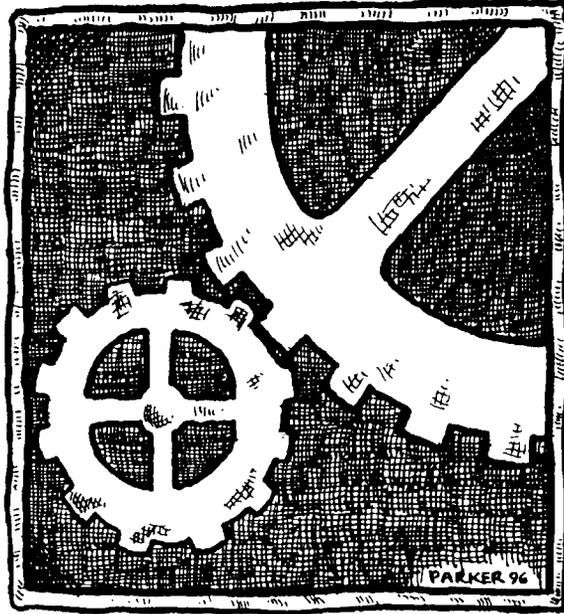
Organisation

We turn now to the question of how far public authorities should be direct providers, and how far purchasers or regulators.

In the short-run, the main arguments concern purchasing at the local level. There are strong arguments that efficiency gains from contracting out result largely, but not wholly, from competition. They also result from some of the incentives that explicit contracting creates for management to resist producer capture. Paradoxically, public purchasers often have more control over services than they had previously as managers. Therefore, in our view, there is a case that compulsory competitive tendering should be retained, but that the system should be designed to ensure continuing competition, or at least contestability. Contracts for ongoing services should last longer than a year, to contribute continuity, control transactions costs and exploit asset specificities, but should not be for longer than, say, two or three years, to ensure asset specificities do not build to the point where the contract is no longer contestable.

However, some of the more rigid aspects of compulsory competitive tendering rules could be relaxed. For example, there is a case that in areas of high unemployment or economic stress, contracts for labour-intensive services could be permitted on criteria that include a preference for providers that hire local long-term unemployed people, or that buy some input services locally or provide training for young people.

Apart from the simple statist view, there are basically three arguments for direct public provision. The first is that private and voluntary providers will not have the 'public service ethos'; the second is that an organisation uninvolved in provision will find it very expensive to buy in the expertise it needs effectively to purchase or regulate; the third is that contracting out results in exploitation. Each of these can be answered.



It is worth remembering there are many aspects of the public service ethos that deserve condemnation rather than celebration – nine-to-five days, job demarcation disputes, poor customer care, etc. While there is some evidence for the claimed erosion in contracted services of progressive attitudes toward some clienteles, there is also evidence from health care that some professionals, at least under certain funding regimes, can offer the best elements of the public service ethos while not being directly salaried by the public sector but under contract to it. Moreover, many elements of the public service ethos – such as accountability to the representative function, user involvement, etc – can either be specifically contracted for, or else incentives can be designed that will elicit these behaviours from private contractors.

The argument that an organisation cannot effectively purchase what it no longer provides applies only in very specific circumstances. Those are where the provider intrinsically has much more information than

either the consumer or the purchaser, where the service is complex and quality hard to define, observe and measure, where capital cannot be substituted for labour in any significant measure, and where providers are highly remunerated professionals. The argument would also apply where only a professional will understand how to purchase or regulate, and where the costs of hiring those professionals to regulate or purchase from their fellows and inducing them to transfer their loyalty to the purchasing side are very high and expected to rise over time. Ironically, in view of the development of the internal market in health care, these conditions are much more likely to apply, if ever, in specialist health purchasing by DHAs than they are in the case of local authority services.

That the working conditions of employees can fall when transfer of undertakings takes place is indisputable. The question is why anyone would think that publicly purchased services should offer more generous conditions than would be efficient. Of course, there is a public interest that the conditions of employees should not fall below a certain level. But, as with the Factory Acts of the nineteenth century, such conditions should be imposed by general national law on all employers rather than in protected public sector labour markets.

Finance

One danger of the proposal for rolling fiscal devolution outlined above is that it could have the effect, *if used in isolation*, of locking resources into existing spending areas and budget heads. Increasingly, there is a need to find ways of rolling up budgets across departments and across local public service providing organisations, in order to tackle problems that require the attention of many disciplines and agencies. The Single Regeneration Budget has created some partnership infrastructures, and some experience of how competition can be used to achieve this. but much more could be done.

There are strong barriers to more holistic financing. Cabinet Ministers in London each want to protect their own fiefdoms and will resist 'virement' of funds. Previous attempts to create cross-departmental structures have tended to fail.

The result is that much of what government does is irrational. The failure to consider localities as a whole means there is no coordination of the employment service's dealings with young unemployed, all too often leaving health and policing budgets to pick up the bill. The manner of budgeting is still chronically skewed in favour of curative rather than preventive policies, whether in education, health or crime, partly because institutions and professions are in place and naturally defend their turf, and partly because short-termism in government means unspecifiable benefits several years down the line tend to be discounted.

Holistic budgeting needs encouragement through a range of techniques. Regular central review of the consequences of all government action upon particular neighbourhoods and representative individuals should be routine. This could be a joint task of the Audit Commission and the National Audit Office. The Single Regeneration Budget and Capital Challenge have represented a new approach in which local authorities have taken the lead, but there are other examples. These processes could quickly be widened, enabling larger areas to compete for funds on the basis of broad strategic approaches to regeneration.

However, the most powerful instrument would be to create an incentive through the DELFI scheme. Where an authority could demonstrate effective local mechanisms for rolling up budgets across departments in order to promote a common objective – without under-mining basic service goals – it would be able to secure an increase in Council Tax up to 120 per cent of the level at which it would have been capped, by comparison to the 115 per cent for single service licences.

Governance

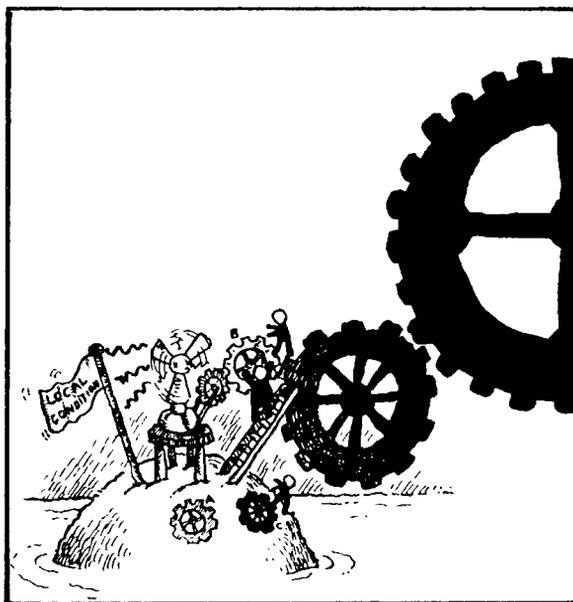
The challenge of developing effective leadership at local level almost certainly requires that we design new forms. In this collection, Stoker argues for the direct local election of mayors. Signs of bipartisan support suggest that some experiments along these lines can be expected in Britain during the next decade. However, this leaves the fundamental problem of the quality of political recruitment to the assembly. We need high calibre part-time as well as full-time politicians. We suggest

it would be worth experimenting with payment for at least the Assembly leadership and the 'Mayor's cabinet' in councils. If a fifth of all councillors were offered, say, £15,000 for part time effort, we estimate this would cost about £60 m per year. We would also suggest corresponding strengthening of the legal obligation on employers to allow councillors to reduce their working hours. The important point is, without high quality leadership in local politics, local councils will not deserve or warrant additional powers.

Demos has already published detailed proposals for reform of the local governance systems of appointed bodies and local QUANGOs.² One of the advantages of creating local executive organisations is that these might facilitate others to participate in local governance, as directors of local boards within a framework of elective accountability, without having to opt for the full demands of participation in local political parties. Some appointed local boards bring in expertise and energy: but they only operate transparently, where there is a clear link to elected members, or where there is scope for their removal in a referendum in extremis (we have argued elsewhere for introducing the concept of contestability into local services so that a significant proportion of users would be able to call for a referendum to replace members of boards running services such as health and training).

Lean localism

'Local self-government' was the slogan of the Victorians who campaigned for the Municipal Corporations Act of 1835 that laid the foundations of modern city authorities. Today, local self-government is neither a viable nor a desirable goal: councils cannot escape from all accountability to the centre. But the balance has shifted far from the optimum, and come to rest too close to the pole of simple local administration. Local areas lack both the capacity to be strategic, and the incentives to take more responsibility for themselves, where they have the competence and popular support to do so. Therefore, we need, not general blueprints or schemes of unfettered fiscal freedom, but schemes that reward competence and popular support with incrementally rolling



fiscal devolution, subject to continuing pressure from the centre on competence, quality, innovation in holistic budgeting, partnership and strategic purchasing. Local authorities can once again become local *government*, but they must expect to earn that right, and earn it individually, and service by service. They must not be permitted to assume that it is theirs by inheritance.

Notes

1. We are grateful to Imtiaz Farroukhi, Gerry Stoker and Sarah Tanburn for helpful comments on an earlier draft. Responsibility for the arguments and errors remain ours.
 2. Plummer, J., 1994, *The Governance Gap: Quangos and accountability*, Joseph Rowntree Foundation, York.
- Viney, J. and Osborne, J., 1995, *Modernising Public Appointments*, Demos, London.
- Warner, N., 1995 *Restoring Public Trust: A Governance Act for public bodies*, Demos, London.

It takes more than a village

Tristram Hunt

Understanding how the local has been invented in the past may help us to reinvent it in the future.

Political commentators and social historians through the 1960s and 1970s regarded the nineteenth century as anathema to the local. It was the century of industrialisation, urbanisation and communal dislocation. EP Thompson, Peter Townsend and Eric Hobsbawm saw nothing but satanic mills and their attendant evils. Yet over the last ten years, there has been a sea change in the social and political analysis of the Victorians. On the communitarian left and the authoritarian right, the nineteenth century has been reinvented as the age of the local. It is feted for its small-scale voluntary associations, friendly societies, and something called moral virtue. The social history of the twentieth century has been, in the words of one rightist academic, 'the demoralisation of society' from these Victorian heights. Bound together by traditional moral virtues inculcated at a local level, Victorian society was a truly civil society – now lost in the post modern maelstrom of moral relativism. For present day communitarians, the strong local

Researcher at Demos.

communities of the Victorian city, with their voluntarism, stable families, and social capital, currently represents the Golden Age which public policy should strive to recreate.

A nineteenth century history shows on the other hand how prevalent was the idea and how illusive was the achievement of the local. As in today's communitarianism and social authoritarianism, the local was imagined as a specifically moral community. There were no rights without duties, no duties without rights. Yet the local of the nineteenth century imagination was unfortunately not a paragon of voluntarism and virtue. First, the Victorians felt the local was in perpetual danger from urbanisation, materialism, and poverty. The moral community was under constant pressure to be reinvented. Moreover, the reintroduction of the moral into local governance was often little more than short hand for cultural tyranny and social control. The community was frequently an upper middle-class construct paid for by the rates of an embittered *petit bourgeoisie*. Nonetheless, we continue to turn to the Victorians for guidance. They, on the other hand, looked to medieval and classical times to provide them with inspiration about the local.

Medievalism

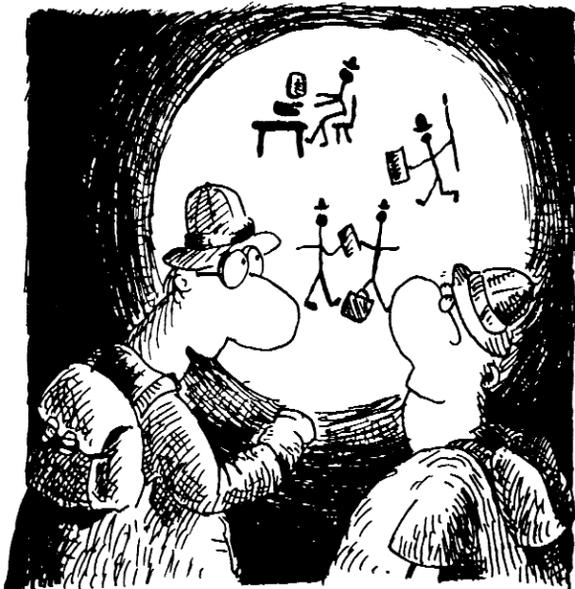
Most Victorians were obsessed by the Middle Ages. From the enormous popularity of Sir Walter Scott's *Waverley* novels, to the yearly re-enactment of Bannockburn and Bosworth; from Ruskin's Guild of St George to Disraeli and 'Young England', and from the radical belief in Anglo-Saxon liberties to the high Gothicism of Manchester Town Hall, the mood was medieval. Importantly, the Middle Ages could be all things to all people: to Ruskin. Carlyle and Morris they were an age apart from the cash-nexus of Victorian society; to Lord John Manners and Disraeli they were a period of hierarchical respect. The medieval ideal was, above all, a local period where the face-to-face moral community had realised itself fully in villages and towns across Britain. Lincoln, Coventry and Durham were the best practice localities of the nineteenth century medievalists.

Classicism

Of equal importance was the reverence for classicism. Whereas the eighteenth century was concerned with the decline and fall of Roman civilisation, the Victorians saw the Greeks in themselves. Gladstone regarded himself as an epic, almost Homeric figure, while the Crimean conflict was widely seen in the classical mirror of the Peloponnesian War. The city states of the Greek age provided an imperial analogy which suited Bristol, Birmingham and Liverpool. As Athens and Rome had the luxury to dwell on art and philosophy, so the provincial capitals established Athenaeums, Mechanics' Institutes and Literary and Philosophical Societies to discuss local histories and literature confident in their global security.

Moral impulse

The Victorian idea of the local first appeared in the wake of the Industrial Revolution and the demands of a Napoleonic war economy.



In the British cities of the early nineteenth century, critics saw tendencies towards anarchy, the denial of social responsibility, and the breakdown of the community as it had traditionally been understood. No longer the refined, cosmopolitan parasite of the eighteenth century, the city had metamorphosed into the industrious, irreligious and impersonal Coketown of Dickens' *Hard Times*. It had become a watchword for individualism and communal dislocation.

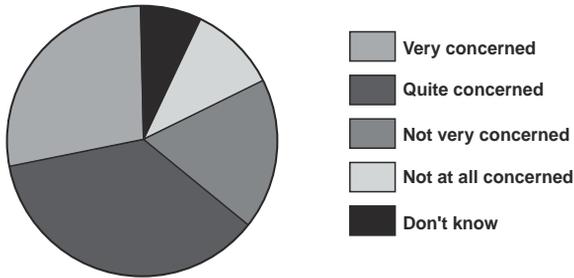
'Bound together by traditional moral virtues inculcated at local level, Victorian society was a truly civil society – now lost in the post-modern maelstrom of moral relativism'

In reaction, Catholic apologists such as Robert Southey and A W Pugin constructed a medieval, pastoral vision of the local. The parish church was contrasted with the workhouse, the local justice of the squire with the Benthamite Panopticon of the State, and the communal fun of the Maypole with the debauched inn. The local was an apolitical, face-to-face, moral community. 'Every person had his place', wrote Robert Southey in 1829. 'There was a system of superintendence everywhere, civil as well as religious ... None were beneath the notice of the priest, nor placed out of the possible reach of his construction and care. But how large a part of your population are like the dogs at Lisbon and Constantinople, unowned, unbroken to any useful purpose, subsisting by chance or by prey, living in filth, mischief, wretchedness, a nuisance to the community while they live and dying miserably at last.'¹ This was the hierarchical, traditional order to which Disraeli and Manners later appealed. The lost moral community was a feudal, catholic chain of being with mutually supportive systems of social superintendence.

As Britain's new urban élites prospered, a different, civic idea of the local emerged. More modern and progressive than the pre-Reformation idyll of Southey and Pugin, its agenda was similarly oriented around putting morality back into the city. The urban gentry of the mid-nineteenth century tried to construct an idea of the local which would nail the image of its inhabitants as materialistic philistines who were insensitive



to values, history and culture. A vortex of individualistic Gradgrinds in place of society was a powerful spur in this reinvention of the communal. The provincial middle classes of Leeds, Bradford, Manchester and Birmingham portrayed their towns as the new medieval *communes* and themselves the new Medics. 'We find in the old cities of the Continent,' claimed Chamberlain, 'the free and independent burghers of the Middle Ages have left behind them magnificent palaces and civic buildings – testimonies to their power and public spirit and munificence, memorials of the time when those communities maintained the liberties and protected the lives of the people against the oppression, and tyranny, and rapacity of their rulers.' In Leeds, the architect Cuthbert Brodrick saw the Town Hall as visible proof that 'in the ardour of mercantile pursuits the inhabitants of Leeds have not omitted to cultivate the perception of



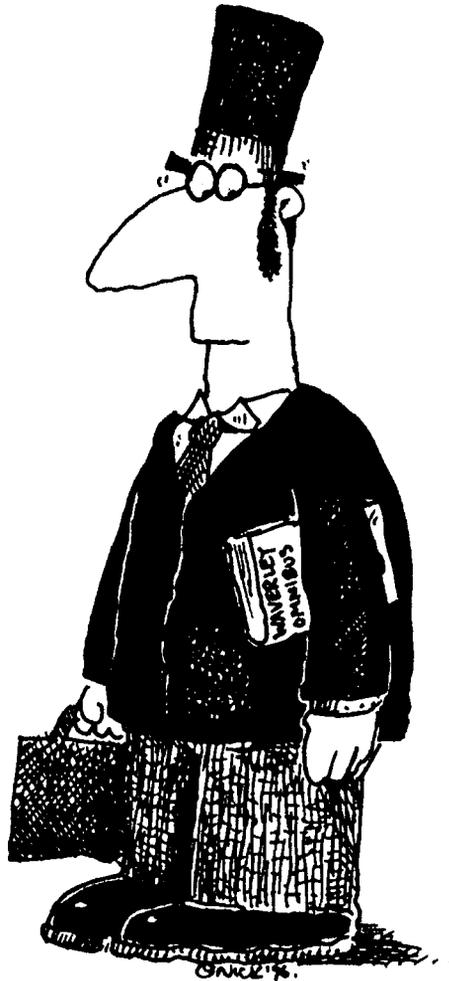
Source: *Public concern, 1994*

Figure Almost everyone is worried about corruption in town halls.

the beautiful and a taste for the fine arts.' Palatial court houses, magnificent gaols, and Gothic red-brick universities all vied for the civic skyline. The process was one of legitimisation. In establishing the 'shock cities' as heirs to *Quattrocento* Bruges or Ghent, the merchant elite invented a moral lineage which absolved them as the stormtroopers of the socially dislocated conurbation.

Class

This idealised construction of the local was, however, a dominant narrative which bore little resemblance to the traditions and aspirations of either middle class ratepayers or working class radicals. Yet they were forced to pay for it. As E P Hennocle has authoritatively shown, local authority revenues were dependent on rates levied on real, immovable property.² This meant local government bodies were able to draw only to a limited extent on the growing wealth of the community. Bold local government schemes were quickly followed by a marked rise in the rate per pound, so the limits of what was politically acceptable were soon reached. Since rates were assessed on the rental value of premises, they tended to fall on the lower middle classes rate payers whose income came from owning small residential properties in towns. The system of local government finance pushed a section of the community into municipal politics who had deep suspicion of any grandiose



construction plans. Ratepayers' Associations and Protection Societies began to exert a considerable influence over local politics, aided in part by the power landlords could exert over their tenants. Leeds had at one point to wait for a change of council to complete the Town Hall. Although condemned as philistines, the rebellious ratepayers frequently

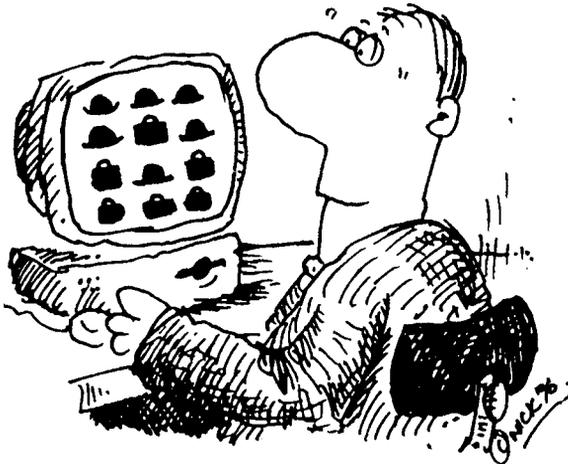
kept the municipalities afloat by reigning back council spending. It was a rather different type of morality.

By the 1870s, the moral community was again in danger. The discovery of the forgotten poor forced city leaders to construct a new idea of the local as a classical *polis*, a self-conscious community which required an affirmatively inclusive social agenda. Socially minded civic authorities built libraries, schools, employment exchange centres, and housing complexes with the help of numerous voluntary bodies. Municipal government was undoubtedly an effective, local way to help the great unwashed. 'Local government is near the people,' argued Chamberlain, 'By its means you will be able to secure their health, to carry out a vast cooperative system for mutual aid and support, to lessen the inequalities of our social system, and to raise the standard of all classes in the community. Yet, the actual implementation of social policy again revealed a surprising degree of insensitivity. The cleared slums were replaced by classical civic monuments which belonged to a different historical narrative; suburban housing constructions were served by inefficient tram systems which hindered employment prospects; zoning out of social classes was common; commercial thoroughfares were reduced in size to recreate a medieval hamlet feel which severely limited the retail trade. A socially authoritarian streak was prevalent in many councils – municipal Mechanics Institutes and art exhibitions were direct attacks on the culture of the pub and the music hall. The local of the 1880s was imagined as a catholic moral community, but was quickly and sharply divided between the deserving and the undeserving. The agenda was defined by a class who saw social amelioration in a moral framework which was not shared by the dumb majority.

Engulfed by nationalism

'Superfluously independent cities, ineffective local amelioration programmes and overspending municipal councils didn't feature in the new agenda'

A local agenda could only go so far. By the 1890s, the British urban renaissance and its social agenda began to be consumed by the national. First, the intellectual current began to change. The explosion of social surveys, which were collected and analysed at a national level, combined with popular eugenicism to prove the damage being done to Britain by urbanisation. The country was in danger – witness the quality of volunteers for the Boer War – and the solution could only come from a national government. The proliferation of social legislation up to 1911 was a national attempt to improve the situation. The work of the English Idealist school of Bradley, Green and Bosanquet, the growing popularity of Hegel and German Romanticism, and the continuing influence of Mazzini all helped to focus social issues at a national level. Popular nationalism was also growing, as the Mafeking and ‘King and Country’ riots showed so dramatically. Secondly, the internal power dynamic was returning to London. By the late 1890s London County Council was asserting itself as an almost national force. In contrast, the Association of Municipal Corporations was no longer seeking greater independence from the state, just more money. The military threat of Bismarck’s Germany and the economic threat from the highly competitive America shunted Westminster into a national paradigm.



Superfluously independent cities, ineffective local amelioration programmes and overspending municipal councils didn't feature in the new agenda.

The Victorian idea of the local suffered a perpetual crisis of confidence, was implemented through morally dubious mechanisms, and, in practice, simply didn't work. At its heart was a romantic belief in the virtue of the face-to-face moral community, yet the attempt to recreate that medieval or classical ideal was destined to fail. Not because an enfranchised majority refused to accept an essentially foreign morality, but because just as the national is now too large to deliver effective services, so then was the local too small. The consequent expansion of state power was not an incrementalist welfare plot, rather a proportioned reaction to the economic and social failings of the local. The local community couldn't properly alleviate or counter the social consequences of an increasingly inequitable global economy. Only national provision could achieve a morally acceptable standard of living. By the turn of the century, the Edwardians had realised it takes more than a village.

Notes

1. R., Southey, 1826, *Sir Thomas More: or, Colloquies on the Progress and Prospects of Society*.
2. E. P., Hennock, 1963, 'Finance and politics in urban local government in England, 1835-1900', *Historical Journal*, VI; 2.

The incredible shrinking state

Tom Nairn

Could Andorra and Liechtenstein be the state of thing to come?

Earlier this year, *The Independent* carried a story on page five under the title *IoW in UDI as Island Activists plan vote to be Tax Haven*. The article also had photos of Queen Victoria (who used to holiday on the IoW), IoW council leader Morris Barton and a characteristically dismal IoW games arcade at Ryde pier (where the mainland ferry lands from Portsmouth). The country referred to is Wight (Roman *Vectis*), a 381 sq km island off the coasts of Dorset and Hampshire, population 125,000, capital Newport. 'UDI' is a fossil splinter irrevocably lodged in British sub-editorial consciousness since the 1960s, when the former colonial regime in Rhodesia staged its Unilateral Declaration of Independence against Harold Wilson's Labour Government.

On July 17th Liberal Democrat council leader, Morris Barton, asked its policy committee to approve a referendum on proposals for a devolved administration with law-making and tax-raising powers giving the island free port status – effectively making it a duty free island.

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The debate duly took place, and a seventeen to three majority agreed to commission a preliminary MORI poll asking residents if they were in favour of building a fixed link (tunnel or bridge) to the mainland. It also asked, more significantly, if they wanted 'more say over island affairs', Holding a full-scale referendum would have required Westminster approval (extremely unlikely), while a survey of 800 would cost only £12,000. The current belief is that most Islanders (occasionally 'Vectensians') are against the fixed link, but quite strongly in favour of more self-government. *Channel 4 News* and *BBC Newsnight* reports followed, and most of their vox pop interviews confirmed the belief. Not even Her Majesty's Labour Party wholly dissents. In *The Independent* Wight Labour leader, Ken Pearson, was quoted as saying, 'It's a great ideal. But I can't see it happening in my lifetime.'

Barton argues: 'The devolution issue has been brought to the fore because of the failure of the British government to recognise our watertight case for European structural funding. Devolution also has its attraction when it comes to creating a financial centre or an enterprise zone. All these matters lead one towards the situation where we, as an Island community, should be asking for devolved status similar to that enjoyed by the Isle of Man.'

The scale of nationalism

For what seems a very long time but actually isn't, tiny polities have figured primarily as some sort of puzzle. The common sense of that circumscribed era perceived Europe's five micro-states (Monaco, San Marino, Andorra, Liechtenstein and the Vatican) as fossils or accidental survivals, and hence as the object of jokes rather than serious analysis. But as recent events in Newport suggest, this attitude is itself rapidly becoming fossilized.

Small states were once commonplace. Renaissance Europe contained about five hundred distinct entities, and many of them survived until late in the 19th century, notably in German-speaking areas and the Italian peninsula. However, certain other features of the period 1850–1950 led to these being seen as feudal anachronisms. No mystery

attaches to what these features were, they loom over-large in every general history and analysis. Together, three things account for a fixing of developmental scale over this era: rapid primary industrialisation, almost incessant warfare or war preparation and the staggered advent of political democracy. Their conjuncture was to privilege one specific scale of economic growth and political aspiration – that of the relatively big ‘nation state’, originally typified by France and England.

Studies such as Ernest Gellner’s *Nations and nationalism* (Blackwell, 1983) have shown why this was. The initial trajectory of first wave industrial capitalism was fatal to the slow-moving hierarchy of dynastic empires like Austria–Hungary and the Ottoman Sultanate. But it also quickly overran most of the smaller components of early modern Europe (like Württemberg, Savoy or the old Venetian Republic). The point was, it demanded a kind of socio-cultural mobilisation most easily attainable by nationality units capable (to put it bluntly) of effectively conscripting peasants into factories, offices and armies. From that crude, century-long process the typical, or viable, national state then emerged in fits and starts. After formal baptism by Woodrow Wilson and the League of Nations in 1919, it became the standard building block of UNO and the post-1945 world. ‘Ethnic nationalism’ (the label is relatively recent) was the identity form most convenient to this new polity system.

As Gellner maintained, the nation state conjuncture was both inevitable and highly successful: it configured the first shock-wave of industrialisation, and defeated imperialism. However, nationalism’s victory also created the conditions for its own transcendence – that is, for a successor system within which differentiation might be continued through other channels and by new techniques. In retrospect, one can see how such changes were prefigured by quite early multinational development. In *The Age of Extremes* (Michael Joseph, 1994), Eric Hobsbawm notes (with distinct disapproval) that as in the 1960s economic transnationalism replaced internationalism, so ‘a paradoxical change in the political structure of the world economy’ came about. Fleas began to take over from the UNO-licensed herd of nation-state elephants. ‘Hence the rise of new city states, a form of polity last seen to flourish in the Middle Ages.’

Post-nationalist scale

The essential alteration is one of scale. The key idea of national viability rested upon certain assumptions about the minimum likely size, population and economic potential of a true nation state. Such assumptions were never strictly observed, any more than was the parallel mythology of an integrated or mono-ethnic culture. But ideal types do not demand literal conformity in order to prevail. For example, one of the founders of today's European Union was the utterly unviable (and multicultural) micro-state of Luxembourg – another flourishing fossil from the Middle Ages, whom the inhabitants of most of today's 'real' national states should regard with envy rather than contempt.

But viability goes on regulating the political universe, nevertheless, and nowhere more aggressively than in the metropolitan mentalités of the primal criminals: London and Paris. After all, it was they who gave the nationalism template to modernity, in 1688 and 1789 respectively. They have never recovered from the gift. Their state forms represent unique investments in that form of power – the very conjuncture now being disabled by post-Cold War evolution – and in all its accoutrements of popular identity and grandeur. Successive governments of Anglo-Britain and the Hexagon can do little but defend that investment. Without the former scale of things they feel they would become nothing – 'diminished' is the usual term – whether by Scottish secession, Welsh self-government or even (now) by a free port zone on the Isle of Wight.

The contrary view – small as successful and powerful, not just beautiful – has been put most loudly in John Naisbitt's *Global paradox* (Nicholas Brealy, 1994). He starts with an evocation of Andorra, which, with half the population of Wight, voted itself a new constitution and was admitted to the United Nations in 1993. 'The world's trends point overwhelmingly towards political independence and self-rule on the one hand, and the formation of economic alliances on the other', he concludes. Hence we are likely to see a thousand or more 'states' after the year 2000, with revived localisms functioning as the more effective vectors of a further stage in world industrialisation. Launched already in the 1960s, the trajectory of this new round will subvert the

nation state model as primitive industrialisation did the dynastic empires. It will diffuse nationalism, but also change its profile – roughly speaking, from an ethnic to a ‘civic’ mode more in tune with the formation of ‘citizen communities’. Most Andorrans, for example, are ‘foreigners’ or immigrants with no blood-link to the former valley-communes. So are most Wighters – the ‘incomers’ or, as they used to be disobligingly referred to, ‘grockles’.

It happens I often visited Wight in the eighties, with an incomer family. We lived by good fortune near the finest pub I have ever known – an ‘English’ pub, one might say, except I never came across anything like it in England. The other thing I remember most vividly is a certain Islander reaction – morose and almost surly, then too quickly covered or apologised for – which any incomer was liable to be surprised by. It was puzzling at the time, though I suppose I would now classify it as a version of what Liah Greenfeld called ‘ressentiment’ in *Five roads to*



modernity (Harvard, 1992) – a nativist sense of put-down, or treatment as a lower class.

Partisans of scale

Like other economic trend-watchers, Naisbitt tends to omit politics from his calculations. Yet one glance backwards over the age of nation stateism is surely enough to suggest how serious this is. That full dress age – 1918–1945 or, stretching it a bit, 1870–1989 – was not configured by ethno-nationalist aspiration alone. What Arno J Mayer has called ‘the persistence of the old regime’ also played its disastrous part. It was the malignant counter-offensives and resurrectionist strategies of Europe’s former élites which imparted much of the desperation to those times. For them, prosperity and the advent of democratic nationalism’s ‘common man’ represented mainly tragic loss and disenchantment, the abandonment of aristocratic essence. Only in roseate retrospect can the Hapsburgs, the Romanovs or the Hohenzollerns be misperceived as guardians of a broader, more universal civilisation.

Their successors today are our defenders *à l’outrance* of the existing state-nation: Euro-sceptics, bipartisan grovellers before the shrine of sovereignty. It makes no difference that the Crown has fallen off their totem-pole; for backbench and street-corner Greatness-vendors, there is no other meaningful trade. They may be doomed – but by God, not while the West Lothian question has any life left in it! Plenty of Europhiles, immoderate reformers, ‘egionalist smart-asses and selfish neo-nationalists will precede them to the grave. The centre of gravity may indeed be shifting in the way Naisbitt suggests. That is, a scale-barrier has come down, permitting in principle a far wider spectrum of political development than did the stilted norms of pre-1989. As *The Independent* report began by indicating, this is not recognised only in Cardiff and Edinburgh. People in Newcastle-upon-Tyne and Newport (IoW) now feel it in their bones too. However, such new possibilities, precisely because they are no longer ‘utopian’ or folkloric in character, at once generate a strong reaction. So it should also be admitted that their political expression may turn out as ragged, salutary and distorted as was the mainstream of nation-state development.

No sense of place? Changing patterns of local identity

Brian Gosschalk and Warren Hatter†*

New research from MORI shows that identity is strongest at the level of the neighbourhood, not the county town or region.

Whisper it quietly. Many English people favour a revised system of local government which resembles that in France. Yes, even those living in English shire counties. Against Western European trends over the past fifteen years, Britain has centralised power. Faith in political institutions is at its lowest ebb, and constitutional reform is high on the political agenda. In this context, British people's attitudes to community identity bear close scrutiny.

Local government reorganisation this century has been a series of attempts to make local government areas and boundaries reflect changes in transportation, settlement and the built environment. But adjustment to these 'objective' factors has been greatly complicated by the subjectivity of people's attachment to place and their resistance to changes which appear to ignore its expression. The 'objective' community (effective) and the 'felt' community (affective) have frequently seemed to differ; and neither has corresponded closely to actual local authority areas.

Introducing the second reading of the 1991 Local Government Bill in the House of Lords, Baroness Blatch stated that Ministers '... believe

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Table 1 Summary of the nine groups

	Strength of attachment to:			%
	Village	District	County	
Unattached	low	low	low	31
Villager	high	low/moderate	low/moderate	26
Civics	high	high	low/moderate	12
Strong identifiers	high	high	high	9
Moderate identifiers	moderate	moderate	moderate	6
Traditionalists	high	low/moderate	high	6
Countyites	low/moderate	low/moderate	high	4
Townies	low/moderate	high	low/moderate	3
Non-locals	low/moderate	high	high	3

Source: MORI.

the best local government is ... built on communities and ... reflects people's sense of identity with the place they live. Local authorities based on real communities will be stronger local authorities, better able to voice local views and respond to local needs and circumstances'. The Local Government Commission's latest procedural advice to the local authorities under review requested local authorities to submit arguments 'on the extent to which the area, both district and county, is perceived as having a 'sense of place'. This sense of place would be identified in the distinctiveness of an area's physical or population characteristics, its felt past or anticipated future, and its identification with sporting, cultural or leisure facilities.

Our project sought to understand the factors driving community identity and establish how communities can form the basis of local government structure.

Patterns of attachment

Our research used a three-level hierarchy of realms within which people operate: the immediate neighbourhood or village, the district, and

the county. All 46,500 respondents were assigned to one of nine groups (see box). The resultant profile of the sample by these is shown below.

- Two of the nine groups together account for over half of the entire sample. The largest single group – *The Unattached* – profess no strong attachment at any level. The second largest group – *The Villagers* – comprises those who are strongly attached only at the village/neighbourhood level, and less attached at district and county level.
- Only just over half of the sample in total are *Discriminating Identifiers*; that is, they have strong attachment to at least one of the three levels of community, but at the expense of others. In contrast, nearly half identify broadly equally with all three levels, or else with none at all.

The psychology of attachment

Our findings show that a complex pattern of inter-related factors drives community identification in shire England. How should this be interpreted? If the main drivers of community identification are characteristics of people themselves, we would say that *community attachment is driven by ‘people’, rather than ‘places’*. On the other hand, if the

Table 2 Main attached groups, by local and non-local activity

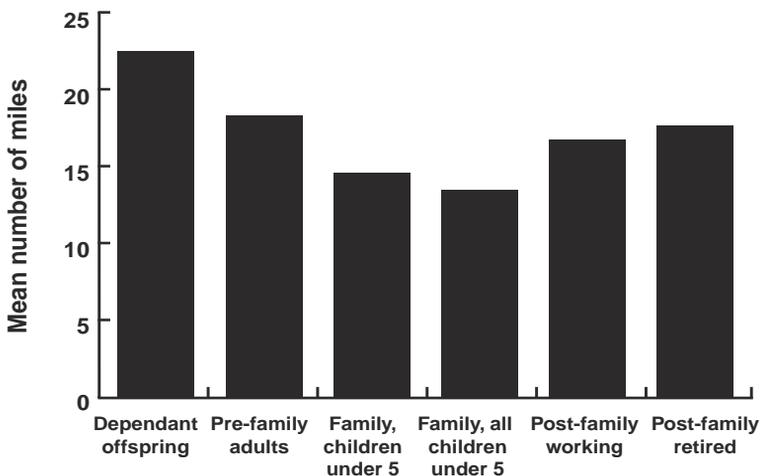
	Unattached %	Villagers %	Civics %
Basildon			
local	52	61	57
mobile	48	39	43
Wrekin			
local	50	53	62
mobile	50	47	38

Source: MORI.

main drivers are characteristics of the places where people live, this would indicate that *community attachment is driven by 'place'*.

Across the nine attachment groupings, variables measuring the characteristics of places – social and economic features, employment change, the existence of local cultural attributes, continuing boundaries or historic status – have relatively little effect in determining attachment. Only the possession of pre-1972 boundaries or, in some cases, former county borough status, taken together with local cultural signifiers, are significant, and even these are rarely among the main drivers. Of all the 'place effects', urbanity alone has much influence, and this usually applies at the secondary level of discrimination.

Apart from urbanity, characteristics of individual respondents predominate as drivers of attachment. Of these, length of residence appears most often, and at the higher levels. There is a paradox here, in that length of residence in a particular local area or neighbourhood seems to drive attachment not only at that level, but at higher levels too. If *length of residence* measures a sense of 'being settled', then more generalised



Base = those who moved within the last ten years
 Source: The Henley Centre Planning for Social Change Survey

Figure When the British move house, they don't move far.

attachments to wider areas might flow from it. This is supported by the fact that *age* also features fairly often as a driver of attachment.

Overall, there is a clear focus of attachment on the most local area. Only ten per cent of our sample have attachment focused on district and/or county, at the expense of neighbourhood/village (*Countyites*, *Townies*, and *Non-locals*). This very local focus emphasises the low importance of 'place', since it is consistent throughout shire England.

The influence of 'effective' community

In successive local government reviews this century, attention has shifted towards greater concern about residents' attitudes towards local government and, in particular, their sense of identity with the place where they live. This movement peaked in the recent Local Government Review, with its initial enthusiasm for 'community'. Its concern with *affective* community of sentiment and attachment for an area outweighed the longer-standing concern with *effective* community – that constituted by travel to work, leisure and shopping patterns. In contrast, the DoE's 1995 guidance to the Commission pointed out that 'the focus of people's day-to-day activities may not be reflected in feelings of community identity, interest and loyalty'.

To look at the relationships between the two kinds of community, we examined two districts – Basildon (Essex) and The Wrekin (West Midlands) – which, although new towns, corresponded to the national pattern of membership of the nine groups. In studying the relationship between attachment and patterns of work, leisure and shopping, we constructed a new variable to measure the extent to which respondents were either locally rooted – not just living, but working and shopping locally – or 'mobile', in the sense of travelling outside their home district for these purposes.

Respondents were categorised as 'mobile' if they did the main food shopping, or clothes and household goods shopping, outside their district or if the head of household left the district to work.

Analysis of two localities enables us to see how the larger groupings might reflect the local/mobile distinction. The table above shows this for the numerically significant groups.

This table confirms that the activity patterns of the unattached group have no bearing on their lack of attachment. It also indicates that, despite some differences between the two districts, both *Villagers* and *Civics* (who share a strong attachment to the village/neighbourhood) are more likely to be working, shopping and taking their leisure locally. The analysis shows that there is a link between individuals' *effective* and *affective* communities, but not an overwhelmingly strong relationship.

Implications for the future

The distinction between attachment to a place, and to the council responsible for administering it, remains an important one. However, it has usually been interpreted to mean that people often combine weak attachment to their local authority with strong attachment to their locality. We have shown that:

- such attachment to place is highly variable, and is patterned in a complex fashion;
- it is largely independent of factors which are place specific, and is driven more by the characteristics of people themselves;
- where strong attachment is found to a significant extent, it only exists at the most local level of the village or neighbourhood. The paradigmatic assumption of strong and exclusive attachment at the district level, driven by the presence of historic cultural and administrative identities, is borne out for only about three per cent of the population.

If local government structure were based on affective communities, then different tiers would operate at levels where residents tend to feel attachment. Our findings do not point to any clear pattern of 'community government' for England, above the most local level. They do, however, provide powerful evidence in favour of community-based government at the local level.

Given greater central government powers and declining faith in the efficacy of local democracy, it is arguable that local government would be strengthened by a structure of elected bodies which reflects people's sense of attachment. Citizens would be electing members of bodies whose identity has currency. At the moment, this seems not to be the case. Analysis of the correlation between individuals' attachment to district and the turnout in the most recent district election in their ward reveals that there is no relationship between these two factors. Those who live in a high turnout ward are no more likely to feel attachment to their district than those in wards with a low turnout. This contrasts with the clear relationship between social class and ward turnout, among the same sample. One explanation for this is that turnout is driven by social factors, and by attitudes to national politics.

On the other hand, it can be argued that local service users are concerned with the quality of service provision, rather than with the identity





of the service provider. This suggests that the structure of local government does not need to reflect communities, but simply to deliver services effectively. In our view, local government fulfils a role beyond that of service provider, or enabler, but even this requires effective consultation. A structure which appropriately reflects communities can strengthen that process.

Community identification, or 'attachment', is an inadequate basis for constructing a feasible system of local government at the levels of presently-existing local authorities. This links in with the findings of MORI's qualitative studies for the *Local Government Review*. People in

shire Counties identify primarily with a community considerably smaller than the district council (though not necessarily the parish), but recognise the need for a strategic authority to provide services, and also for a wider body for planning and coordination of policies affecting regions. Readers should also bear in mind that national and local MORI surveys have consistently shown people to rate community identity among the *least* important factors for deciding local government structure.

Our study provides powerful evidence in favour of community-based government at the most local level, but suggests that beyond this, existing local authorities cannot claim to speak for, or embody, a larger sense of local community. Based on *affective* community, the case for district or county based government is weak. The strength of the case for local level community government may be reflected by another survey finding. Surveys on structure conducted by MORI for the Local Government Commission, have shown consistent and widespread support for establishing town and parish councils where they do not exist, if local people want them.

The case for a structure that builds on this, by pursuing *affective* community at the village/parish/neighbourhood level, and *effective* community above this, is strong. It might be akin to the structure in France. Here, 36,000 *communes*, ranging in size and population to reflect the building blocks of communities, are grouped into 96 *départements* (broadly the equivalent of English counties), which in turn combine to form 22 *régions*. An English adaptation might involve the introduction of 'city regions', centred on major conurbations and based on a combination of travel to work, shopping and other activity patterns. This level would be suitable for strategic decision-making on, for example, land use and planning issues. Within each area, neighbourhood councils could give voice to community feeling. If these putative authorities were not too large there would be no need for an intermediate tier. They could also combine to form a series of regions.

Such reforms go well beyond this review of local government structure. However, they follow logically from the analysis, especially given recent trends in local governance, and raise issues which future reformers, of whatever political complexion, would do well to consider.

Nine defined

Unattached

The typical non-identifier is usually new to the locality, generally young, and likely to be living in a more urban area. Although this may seem unsurprising, we should remember that this group consists of people who not only do not identify with their immediate locality, but express no sense of attachment at any of the levels we explored. They are truly delocalised.

Southern England is more strongly represented here than the north, in particular with people from two types of town. The first is the south coast retiree or holiday town – Bournemouth, Eastbourne, Hastings, Worthing, Taunton Deane. The second could be called home counties industrial – Luton, Slough, Ashford, Gillingham, Rochester-upon-Medway and, most strikingly, several London New Towns – Bracknell Forest, Stevenage, and Crawley.

Villagers

The most powerful discriminator in the membership of this group is urbanity. Members of this group are most likely to live in rural areas and, to a lesser degree, in mixed areas. Lifestyle is the next strongest discriminator. ‘Country dwellers’, ‘high income families’ and ‘suburban semis’ are the predominant types of neighbourhood for these respondents. The districts most heavily represented here vary in character: Ellesmere

Port, Halton, Warrington, Caradon, North Cornwall, South Derbyshire, Teignbridge, East Dorset, Castle Point, North Hertfordshire, and Alnwick.

Civics

The archetypal group member is a long-standing resident, retired, in a district with a historical boundary (i.e. one which did not change in 1974). Living in a former County Borough also registers an effect. Place has a persistent, if not determining, importance here.

Civics are particularly prevalent in Gloucestershire, Derbyshire, Hereford and Worcester, Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire. At district level, most of the notable inclusions lie within these counties, with Bristol, Derby, Derbyshire Dales and Huntingdonshire featuring prominently.

Strong identifiers

Strong identifiers are usually older, long-standing residents, often retired, and typically living in council accommodation, often in established urban areas. They have a very strong sense of identity with their neighbourhood, which they may project to the town and county itself.

Moderate identifiers

Moderate identifiers are those who feel quite a strong sense of attachment, with little or no discrimination between the three levels. The archetypal member of this group has lived for more than 20 years in districts which were not formerly county boroughs, located within historic counties.

Traditionalists

The archetypal member lives in a mixed or rural area in a district with a high cultural profile, within a historic county. The importance of being in a district with a high cultural profile is surprising, since traditionalists' attachment is focused at the neighbourhood/village and county level, at the expense of the district.

Countyites

Full-time workers who have recently moved to an area, in a district which does not have a marked historic character, are archetypal members of this group, which is fairly evenly represented across all counties.

Townies

Members of this small group typically live in a district with an established boundary, particularly one with high profile cultural activity.

Non-locals

Membership of this small group – attached to district and county at the expense of the village or neighbourhood – is most prevalent in areas of high male unemployment, especially among those who are recent arrivals.

Earlier this year, Brian Gosschalk of MORI led a Demos seminar which focused on the findings of a large-scale analysis of data on community identification. The project was carried out by Brian Gosschalk. Professor Ken Young of Queen Mary and Westfield College and Warren Hatter of MORI's Local Government Research Unit.

Since the seminar, the findings have been published by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation. The article above draws on the published material and develops some of the themes of the seminar.

The dataset used for the analysis included community identity survey data from the great majority of the English shire counties, nearly all with a sample size of around 200 respondents per district (occasionally more), in more than 200 district council areas. Commissioned by different clients, the questionnaires varied slightly in design; most, however, were organised around a common core of identical questions. This dataset included a total of 46,567 respondents.

The dataset of survey data was enriched with non-survey information from a variety of sources. Following this, the technique used to identify the factors driving membership of each of the nine groups was CHAID (chi-square automatic interaction detector).

Knowing me, knowing you: revitalising local representative democracy

Gerry Stoker

Every part of the public sector has been reviewed, audited and reformed. It's time to apply the same tough measures to local representatives.

Making democracy effective means finding new ways to involve the public in decision-making. Some instruments and mechanisms for doing this have been examined in previous work published by Demos.¹ But most people have limited time, interest and capacity to engage in direct democracy. So we also need to reinvigorate local *representative* democracy. At regional, national and European levels, our representative structures are losing legitimacy and are perceived to be ineffective. This article examines the weaknesses of local democracy and suggests some remedies.²

Today, over 85 percent of councillors serving on local authorities are elected on a party ticket. Party business and meetings take up a fifth of the average councillor's time. While group discipline is strong enough to ensure councillors hold the party line on most issues, it is clear that party networks have a thin presence in the wider community.

Councillors spend nearly two-thirds of their time in, or preparing for, council meetings, that usually focus on services and monitoring

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performance rather than setting direction. These meetings often involve set piece confrontations and point scoring between parties, and can also be dominated by the sport of officer-baiting. Most decisions are made beforehand, though in balanced councils – of which there are an increasing number – committees do make real decisions.

Dealing with the public and working in partnership with other organisations, take up just 15 per cent. A few local authorities have experimented with scrutiny committees, area committees and special interest forums, to give greater prominence to such externally-orientated activity.

The time and effort offered by councillors is considerable, for modest allowances and expenses. They spend on average 74 hours per month on council and related duties. The impact on career, family and social life is considerable. Little wonder that councillors are drawn from a relatively narrow socio-economic band: 80 per cent are over 45 years old, 75 per cent are male and a third are retired. Only 4 per cent of the population claim to have thought about standing in local elections. When asked, people list concerns about time commitments, lack of skills, financial loss, too much party politics, lack of support and lack of local government power (in that order).

In short, our local representation system rests on a narrow, inward-looking party political base obsessed with the detail of local administration. Turn-out in local elections achieves a modest 40 per cent on average, although it slumped to 31 per cent in 1996. National party fortunes are widely recognised as the determining factor in most local voting.

Some argue that if power was restored local representation would become more meaningful. Cynics argue that local democracy can do no more than legitimate decisions which are often determined by factors outside the influence of local representatives. Electoral competition creates the reassuring illusion of choice for the public.

‘Representatives who share their identity and experience can help ‘excluded’ groups to ensure vigorous advocacy and effectively legitimate decision-making’

Both these arguments have strengths. Revitalising local democracy means restoring power to local authorities and bringing a range of local appointed bodies or quangos into the democratic net. Local autonomy in the modern world is constrained. We must free our thinking from a nineteenth century conception of the autonomous local authority raising most of its revenue from taxes (see also *It takes more than a village*). Local authorities are part of a broader system of governance. Getting things done involves partnership with other bodies from all sectors, and requires fresh outlooks, new skills and new ways of working.

We must look again at the meaning and purpose of representation. To be a representative under the existing system is primarily about governing a set of services. Everything else is seen as second-class or inferior. This is why they spend so much time in meetings and committees.

This conception is inadequate. It fails to capture the richness of representation. Moreover, it sees representation as an exclusive right rather than an incorporating process.

Essentially, representation is about 'the making present in some sense of something which is nevertheless not present literally or in fact'.³ Representation exists in political systems because it is not practical or desirable for us all to be involved in all decisions. Its function is to ensure expression for voices that need to be heard, and to provide a platform for compromise and agreement. Representatives make deals on behalf of others.

Effective representation of distinct social groups is more important, because those who share their identity and experiences can help 'excluded' groups to ensure vigorous advocacy and effectively legitimate decision-making. Representation might also be appropriate on a functional or service basis rather than by territory. We need political frameworks where people can deliberate and learn about the interests and concerns of others, and where representatives are in constant interaction with their publics and other actors.

Councillors will continue to have a special role because of their election on a universal suffrage. Many who advocate a politics of difference also recognise the need for some 'universal' or unifying force within a political system. Councillors will act as the ultimate arbiters of

a community's choices. Some will have a particular role in day-to-day supervision of the executive, and a more formal separation of assembly and executive functions may be necessary to fully express the distinctiveness of these roles.

The Commission for Local Democracy proposed a formal separation of 'executive' and 'assembly' bodies within local government, with each branch given powers and responsibilities and the legitimacy of direct election.⁴ Why did the Commission think such a system would deliver a revitalised local representative democracy?

First, a directly elected leader will create a well known and accountable figure.⁵ The assembly will have an enhanced profile as supporters and opponents of the leader's actions use it to make their case. This higher profile should make for a greater local dimension to policy-making. By playing up personality and leadership, nationally-oriented party politics will be downgraded. Fun, excitement and spirit could be injected into local politics.

Leadership could also be enhanced. The elected mayor or leader would provide a steering capacity within and beyond the locality. Members of the assembly would become advocates for various causes and champions of individual citizens' rights. Separating the executive and deliberative functions should encourage a more reflective and open politics. The mayor or leader would be well placed to stimulate public debate and raise issues, while the assembly could offer scope for extended deliberation. The creative tension between executive and assembly should also increase the number of access points for citizens and so enhance the system's openness.

'If today's local politicians are not up to the task, we can find a new generation to represent us better'

The Commission's proposals would also increase the scope and variety of monitoring and advocacy roles. The elected leader or mayor could be both representative spokesperson and 'ombudsman', a final port of call for complaints. Assembly members could promote the

interests of their neighbourhoods or particular interests, defend the concerns of the taxpayer, undertake casework and exercise scrutiny over the executive.

Freeing the councillors from day-to-day executive responsibilities could also attract a wider range of people to serve, since membership of a more deliberative body could be less demanding of time.

If we are to make sense of the slogan 'community governance', we need new roles for elected representatives and a new kind of local leadership. If today's local politicians are not up to the task, we can find a new generation to represent us better.

Solution: Ending the cold war: a treaty with central government

Gerry Stoker

British local government relations with Whitehall and Westminster have long been adversarial. Perhaps we can learn from France how more consensual relations may be developed. In 1988, the *Contrat de Ville* initiative was formally launched to provide a new basis for local authorities to meet with Paris. The contrat tackled specific social and economic problems in urban areas through an agreed inter-agency strategy encouraging coherence between assorted ministries and local authorities. John Mawson and Patrick Le Galès comment:⁶

'The *contract* can be interpreted as a form of partnership in which the state, by offering greater influence over its programmes and some additional funding, demands of the local authority that it is representing the interests of all sections of its population, and engages in collaborative action with neighbouring local authorities to tackle urban problems straddling local authority boundaries. The local authority, in turn, requires of the state the delivery of high quality services either, directly, or by providing the means to do so through local authority or other relevant bodies. This approach is sometimes referred to as urban solidarity. It reflects the belief that urban growth can only be successfully accomplished if all sections of the community and areas of the city are given an opportunity to participate in that development.'

They go in to some interesting comparisons with the much praised *City Challenge* initiative in England. Both aim to improve coordination and create greater partnership between government, private and voluntary sectors. Yet there are fundamental differences in style. The French take a longer-term perspective: competition for funding is a feature of the French system. In Britain it leads to short time horizons ‘for putting together partnerships – raising doubts, in some cases, as to their underlying strength.’ The Treasury-driven concern to justify public spending also leads, in the British case, ‘to the requirement to produce evidence of relatively short term pay-offs.’ The French, on the other hand, concentrate on the need to build effective working relationships over a number of years.

Notes

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The convivial city

Liz Greenhalgh and Ken Worpole†*

If our cities are not to become gated fortresses or air conditioned nightmares we must attend to people's values.

While the American Dream feeds on consumption, and the perpetual reinvention of what is desirable, its British cousin harks back to a notion of pastoral idylls which hasn't changed in the course of several centuries. Just as industrial masters once joined the rural aristocracy when they had made their pile, so today's urbanites seek relief from the *Albert Squares* and *Coronation Streets* of contemporary Britain in down-sizing Ambridge. Though over 80 per cent of British people actually live in cities, more than two thirds would choose to live in small towns or country villages if they could, and where people can leave cities, they do. Of eleven cities or metropolitan boroughs studied for the 1994/5 Comedia/Demos report on *Park life* (Bristol, Bromley, Cardiff, Greenwich, Hounslow, Leicester, Merton, Middlesborough, Sheffield, Southwark and Sutton), all suffered significant depopulation between 1981 and 1991. In just one decade, Bristol's population dropped from 438,038 to 370,300, Southwark's from 313,413 to 196,500.¹

Where permanent moves aren't possible, many people look for out-of-town shopping malls, multi-facility 'leisure boxes' built on greenfield

*†Demos Associates.

sites and country parks. By 1994, 45 per cent of all car journeys were devoted to escaping the city limits in leisure time.²

The desire to flee the city suggests we have lost a model of urban living that can inspire and sustain people. The benefits have been masked by costs, and more alarmingly, by a concern about security. Anxieties about crime now dominate people's thoughts and fears to a greater extent than the prospect of illness, unemployment or accidental injury.³ Fuelled by political scaremongering, people now frequently characterise public spaces as danger zones. Only half the population dares go out after dark, fewer than a third of children are allowed to walk to school and a fear of strangers is regularly voiced after murders such as those of James Bulger and Rachel Nickell which occurred in shared spaces where people ordinarily shop and walk their dogs.

It's no surprise interest in surveillance techniques has mushroomed. Indeed the security industry is currently defining social policy. A burgeoning sector of the urban economy, it views the control of space and personal security as largely a technological problem, amenable only to expensive forms of private security – car alarms, burglar alarms, electronic fencing, gated residential estates, mobile phones – all important positional consumer goods for the 1990s.⁴

This equation between safety and surveillance has been one of the factors behind popular support for out-of-town shopping centres, an American-style mix of cars and commerce which date the old Victorian public spaces. New shopping centres such as Lakeside in Thurrock, Meadowhall in Sheffield and the Newcastle Metro Centre provide attractive shopping environments with strictly controlled security. They offer a pure antithesis to the countryside, wholly protected from the vagaries of the weather and the organic, natural world.

But these micro-cities, based around the car and shopping have not been as successful as might have been expected. Their relative failure gives us some important clues as to how thinking on cities will develop in the next century and why many people now talk of the monolithic shopping centre as likely to become the tower block problem of the next generation – a dangerous anachronism without public affection or loyalty.



Unfortunately, despite the flaws of the Los Angeles model, policy makers have not projected a credible alternative. Assessments of recent policy have reluctantly concluded that urban regeneration policies of the last two decades have been fragmented and ineffective, too concerned with property and not enough with people.⁵

We need to take much more seriously the extent to which urban unease cannot simply be understood in terms of problems that are concentrated in urban areas. Instead, we need a approach that builds on the central virtues of the city – its role as a place of conviviality, a place where people meet, trade, exchange, share ideas and one that

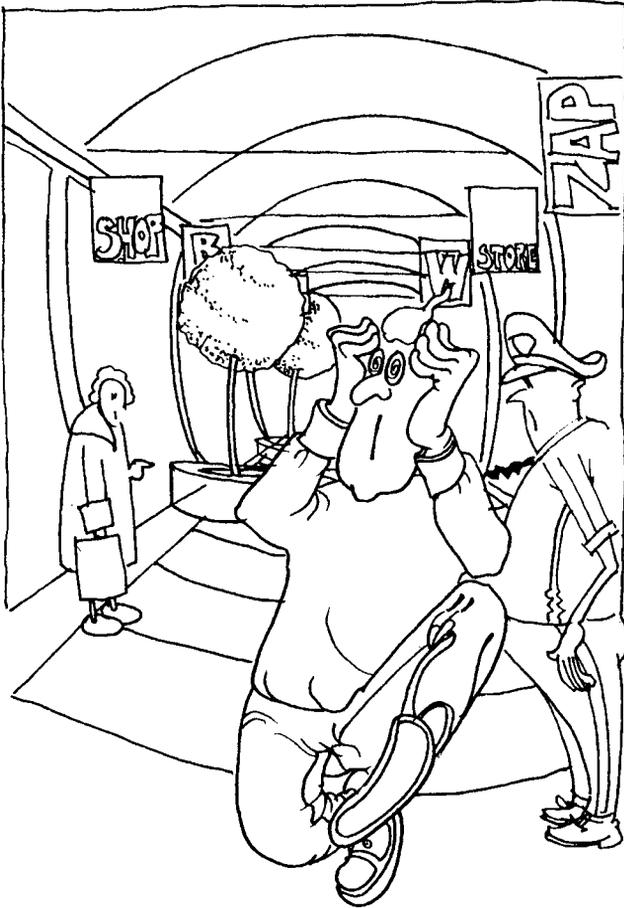
avoids the error of replacing the vitality of the city with the sterile atmosphere of the shopping centre or an ersatz rural design.

A good starting point would be to better balance the parts and the whole. Without some responsibility for the system as a whole, cities fall apart. British cities in particular lack the capacity to act strategically. But, equally, there are important new ways to devolve some power: neighbourhood councils, advisory groups, citizens' juries, 'planning for real' exercises can all provide new means for people to influence decisions about their locality.

A return to high density would also give people a sense of control, and more closely connect their needs to plans for their immediate surroundings. One of the demons of urban life has been overcrowding and, as a result, lowering urban population densities has been one of the long-term goals of the planning profession over the last 20 years. Only now is the idea of increasing density again being discussed, as the growth of one person households in cities casts a new light on the debate. Recent studies indicate it is the sense of privacy and control over one's immediate living conditions that are important. With mounting evidence from edge of city estates that lower density housing may not reduce urban problems, reductions in pollution, crime and noise may be a more satisfying way forward.

Changing patterns of employment and leisure which produce a multiplicity of lifestyles, many of which are increasingly enacted at night rather than during the day, create further pressure which should be taken on board. The demands of the 24 hour city should be catered for rather than allowed to strain previous conceptions of organisation.

We need to encourage a public culture. The traditional assumption that a vibrant street life and public culture was only possible in warmer, more Latinate cultures, is now disputed. In fact it was the English who invented the promenade (or the 'monkey parade' as it was more popularly called), as well as the culture of the coffee-house. Festivals, gatherings, fireworks displays and concerts that use public spaces in new ways – all are means for reinforcing the sense of the city as a convivial melting pot.



A move away from the hegemony of ‘the design solution’ would enable us to prioritise desire, or people over planning. The dominant discourses of urban renewal in Britain are still those of urban design and landscape architecture (‘designing out crime’), allied to the leading role assumed by architects, planners and street furniture manufacturers rather than sociologists, representatives of social movements or community groups, as well as the city inhabitants and users themselves.

The issue of sustainability has become increasingly pressing. It has recognised the importance of a city's ecology – how it manages waste, energy, transport and water – and programmes for the 'greening of the city' have turned derelict sites into attractive and much used recreation areas. What have been less well understood are the links between ecological and social sustainability. People who do not trust each other will not get involved in programmes of mutual aid, land reclamation, waste sifting, or indeed engage in moral arguments about reduced consumption.

Finally, the value of user-friendly transport should not be overlooked. The new tram systems in Manchester and Sheffield have done more to present a sense of quick, clean, efficient and, above all, modern change in these cities than any number of passing regeneration policies. Future transport policies will determine whether cities come to be seen as anachronistic, polluting, gridlocked structures or as places that make the most of individual mobility and therefore enhance the opportunities to get about and make the most of the city.

Some years ago, in his book *The country and the city*, Raymond Williams asked: if the countryside represents the past, and the city the future, where does this leave the present? The answer may be in stalemate. The public has lost confidence in the models of the city's future, just as much as the countryside no longer seems able to fulfil the promise of a peaceful idyll. While in rural areas battles are fought over the aesthetics of wind farms (and as Raymond Williams pointed out 'landscape' was always the enemy or working rural economy), in cities people are trying to find a new balance between greening and the messy cosmopolitanism that gives many British cities their energy. As they do so, they are beginning to understand the future of the city in terms that redefine its attractions and reinforce continuity with the past, a continuity of the idea of the city as a place of conviviality and social interaction, of creativity and experimentation, tolerance and dissent, which cannot be reduced to the instrumentalities of a communications network, a proliferation of shopping and other leisure opportunities, or architecture as a heritage experience.

This article draws on The Freedom of the City by Liz Greenhalgh and Ken Worpole which is published by Demos on October 11th.

An air-conditioned nightmare? Reasons to be fearful

One objection to these commercial spaces is their striking failure to become a natural part of everyday life. Many are well-managed and enjoyable places in which to spend an afternoon, but most remain lifeless, homogeneous, too regimented to mesh with the memories, dreams and ghosts which fill more traditional public spaces. They have not succeeded in becoming the places where people live out their rites of passage. In contrast, parks remain the places where people live out their rites of passage. In contrast, parks remain the places where lasting childhood memories are formed, teenagers have their first experience of love and sex, parents take their children to play and the old commemorate their absent partners with memorial tree and benches.

Another anxiety about many shopping centres is their use of exclusionary design as a way of distancing social problems. Examples might include minimising seats to deliberately exclude the old or unemployed who don't spend enough money, or using closed circuit television to keep out the homeless. American cities and their politics serve as warning of how entrenched division and mutual resentment can become. In some instances finding ways of excluding unwanted groups dominates the planning brief. In Los Angeles, the police department now has an effective veto over planning decisions, which it has used to block provision of public toilets in parks and subway stations. By contrast, British people still favour more inclusive spaces. More than half

have a public library card, nearly half regularly use parks and most enjoy the unpredictability and social mixing these facilities involve.

An over-dependence on cameras and mobile security patrols creates a further tension in other parts of the world. In Britain, we find a sense of security depends far more on the presence of people (both employees and members of the public) who have the effect of 'crowding out' crime. A recent drive to replace park attendants with mobile crews led the New York Parks Commissioner to lament, 'the worker who appeared to be idle much of the day had, in fact, been lending a presence to the park that moderated disorder and gave a touch of humanity to a neighbourhood lacking in social services.' Handling intense public insecurity about open spaces in a people-intensive way is not only effective, but has been shown in other parts of the world to create employment for millions of older people who often lack the skills to go into the new jobs in services or technology.

If these reservations about the new model shopping centres are widespread, the lack of support from ethnic minorities should sound a warning about their unlikely future livelihood. Britain's Black and Asian communities overwhelmingly live within cities and are usually the last groups to venture into rural hinterland.⁶

They have tended to recreate features of cities in their countries of origin, building close-knit, dense communities based on walking rather than driving. As the Guyana-born novelist Mike Phillips effused: 'You must understand, we never had the myth of a rural paradise. We embraced the city because it meant progress, material progress, intellectual progress, educational progress.' It would surely be unwise to continue building structures these communities don't endorse.

Finally, there is a cultural argument against over-managing these public spaces. As public space is increasingly industrialised, each with a defined purpose, we come to value all the more those spaces which have no overt purpose, where time stands still. Places like libraries, parks, street corners or cafes which are best simply for idling, chatting or meditating.⁷

Notes

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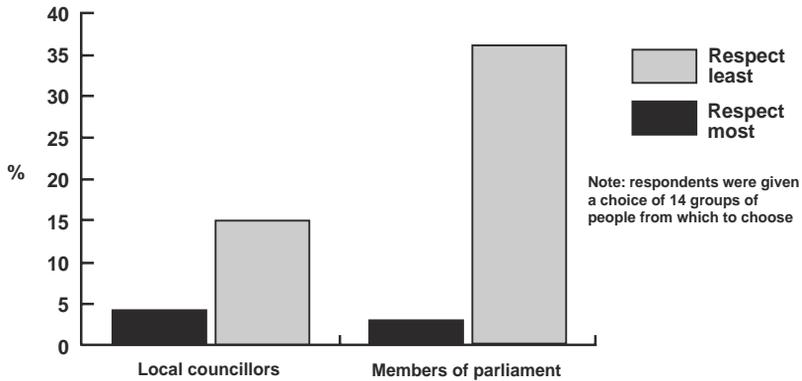
Two tales of two cities

Ian Taylor

If cities are to make the transition from the industrial to the post-industrial age, they need to acknowledge local cultures and histories, not deny them.

Thinking about cities has been profoundly influenced by what the American researchers John Logan and Harvey Molotch referred to in the 1980s as, 'urban growth coalitions' – partnerships of senior private and public sector professionals working in architecture, transport and urban planning in close, frequently commercial relationships with developers. Their claim to speak on behalf of local urban populations in general has found increasing support over the last ten to fifteen years.¹ In the perspectives of these local growth coalitions, the challenge to all cities, especially old industrial cities in post-Fordist North America and Europe, was that of occupying a new niche in the image market – whether as a City of Sport, City of Drama, a City of Shopping or a Garden City. Meanwhile, large and ambitious cities, have preferred to identify themselves as 'headquarter cities' based on the new cultural, communication and financial industries. Logan and Molotch advance a taxonomy in which all post-industrial cities are seen to be launched into one of five redevelopment categories: in a few instances, as headquarter cities; more

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Source: MORI, 1995

Figure Respect for local councillors and member of parliament.

frequently as specialist module production cities which try to survive on the inherited skills of a local labour force; as border/entrepôt cities – primarily trading or commercial centres; as centres of sports and entertainment; or finally, as retirement cities.

This abstract typology of ‘urban fortune’ offers a starting point, but my own study of two North of England cities,² has suggested the understanding of urban futures may involve more detailed exploration of local and often very long-standing variation.

The local line

‘For all that Sheffield’s Labour Market has collapsed, residents do not appear keen to leave’

Between 1991 and 1994, our research into Manchester and Sheffield – two old industrial cities settled and built up during the middle years of the nineteenth century and seen as substantially similar ‘old North of England cities’ – unearthed the overwhelming sense of difference,

not least in popular discussions of local urban futures.³ In Greater Manchester – the site of two Olympic Game bids, City of Drama in 1994, home to the new Metrolink urban transit system, and, thanks in part to City Pride and other European monies, the centre of a considerable amount of new-build architecture – we encountered a widespread sense of being on the pioneering edge of urban change. The conurbation was perceived as a city with job market capable of supporting some kind of economic future, but also one with a vibrant range of lifestyle attributes, especially for the young. In Sheffield, by contrast – a city which as recently as the early 1980s still thought of itself as the City of Steel, despite losing over 35,000 jobs in that industry in a very short time – the general mood was quite different. The initiatives taken almost in panic, on some accounts – by the local council in the 1980s to deal with the unfolding economic catastrophe (most notably, their investment in the World Student Games in the failed attempt to reposition Sheffield as a national City of Sport) were widely criticised by local people, as was the Council's new South Yorkshire Supertram, which is far less successful than the Manchester Metrolink (which has vastly exceeded its own profit projections). Sheffielders also opined at length on the troubled condition of the city's shopping centre, which has been decimated by competition from the Meadowhall development on the city's East End, and the decline in the quality of life in the city – usually referenced in terms of the demise of the city bus system, consequent on government intervention with the city's famous Cheap Bus Fares policy of the 1970s and subsequent deregulation of local bus services. Other locals spoke with feeling of the steep increases reported in local crime rates. This in a city which has prided itself for many years as having one of the lowest crime levels of any major industrial city.

It's tempting to see this marked difference in local feeling as a specific product of recent economic developments, a demonstration of the mood shift that the dynamism of local, far-sighted enterprise can make. But in the discussions we held, another perspective was inescapable. For a great many Mancunians, the rapid changes occurring in their city are an expression of a long-established local character – notably, as

home to the cotton industry's birth and rapid growth in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, working hard to market the products of its commercial activities as they spread across the region. The 'cottonopolis' connections to the wider world had been assured by the opening of the Manchester Ship Canal: by the 1840s, Manchester, the 'Shock City', was at the very centre of the whole Industrial Revolution. Later in the nineteenth century, as captains of this trade, the 'men who made Manchester' invested heavily, providing a material infrastructure of buildings and streets – the core of Victorian Manchester – and it was in this central area that the theatres, shopping arcades, schools of music and art galleries of Manchester quickly developed. 'What Manchester does today (in commercial or cultural terms)', went the saying, 'London (or the world) will do tomorrow.'

'There are forms of "ocal knowledge" on which innovative public and private sector urban developments could depend'

It is very difficult to escape the feeling that some very similar process has been applied to Manchester during the 1980s and 1990s. Not only are many of the new urban development initiatives driven by close networks of confident young or middle-aged Mancunian men, but there is also evidence of a fast developing local alternative economy of work and employment, based on similar entrepreneurial or opportunistic common sense to that which nurtured the local economy at the height of the previous free trade movement. The organic connection between the local Manchester scally of that period and the street-wise 'Manc' of the 1990s is unmistakable. So too is the gendered character of both the urban leaderships and street-level economy – it seems primarily, once again, to be men who are remarking Manchester.

The cultural contrast with Sheffield is marked. There are some local examples of individual and corporate enterprise, not least in some key city centre locales such as the Tudor Square piazza, but urban change has mostly taken the form of the refurbishment of what is old and familiar rather than radical post modernist transformation. Cultural



activity in the city seems very often preoccupied with the so recently lost world of the economy of cutlery and steel – for example, in the flourishing interest in local, industrial history and in dramas at the Crucible Theatre. Even the television advertising for William Stones’ Sheffield Bitter relies on sepia images of the grafting steelworker, self-evidently having earned his pint reward.⁴ A very large proportion of the discussions of ‘global change and everyday life’ in our Sheffield focus groups consisted of references to the past.

By 'eck, it's gorgeous

A purely economic analysis of residents' responses to the prospective futures of their cities would explain little. For all that Sheffield's labour market has in effect collapsed, and for all the other problems which residents of that city reported to us at great length, they do not appear very keen to leave. The total loss of population in the whole South Yorkshire area between 1981 and 1991 was only 47,900 people, or 0.4 per cent; of these, 33,900 were lost from the city of Sheffield (6.0 per cent of the population of 1981).⁵ The contrast with the emigration from Merseyside in the 1970s and 1980s, and with the Northumberland and Durham coalfields over an even longer period, is striking. Our talks revealed a range of compensations for many people in living in the city-calculations which were always set against the poor economic prospects. These ranged from an appreciation of the city's physical location (ten minutes from open country), its celebrated system of parks and The Round Walk to other, more nebulous but powerfully-voiced characteristics such as its friendliness. These qualities have been the subject of comment for many years, attributed by some to its geographical location or that it is 'built around seven hills', and by others to the peculiar character of the cutlery and steel trade culture. The city has been seen as an 'enclave culture', originating around the workshop (the cutlery mill), the pub, the chapel and the private house, but with a longstanding sense of autonomy from wider England.

Local futures

This comparative project into the local impacts of global change cautions against the generalising emphasis of so much contemporary urban analysis, and echoes the research into regionalism conducted at the University of Lancaster in the 1980s⁶ as well as Robert Putnam's recent analysis of the long-established sense of autonomy and difference in Northern Italy.⁷ My concern is not to deny the universal impact of global developments (on culture, economics or forms of political and urban representation), but to highlight the significance of 'residual' aspects of local culture. In one interview in Sheffield, for example,

the activist leader of the Don Valley Forum wanted to see the 'dead space' around the central inner city reclaimed for use by market gardeners in the form of allotments, with space on higher ground for pigeonracers. In Manchester, the home of the new national cycling Velodrome, many locals want to see a redesign of central city streets for cyclists, an impossible dream around the hills of Sheffield. Recent migrants into Manchester from Hong Kong want more viewing areas at Manchester International Airport to facilitate their Sunday hobby of watching international flights arriving and departing. Residents of the suburban areas of both cities were bent on improving their own neighbourhoods, nearly always in reference to reclaiming something of its specific local or village like character. These are the forms of 'local knowledge' on which innovative public and private sector urban development projects in Britain, closely attentive to local cultural differences in this old society, and sceptical of the universalising voice of the postmodernists, could depend.

Solution: The making of Curitiba

Tristram Hunt

Or how urban planners stopped going round in circles and found a lesson in linearity

The talk of the development world – as distinct from the developing world – is of the crisis of the city. A recent report from the *United Nations Centre for Human Settlements* asked, ‘Is there life after cities?’ The paper proceeded, ‘By 2015, Tokyo will be the world’s biggest city with 28 million people; Bombay will rank number two; every other city in the top ten will be in the developing world.’ The predictions were dire: disease, congestion, overcrowding. Forget the local.

Jamie Lerner, the architect-mayor of Curitiba, one of the largest and poorest cities in Brazil, disagrees with such a gloomy prognosis: ‘People try to sell you complexity, they see the destiny of the city as tragedy. But if you are pessimistic about cities, you are pessimistic about human beings.’

The history of Curitiba demonstrates how a deprived metropolis, with a population of over 2.3 million, can grow and prosper, yet at the same time foster a strong degree of local pride, efficient municipal services and an envious environmental record.

Researcher at Demos.

The success of Curitiba lies in its planning and public accountability. In the 1960s, when other Brazilian cities built highways, consolidated dependence upon the car and allowed development to occur haphazardly in ever-widening concentric circles, Curitiba took a different path. Its master plan, which emerged from six years of research, forming institutions, developing human resources and consensus building, proposed transforming urban growth from a radial to a linear pattern by integrating the road network, public transportation, and land use. Lerner promoted a modern, high-density city that would give its inhabitants easy access to offices, shops and amenities, and avoid the long car journey times of North America or Australia's low-density urban sprawls.

The plan began to be realised during the 1970s. Lerner implemented linear growth along structural axes that were planned to reinforce existing public transportation networks. Simultaneously, the public transportation system was realigned and expanded to bolster and exploit the axes. New buildings were grouped along five axial roads leading into the centre. Each axis consisted of three roads. In the centre of each were two lanes reserved for express buses, flanked by standard local roads. In effect, Lerner identified what made an underground system fast and applied it to the bus service. The difference being that the bus network cost only US\$200,000 per kilometre to build, whereas a subway system would have cost US\$60–70 per kilometre. The result? While Curitiba has over 500,000 cars (more per capita than any other city in Brazil except Brasilia), 75 per cent of commuters travel by bus. The city is decongested, its historic centre preserved. Bus jams never happen. Vandalism is unknown. 'People don't vandalise it because they like it. They feel respected, they show respect,' says Carlos Ceneviva, president of Urbs, the local transport regulation authority. A model public transport system has been a crucial element in maintaining the spirit of local loyalty. As Lerner argues, 'The less importance you give to cars, the better it is for people. When you widen streets for cars, you throw away identity and memory.'

While Curitiba, like any major city in the developing world, is not exempt from poverty, overcrowding or drugs, it has nonetheless forged

ahead with innovative projects which have caught the attention of policy-makers the world over. As a recent World Bank report indicated, the success is in large part due to a regard for public information and accessibility – ‘The better citizens know their city, the better they treat it’. Through the use of best practices, Curitiba, a city with one of the fastest growing populations in Brazil, has retained a sense of being local space. ‘Curitiba is only different because it has made itself different,’ concludes Lerner. ‘It has gone against the flow and made itself a human city.’

Notes

1. Logan, J. R. and Harvey L., 1987, *Molotch urban fortunes: the political economy of place*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago.
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3. This research involved over thirty focus groups which brought together many different elements of the local public.
4. Given the closure of all the main steel plants in Sheffield during the 1980s, the sequences for these Sheffield Bitter adverts had actually to be filmed in Czechoslovakia. In 1995, only 4,500 people in Sheffield were employed in steel (compared to some 45,000 in 1971).
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Cities of people and cities of bits

Peter Hall

Virtual trading may appear to mean the death of distance, but evidence shows that traditional homes to privileged information will remain competitive.

Why do old cities like London and New York retain such a strong position in an age when information technology should have made cities obsolete?

The shift into a service producing economy has rendered old factors of production, such as coal deposits or long stretches of navigable water, ever less relevant to competitive advantage. Today's raw material is information: weightless, easily produced and equally easily exported. Once the individual, for example, has paid her user fee to log onto the World Wide Web, she thinks nothing of surfing three miles or three thousand miles along the Superhighway.

The effects of the information revolution are already being felt. In the UK, business activities are moving out of London to regional cities

'The growth of telecommunications traffic is, in fact paralleled by the growth of terrestrial human travel'

Professor at the Bartlett School of Architecture, University College London.

such as Leeds, Newcastle, and Glasgow. The growth of direct banking, especially in Leeds, has seen spectacular advances in the past five years. British Airways has recently moved its inquiry reservation service out of Heathrow and into Newcastle – where pecunious undergraduates with good southern accents service your every requirement. If you now phone for a domestic reservation, Britain's national carrier will connect you to a sales representative in Bombay. Best Western hotels use the inmates of the Arizona Women's penitentiary to take reservations. Once inside the informational world, the user rarely knows where she is – unless you happen to ask your service provider. This is what Bill Mitchell, in his book *City of Bits* has termed the virtual city, in which all space and traditional physical qualities have disappeared.

So, what is left for this earthly world? What are the forces that will keep industries and services in major cities – centres which traditionally carry very high operating costs?

This is difficult territory. The experts in the field have by no means reached a conclusion. However enthusiastic they purport to be about the effects of new technology, they all seem to believe there is something in traditional cities after all, some special factor that allows them to win out against the all-conquering forces of cheap labour.

To understand why we have to recognise that the information revolution is not a zero-sum game where the computer beats the human interaction and where electronic communication can always act as an adequate substitute for face-to-face communication. Historical, evidence indicates that the growth of telecommunications traffic is, in fact, paralleled by the growth of terrestrial human travel. Every programmed contact by telecommunications will lead to the need for an unprogrammed contact, i.e. face-to-face communication. The real question is whether this face-to-face contact takes place in a city, or at the Gatwick Hilton or the O'Hare Holiday Inn outside its boundaries.

The evidence seems to suggest that established capital cities enjoy the tremendous competitive advantage of inertia: because things have always been done in a particular location, they tend to remain there. The pattern is especially pronounced when activities depend on privileged information. A great deal of life in cities consists simply of

the exchange of such information. Why is so much high value added economic activity concentrated in places like Silicon Valley? Why does the City of London exist when you can potentially trade from any location? The answer is that it is because of the exchange of special privileged information, be it in gyms, at dinner parties, or at the pub. There is strong anecdotal evidence that these qualities will go on operating and that businesses will happily continue to pay for it through high rents.

‘The tremendous scale of inertia will ensure that traditional clusters of libraries, museums, and tourist paraphernalia in major cities will indubitable benefit from this information revolution’

These factors are what Alfred Marshall termed general external economies, rather than external economies specific to the industry. They are of particular importance in complex, multi-industry cities like Paris, rather than single industry cities like Washington. Marshall’s external economies arise precisely from that exchange of information across different business boundaries which London, Paris and Rome enjoy. These conversations could take place in other peripheral centres, but they don’t because this activity has accumulated within established cities.

This doesn’t mean geographical patterns are fixed for all time. London’s positioning, for example, is not guaranteed. The decline of the global cities of Florence and Bruges from their *Quattrocento* dominance illustrates the dynamism of international civic power relations. But in the game of city competition there is a tangible inertia advantage, unless cities manage to completely destroy it through war or partition. The decline of Berlin after World War II is a spectacular case in point.

Competition between places, and particularly informational activities, will be the main driver of the economy in the foreseeable future, drawing places like New York, London and Los Angeles into increasing competition with each other – especially in the cultural and cultural technology industries, such as multi-media and interactive educational

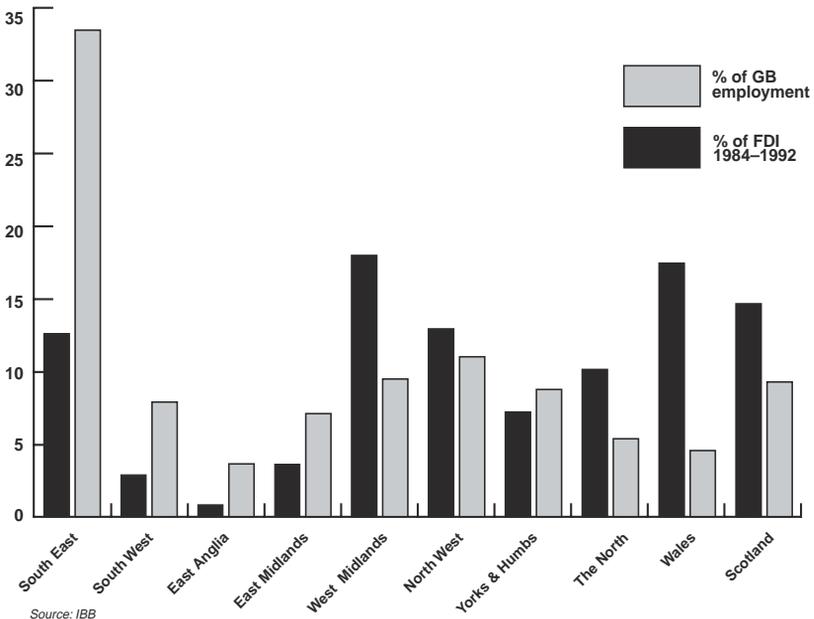
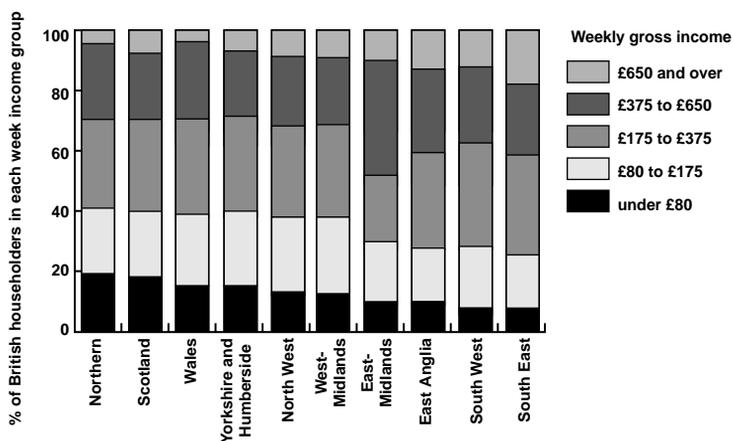


Figure Foreign direct investment goes to areas of rich infrastructure as well as cheap labour.

services. In the financial services sector, London will continue to compete with New York, Tokyo and perhaps in an EMU world Frankfurt.

Just as electronic informational activities can generate face-to-face activities, so they generate industries. Electronic exchange generates business tourism, which is itself an important component of the tourist industry. Electronic cultural information frequently generates the desire to see performances in reality, and following the experience of the Open University, there is a strong possibility that electronic education will create a demand for traditional, campus-based education. Where will all these related activities be located? The tremendous scale of inertia will ensure that traditional clusters of libraries, museums and tourist paraphernalia in major cities will indubitably benefit from this information revolution.



Source: *Regional Trends 28, 1993, CSO, HMSO, London, table 8.2*

Figure The closer to Dover, the richer the region.

Globalisation will see the major cities retain their prominence – despite shedding some kinds of activity to lower order centres such as provincial capitals – by the compensatory growth of the highest order activities. Even the newest industries like multimedia are growing most strongly in small areas of Los Angeles and New York, although just as the film industry and popular music industry emerged in the relatively peripheral Hollywood and Memphis, new centres may become significant in combining culture and technology into new forms.

But the main conclusion is this. Where the newest industries are concerned the old categories are dwindling in their usefulness. The traditional ‘mercantilist’ argument over the competitiveness of the nation state is being increasingly superseded by debates about the competitiveness of city and regional economies. The international economic league table of the 1960s has been replaced by civic and regional prospectuses promising foreign investors best possible locations. It is to this kind of competition – a competition in which old cities retain great advantages even in the newest industries – that we should be turning our attention.

Green shoots

Ravi Gurumurthy

Most western societies waste both material resources and human ones. Here we examine new ways of cutting both kinds of waste by linking environmental improvements to job creation.

Waste is not a fashionable issue. Since the demise of the rag and bone man, it has been just another green obsession. But waste is again becoming central to economic strategy. Managing waste creatively can not only conserve the environment, it can save enormous sums of money and create many new jobs. In this article I argue that the way to this promised land is coordinated local action, combining supply side reform with new forms of demand management. The practicality of this approach is demonstrated in the success of Ontario's *Green Communities Initiatives* (GCIs).

Recycling

Effective recycling depends on bringing together four different elements. Households have to be persuaded to separate their refuse – everything from glass to clothing. Refuse collectors must be able to collect separated

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waste, and firms need to be encouraged to invest in secondary materials technologies to turn waste paper or plastics into new products. Finally, demand has to be stimulated for these products.

These four elements of the waste system are interdependent: a paper remanufacturing company can only be profitable if there is a supply of waste paper and if demand is stimulated. It is no good just giving a start-up grant to a paper recycling firm if no action is taken to separate waste collection and thus supply the firm with waste paper. Equally, it is not profitable for a waste collection service to collect separated waste if it cannot sell these materials to a remanufacturer. With each part of the recycling process so interdependent, coordinated local action in each part of the system is vital for recycling to become efficient.

Producing paper from waste paper rather than from virgin pulp uses 35 per cent less energy, but without an adequate supply of waste paper, the green option is not profitable. In many areas, such as paper, aluminium and textiles the main obstacle to greater recycling is the inadequacy of the collection system. The GCIs have managed to transform their collection system and hence their recycling rates through the introduction of the blue box and the use of multi-function rubbish vans. The blue box was supplied to all households. It allows them to separate rubbish and place it in separate compartments in the blue box. With rubbish now separated into different materials such as metals, paper and plastics, the refuse is collected using rubbish vans which have four separate compartments for the various materials. The result of these measures was a massive increase in the recycling rate. Most of the nineteen GCIs have achieved recycling rates of 50–75 per cent compared to Britain's pitiful rate of 3 per cent.

The introduction of the blue-box and multi-function rubbish vans was combined with an intensive education programme in schools and through the Home Advisory Service (see below). This education programme taught people how to separate their waste more effectively and how to compost their organic waste which can account for up to a third of total refuse. Alongside information and public investment in waste collection, private investment in the disassembly and remanufacturing stages which complete the recycling process must be encouraged with

a much greater supply of raw materials, combined with investment in new waste conversion technology, these stages become very profitable.

Behind this shift towards recycling existing resources lies a new vision of the city. In the past, cities fed off the raw materials of the countryside – food, coal, iron and wood. But today, cities represent the great untapped source of raw materials in the huge wastes they throw away everyday: everything from food wastes that could be composted to old cars and computers. Turning these materials into new products not only saves on scarce materials and the rising costs of waste disposal: it also creates new jobs and wealth at each stage of the process, whether in collecting, sorting, disassembly or remanufacturing. Best of all, many of the jobs are relatively local and suitable for the relatively unskilled unemployed. In an age of increasingly global, high skill, automated industries, a profitable industry that is local, low skill and labour intensive is increasingly precious.

Home and industry advisors

The GCIs second innovation was to provide easily accessible packages of advice to help people shift their consumption to more local, cost effective and environmentally sustainable products. There are a wide variety of potential savings both in using efficient appliances such as low-energy lightbulbs and condensing boilers, and through the insulation of walls, attics, basements and windows. Although the initial investment on these measures are recouped rapidly, there are many obstacles to actually fitting them. Despite the financial benefits of home improvements, people often fail to take advantage of them due to a combination of lack of knowledge, distrust of builders or plumbers, problems with the initial investment costs and simple inertia.

Home Green Up, funded publicly, is designed to overcome these obstacles. Home visiting professional advisors carry out detailed assessments of energy and water use, waste and pollution prevention. Advisors assess the home and then produce a recommended package of improvements in order of priority. The package has a price list, an estimate of when the investment will be recouped and a list of local suppliers and

fitters. Help is available for the initial costs with low-interest 'enviroloans' and discounts through the Town Card (see below).

Many households adopting many or all of the recommended package. This is indicated by the amount of money spent as a result of each home visit: the average renovation spending in the Guelph region of Ontario from 2,714 home visits was \$2,763. The total \$7.5 million dollars spent in the Guelph area led to 201 person years of direct employment. There were also spin-off benefits. The homes targeted in the Ontario schemes were those of fairly high disposable income households. In effect, Home Green-Ups had the effect of redistributing some income from higher earners towards jobs created in green industries. However, unlike taxation, the redistribution was voluntary and financially beneficial to the purchaser of green products. It is a good example of the potential for mutually beneficial outcomes through greater overall efficiency.

In the industrial sector, similar advisory schemes operated with great success in Ontario. Under the Green Industrial Analysis and Retrofit (GIAR) project in Ontario, a number of companies benefited from professional assistance. The take-up rate was high because of the substantial savings made from relatively low cost measures. Average annual savings in energy were 18.5 per cent; in water, they were 25 per cent; and in waste disposal, they were 85 per cent. This, too, shows why the nineteen Green Communities schemes attracted support from all areas of the community.

Green pages and town smart cards

The large response generated by the Ontario home advisors demonstrates that simple information and marketing can change consumer behaviour considerably. This was the reasoning behind the development of the Green pages, which though similar to the Yellow Pages, operate selection criteria that assess whether goods and services are indeed green, local, cheap and of suitable quality, or GLCQ.

The GLCQ was planned to be used in a town discount card. However, a new Gingrichite government in Ontario stifled its development.



Marketing, education and financial services can go a long way in altering consumption patterns, but a discount card for GLCQ goods would provide a further financial stimulus for consumption of local, green products. Consumers would receive a 10–20 per cent discount on a series of goods that fulfil all or part of the GLCQ criterion. However, the discount would not be received in conventional cash but in the form of points on the discount card. These discount card points would work rather like a local currency. Consumers could purchase other GLCQ products with the points on the discount card. Whereas most discount

cards allow the money to flow out of the locality, the GLCQ card keeps the currency in local circulation and so encourages local trading. Particularly, in poor communities, it is often not the level of investment that is important but how many times the investment circulates before leaving the locality.

The GLCQ criterion covers a diverse range of goods and service. These include household equipment and building materials that reduce energy and water use, locally produced organic food, greener forms of transport including off-peak travel, municipal services such as libraries and education services, sports facilities, theatre and restaurants and many others. The attraction for retailers and service providers to offer discounts is three fold: the GLCQ card and pages would provide marketing for their products, while the use of bar coding or smart card technology would reduce transaction costs and most importantly, supply firms with invaluable information on consumer patterns which can be used for data-based marketing.

The GLCQ card could also be used to encourage reduced working hours through special discounts for those prepared to work fewer hours. Although workers would earn less money in conventional cash, they would receive more benefits on the discount card system to compensate. With more people working longer hours, often against their will, yet mounting unemployment, we need not only to encourage labour intensive processes but to share out work more effectively. Simply legislating to reduce hours would be unwelcome both to workers and to employers. However, encouraging 'downshifting' through extra GLCQ card benefits would generate jobs, save money and improve the quality of life for existing workers.

Conclusions

The success of the GCIs has both a theoretical and practical lesson. The theoretical one concerns the nature of growth. There is still a stale argument between the advocates of high growth and the advocates of no-growth. The real question should not be 'how much growth?' but 'what type?'. Unlike other growth activities, recycling and energy

efficiency are very labour intensive, are done locally, save consumers money and conserve the environment. The practical lesson is that if we are to encourage the right types of growth we need coordinated local action – to shape consumer demands with discount cards, green pages and home advisors and to invest in the collection and remanufacture of waste. It is time policymakers in Britain accepted both that certain types of growth are much more beneficial than others, and that we have the tools available to encourage them.

A green light for local power

Ian Christie

When the Rio Summit met to discuss the future of the world's environment, it decided that half of the policy steps needed to be carried out at a local level.

For well over a decade, the fortunes of local government in the UK have been at a low ebb. Local authorities have been reorganised, their finances capped. They have received new responsibilities without commensurate empowerment; their ability to deliver on strategic plans has been severely restricted by privatisations, deregulation in transport and greater autonomy for health and education bodies. Election turnouts and results indicate low public interest in local government. Local elections are used as opportunities to punish national politicians.

Short of abolishing local government altogether, it is hard to see what further restrictions could be imposed by a national government of any colour. Even the Treasury, in a leaked memo, recently acknowledged that the pendulum had reached its limit in swinging away from autonomy for local government. It is likely that local authorities will gradually gain more powers in coming years, especially under a Labour government or Labour/Liberal Democrat coalition, and as European Union regional policies increasingly influence the UK. But will this

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revitalise local governance and democracy? Unless it does, little will have been gained.

This article argues that revitalising local democracy depends crucially on the environmental policy agenda for two reasons. First, the emerging agenda of environmentally sustainable development requires *strong local government* if its goals are to be realised. Second, the reenergisation of local democracy requires *strong commitment to sustainable development*. No other source of civic energy is a plausible contender for the task.

Local Agenda 21: a new prominence for local government

In 1992, the international community gathered at the Rio Earth Summit to discuss emerging global environmental problems and commit national governments to pursuing sustainable economic development that maintains or enhances the natural and human capital available to future generations. This event was the most significant shot in the arm for UK local government in many years. British representatives made new connections, were inspired by new ideas, and found themselves taken seriously. Most importantly, the Summit gave a major endorsement of the role of local action in planning and implementing sustainable development.

The Rio consensus recognised that, while some problems can only be addressed internationally, policy changes at all lower levels are essential. As the transition towards more sustainable development will require substantial changes to production and consumption patterns, public involvement in initiatives is vital, and this is more readily achieved through activity that has a clear impact on people's local environments. The key Rio document was Agenda 21, a comprehensive statement of initiatives required to shift the world's economies to a development path that could provide improved living standards while safeguarding crucial ecological systems and biodiversity. Agenda 21 is path-breaking in several ways.

First, it makes explicit the need for environmental policy to be integrated into decision-making at all levels and across all policy areas.

Environmental policy is often undermined, or contradicted completely, by the measures of other departments at different levels of government. Second, it recognises that environmental improvement is linked to improving the economic and social standing of deprived communities and countries: without equitable treatment, it is impossible to imagine support from low-income countries and low-income voters in the West for radical changes in consumption patterns.

Most importantly, it calls for *over half of the required policy steps to be carried out local level*. This recognises that developing sustainability will require local experimentation and painstaking consensus-building among groups who may see themselves as 'losers' from policy initiatives such as car restraint schemes or energy and other resource taxation.

Agenda 21 called for local authorities to undertake community consultation by the end 1996 – an optimistic target for most countries. The UK is widely acknowledged as a leader in embracing Local Agenda 21, at least in consultation and education initiatives.¹

Local economic development strategies and planning policies are now inescapably influenced by awareness of environmental challenges, from the global to the local. This opens up new responsibilities for local authorities and their partners in the UK, new opportunities for innovation in economic development and local democracy, and new problems. The following sections consider the opportunities and obstacles in turn.

What the environmental agenda can do for local government

The crucial role of local government in sustainable development is highlighted by the European Union's Fifth Action Programme on the Environment, which emphasises the need for decentralized environmental decision-making and local consensus-building.

The sustainable development agenda confers new legitimacy on local government as a site for experimenting, strategic planning and attaining public support for radical policies.

However, the eco-agenda is even more important to local democracy itself. Sustainable development is an intensely *political* process

requiring laborious strategy formulation from the ground up and the fostering of consensus throughout local communities.² Because pollution and environmental quality affect all sectors of the population and economy, sustainability pervades all areas of local government competence.

Taking sustainability seriously means restoring the influence of local authorities in many areas of policy where it has been eroded or removed in recent years. To realise sustainable development at local level, local government needs a strong strategy-setting and advisory role in transport, education, health, energy, pollution control and spatial planning. The green agenda legitimises this ambition as no other political programme currently can.

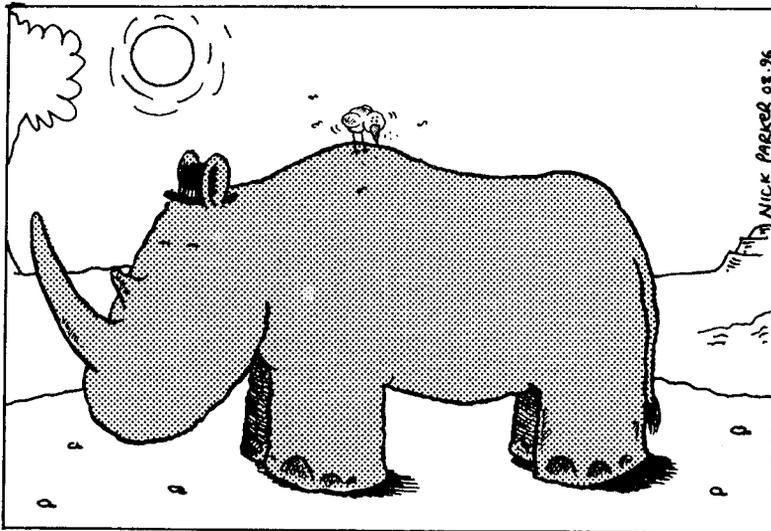
'At the Rio Earth Summit in 1992, British local government representatives made new connections, were inspired by new ideas and found themselves taken seriously'

Sustainable development also offers opportunities for innovation in local democratic participation. Because it affects all aspects of local economies, no single agency can possibly take full charge of the agenda. Multi-sector networks and partnerships are essential to the design and implementation of initiatives in this field.³ One relatively successful aspect of local governance in the last decade has been the emergence of strategic partnerships between local authorities and the private and voluntary sectors, in bidding for regeneration funds from WhiteHall and Brussels. Local Agenda 21 can build on much good practice. It also presents an opportunity to improve the operation and scope of multi-sector partnerships, which often suffer from inadequate mechanisms for involving local community groups. The UK programme has stimulated considerable innovation in consulting individual citizens and community organisations about sustainability. These include 'future search' sessions to develop a shared vision, neighbourhood Agenda 21 projects, and work on new indicators of local sustainability. It has also illustrated the value of work by pioneering partnership based

organisations such as the Groundwork Trusts, which draw together resources from public, private and voluntary sectors to enhance the natural and built environment in urban areas. Experience suggests there is real potential for energising local communities and providing new motivation for involvement in local democracy.

'The sustainable development agenda confers new legitimacy on local government as a site for experimenting, strategic planning and attaining public support for radical policies'

This argument is supported by the figures for public membership of environmental groups. The explosive growth seen in the 1980s has not continued, but passive and active participation still hugely outweighs that commanded by the political parties. The green agenda remains one of the few areas of public life to inspire *passionate* commitment and debate, and mobilise mass protest and imaginative, constructive dissent



(such as the occupation of the Guinness site in Wandsworth earlier this year). Locality is crucial: it is local landscape, traffic and litter that make 'the environment' real for most people as a fundamental political issue. In tapping popular concern and enthusiasm for environmental protection, local government has an opportunity to revitalise itself.

What local government can do for the green movement

If local government needs environmentalism to revitalise its processes and tap local energies, the green movement needs strong local government in order to achieve its goals. Implementation of international and national policies demands strong local government – it is just not feasible to envisage national sustainable development plans being devised and imposed in a uniform top-down process. The need for local experimentation and the scale of change and consultation rule this out.

It is locally that pilots of indicators, community consultation and changes in consumption, land use and production can best be designed and monitored. The variety of activity is remarkable.⁴ Notable initiatives include the Environment Cities scheme, run by the Wildlife Trusts and sponsored by BT and the Department of Environment. This was designed to explore measures for achieving sustainable development in major cities, and focused on Leeds, Leicester, Middlesbrough and Peterborough. In each city, working groups and other networks raise awareness among the public and business, promote energy saving, recycling and environmental education, develop targets and indicators, and explore measures for linking job creation and new business development to environmental goals.⁵ Another well-publicised initiative is GLOBE in Reading, a partnership between the borough council and World Wide Fund for Nature to develop neighbourhood-level Agenda 21 action plans.⁶ Innovative sustainability indicators and good practice in Local Agenda 21 have been researched by the Local Government Management Board (LGMB). They are also the focus of forthcoming work by the Henley Centre in its new *Planning for Local Change* research and consultancy programme.

Achieving environmental goals requires local government as a necessary, though not sufficient, element of sustainable development policy. But there is a broader reason why the green movement needs strong local democracy. The environmental campaign groups have come to recognise in the 1990s that their strategy needs to change. It is no longer enough to identify problems and campaign on single issues within an agenda dominated by pollution and conservation. Groups such as Friends of the Earth increasingly realise that their public appeal can best be extended by linking the green agenda to wider issues of social policy and quality of life – jobs, public health, insecurity, community cohesion and transport.

If this strategy is to succeed, Green campaign bodies plainly need to become more closely connected to policy design and implementation issues across the board. Since so much depends on local implementation, the future vitality of the Green groups' appeal is linked to that of local democracy.

Barriers to the green revival of local government

In the UK, important problems arise from recent changes in the powers of local authorities. The loss of revenue-raising power, the need to tender for services and accept the lowest bids, and the loss of functions to quangos and other non-elected bodies all restrict the capacity of UK local authorities to be proactive in implementing Agenda 21. Internal management upheavals and the inflexibility of cost-led compulsory competitive tendering have been particularly disruptive to the pursuit of sustainability.⁷

The combined effect has been to fragment responsibilities, distract members and officers from the green agenda, and pressurise authorities to seek resources and new investment at all costs.⁸ While British local authorities have so far played a leading international role in developing Local Agenda 21, their powers are greatly restricted in comparison with authorities in, for instance, the Netherlands and Germany. The risk is that innovation will be restricted to developing community forums and exhortations to local businesses and households. This is likely to create

frustration among electors, officers, elected members and their partners in TECs, LECs and local business.

‘Environmental groups realize their public appeal can best be extended by linking the green agenda to issues about jobs, public health, insecurity, community cohesion and transport’

The potential problems are illustrated in pioneering work by Lancaster University researchers on Lancashire County Council’s Local Agenda 21 consultation. The exercise revealed much public distrust and cynicism about political institutions, including local government, and a pervasive sense of pessimism and personal helplessness about major environmental problems.⁹ The research underlines the danger for UK local government of being able to conduct innovative consultations with only a seriously restricted ability to act.

Local government and its partners can do a lot on their own, applying what Roger Levett calls the ‘residuary principle’, of doing one’s best even if national government does not devolve sufficient powers and resources.¹⁰ However, the impact of their action is gravely reduced if the obstacles outlined above are allowed to remain. If the green movement and local government need each other, they also need to be given more involvement in local democracy by Westminster and Whitehall. There are several steps which would help.

Policies which support the green revival of local government

Appealing for an overhaul of relations between national and local government is probably in vain. Even under a Labour administration we cannot expect enthusiastic devolution of powers and new money. The following policy changes maybe more feasible:

- A partnership business school to facilitate the spread of good practice from Local Agenda 21 and other regeneration

- partnerships, and promote understanding of multi-sector partnership management.
- Council house sale receipts could be released for energy efficiency and conservation projects, perhaps focused on low-income residents in poor quality housing areas, and involving such partners as Neighbourhood Energy Action.
 - Sustainability criteria should be fully integrated into bidding guidance, selection and evaluation for public funding competitions such as the Single Regeneration Budget (SRB).¹¹ The SRB could become the Sustainable Regeneration Budget and be integrated into Local Agenda 21 planning by Government Regional Offices and local authorities.
 - Compulsory competitive tendering should be phased into compulsory sustainable tendering, allowing local authorities to specify environmental criteria and targets for suppliers. This would build on requirements already enshrined in the local government version of the EU's Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS) for environmental management systems.

Many other actions could be proposed and a wider settlement of subsidiarity in the UK is required if local government is to play its essential role in pursuing sustainable development. If we wish to see a revival of local democracy, such reform will be crucial, but procedural and budgetary changes alone will not be enough to reenergise the system. Certainly the environmental cause needs strong local government, yet it could be that we can only have strong local government if local democracy is linked ever more closely to the agenda of sustainable development.

The views expressed in this piece are the author's and do not represent the corporate view of the Henley Centre.

Notes

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Syndicated taxes: a new policy for regenerating city centres

Tony Travers and Jeroen Weimar†*

America's Business Improvement Districts show how earmarked taxes can raise new money to clean up city centres.

After years of decline and neglect – fuelled by the boom in car ownership and convenience shopping – local authorities and businesses are looking for ways to bring people back to city centres.¹ These 1990s city boosters want to re-establish the city and town centre as a focal point for social interaction. If they are to survive, these places must be attractive, entertaining and fun.

Vibrant city centres offer a range of retail, leisure and commercial activity, which relies upon and attracts shoppers, visitors, employees and residents. Without this, the city centre has only ceremonial and historic significance.

Most efforts to revitalise city centres have been voluntary partnerships led by local authorities. Community and local amenity groups have responded positively to these initiatives, often encouraged by government cash from City Challenge, the Single Regeneration Budget and, more recently, National Lottery funds.

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A few major retailers and banks have also contributed to town centre management initiatives, but commercial stakeholders are generally under-represented. Retail, leisure and commercial enterprise are the *raison d'être* of any town centre, so including commercial property owners and tenants is central to the success of any regeneration strategy or investment partnership.

Thinking BID

In the United States, a new form of city centre partnership has blossomed in recent years. *Business Improvement Districts*, or BIDs, were established to meet the challenges faced by many American urban centres: deteriorating infrastructure, inadequate public services and declining financial resources. These factors have encouraged the 'hollowing out' of American city centres, as businesses fled to out-of-town locations.

Our recent study of BIDs in New York City shows some of their potential strengths and applications for British towns and cities. BIDs were first established during the late 1970s, in the declining retail neighbourhoods of older, inner city suburbs. These areas faced stiff competition from the burgeoning mall movement in the outer suburbs, and were often hit by public service reductions following fiscal crises. In effect, BIDs were a response by private sector property owners to declining municipal provision.

The early BIDs used their limited resources effectively to stem retail and commercial decline. By providing simple services to enhance the appearance of their areas, they made both a visual and commercial return on their activities. They showed that focused, direct action could contribute to developing a new image.

What are BIDs?

Business Improvement Districts are private, not-for-profit organisations, entitled to levy a rate on all commercial property owners within a specified area, in order to provide services. Ranging from small retail corridors to 60 block swathes, BIDs are formed and controlled by property owners within a self-defined locality. As contributors to

the BID, property owners have shareholder rights over the services provided.

Although city officials and elected representatives may sit on the BID board, the driving forces are property owners seeking to improve their operating environment. Public authorities have discovered that this private sector motivation can be encouraged and directed to further their own, wider goals.

BIDs are a vehicle for property owners to invest in local improvements for long term commercial gain. A compulsory, property-based levy eliminates the 'free-rider' problem. If payments to the BID were voluntary, individual property owners would have an incentive not to contribute, because the public nature of the services (street cleaning, marketing, and so on), means they would still benefit. Under these circumstances BIDs would be unsustainable, but because the risk of free-riding is removed, the proportion of businesses voting for the creation of a BID is typically 75 to 90 percent.

By balancing the size of the district and the cost of providing services, the levy on individual properties – usually a fixed rate per unit of assessed value or floor space – can be kept fairly modest. For example, the Grand Central BID collects around US\$9 million a year from 350 properties, at a rate of \$0.14 per square foot.

All members vote on the management and service provision of the BID. BID members elect a board which holds officers to account. The board's structure is usually laid down in enabling (state) legislation, which ensures that different interest groups, such as tenants and residents, are represented.

BID services

BIDs seek benefits for their members by providing, for the most part, public services. The most common services, such as street cleaning, providing visitor information and low-level security, are easily kept within a specific area. No restriction is placed on who uses them, and no cost is incurred by their direct recipients. The commercial benefit to property owners is indirect: it is regenerated economic activity due

to increasing clients, customers and employees of both the property owners and their tenants.

Given the long term trends in public service, provision and crime rates in major US cities, it is not surprising that most BIDs focus their services around the concept of making city centres 'clean and safe'.

As a result, a large share of most BIDs' service expenditure is on street sweeping, pavement maintenance, graffiti removal and improving street furniture. The second most common service is the employment of uniformed security guards or BID representatives as 'active citizens' to assist visitors, give confidence to passers-by and act as the eyes and ears of the police. (See also *Someone to watch over you.*)

These core programmes – 'clean and safe' services and marketing – have been criticised as a gradual take over of existing city services by the private sector. However, BIDs maintain that the services they provide are purely additional to existing public provision. Indeed, New York City is contractually committed to ensure that where BIDs provide services there will be no reduction in city provision. A BID might attempt to coordinate some services with provision, but both parties have usually been keen to keep their services distinct. BID managers are extremely proactive in protecting the allocation of city services to their area, and have, on the whole, developed continuing relationships with public authorities.

Issues raised by BIDs

Most objections to BIDs revolve around complaints about uniformed security services officers being overbearing and attempting to move 'undesirable' individuals, particularly the homeless, out of districts. Although similar concerns have been expressed about private security guards in privately owned but semi-public places such as shopping malls, the implications of private uniformed employees patrolling a public space clearly raise more fundamental issues.

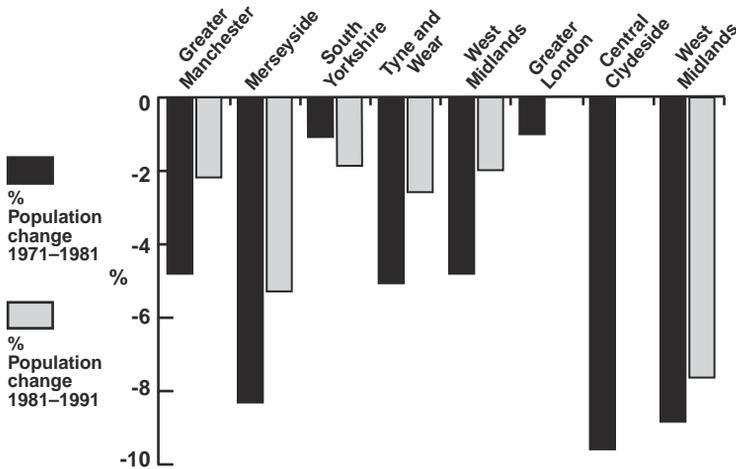
In so far as they enhance commercial property, BIDs contribute to the wider public good by providing services from which the overwhelming majority benefit. Essentially, BIDs are generating a public

good as long as the interests of property owners are in line with all those who use the district in anyway.

However, issues such as homelessness divide commercial interests from others. Although both property owners and the homeless may use the area to further their economic position (through property leasing, trade or begging), some see the presence of homeless people as an intrusion which constrains the vitality of the area.

Some BID schemes – such as those run by Times Square – have been praised for their sensitivity in dealing with homelessness. However, a number of social commentators, civil liberties groups and homeless advocates are concerned that BIDs are involving themselves in social policy without effective consultation and accountability mechanisms. Public control and accountability are clearly necessary where a BID may use its power to coerce, or even actively encourage, individuals.

The New York public authorities – officers, elected members and mayor – are highly supportive of BIDs. Investment in public services by property owners, especially in high profile downtown areas, contributes to a city-wide environmental improvement which reflects well



Source: The Census of 1971, 1981 and 1991

Figure The haemorrhage of people from recession-hit cities is slowing.

on City Hall. There is also substantial synergy between the BID emphasis on street level services and the Giuliani administration's crackdown on petty crime. The combined efforts of public authorities – especially in front line services such as policing – and BIDs have generated a demonstrable environmental improvement, especially in reducing litter and street crime.

The key role for the public sector in the BID process is using legislative instruments to harness private sector initiative, drive and funding. This is how they maintain some control over services, and seek to protect minority interests through appointments to BID boards. Although city authorities can use their powers to control BIDs, they are clearly as popular with senior political and public figures as with major property and commercial interest groups. City authorities have sought to assist and guide the BID process rather than restrict its potential.

Private companies and individuals in the US are far more used to funding charitable bodies or public-private partnerships than in the UK. But things have changed radically in Britain in recent years. Local government has embraced the private sector and other local organisations. The private sector has taken a more active role in public sector institutions. BIDs are consistent with the spirit of the age in Britain.

Legislation allowing BIDs to be established in London and other British cities would require parliamentary approval. Compared with the massive reforms to local government functions, finance and structure over the last 25 years, introducing BIDs, possibly as an experiment, would be relatively simple. Once a new law was enacted, it would be up to the private sector and local authorities to make it work

BIDs for Britain

A BID experiment in Britain could bring considerable advantages for towns and cities, local authorities and central government. Coventry has already pioneered a new approach to town centre management by creating a private company to provide a range of city centre services.

BIDs would only be established where businesses wanted them. The model could be slightly different from the one used in New York. For

example, it would be possible to increase local government or community representation, and it might be necessary for local government to be more actively involved in BID creation.

BIDs are not a panacea. They could never tackle the major problems of economic regeneration suffered in many parts of Britain. But they do offer a solution to more modest problems, such as finding additional funding for city or town centre revival, providing self-help in smaller neighbourhoods and for fostering local partnerships. Such partnerships already exist voluntarily in many areas. BIDs offer a chance to give them a more secure footing. The time has come to test BIDs in Britain.

Note

1. This article draws on material from *Business Improvement Districts New York and London* by Tony Travers and Jeroen Weimar, free from the Corporation of London, Guildhall, London EC2.

The secrets of local success

Paul S Williams

Every local politician wants to improve the competitiveness of their locality. Few know much about what to look for, what to concentrate resources on, or what works. In this article, I use ideas from Harvard scholars Rosabeth Moss Kanter and Michael Porter to understand the factors that make for local competitiveness, and use their concepts to set out a radically revised map of Britain's local competitiveness before pointing up key policy challenges.¹

Local and regional diversity

When the British Government last revised the map of Assisted Areas in 1993, for the first time it targeted regional assistance on a number of southern areas, including some in the generally prosperous South East. This confirmed that local prosperity gaps are widening throughout Britain, mainly because income and employability differentials are growing between the skilled and unskilled. Extremes of economic performance and potential can be found cheek by jowl in many areas. For example, although London has always had an uneven pattern of prosperity, it has recently become remarkably polarised.

During the next few decades, regional divisions in Britain will probably become less acute than the trends in the 1980s, but the deeply

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entrenched north-south divide has not gone away and is not likely to. Widening income differentials are likely, on average, to benefit southern regions more than northern ones, because the south has higher concentrations of skilled workers and because, within manufacturing, work has shifted to higher skilled functions, from which the south benefit disproportionately. In addition, since the early 1990s recession, evidence suggests that, as economic recovery has got under way, the southern regions have recovered from high unemployment much more quickly than their northern counterparts. Employment growth has largely reverted to the pattern of the 1980s, with the south creating many more service sector jobs than the north and losing fewer in manufacturing. It is true that, in the early 1990s, the north-south unemployment gap narrowed, but this was largely as a temporary phenomenon.

These regional divisions provide the context for the equally significant local divisions that preoccupy local councillors, TEC boards and businesses. The geographical separation of different income groups in different housing estates and suburbs has heightened and reinforced these developments. Moreover, in the late 1980s, Rent Officers were given duties, in setting fair rents, to give prime consideration to local market levels of rent, which has enabled mixed income areas to become gentrified far more rapidly than was previously possible.

However, Michael Porter highlights the benefits to depressed inner city areas of proximity to strong local and regional markets and encourages inner city businesses to develop networks and relationships with firms outside the immediate locality, rather than serving only local markets.² The London Borough of Southwark, which is relatively poor but in such close proximity to the City of London and the buoyant markets of the South East, faces quite different opportunities from those available to equally depressed areas, such as parts of Merseyside, Tyneside or Cornwall, situated in much less vibrant regional economies.

Local and regional competitiveness

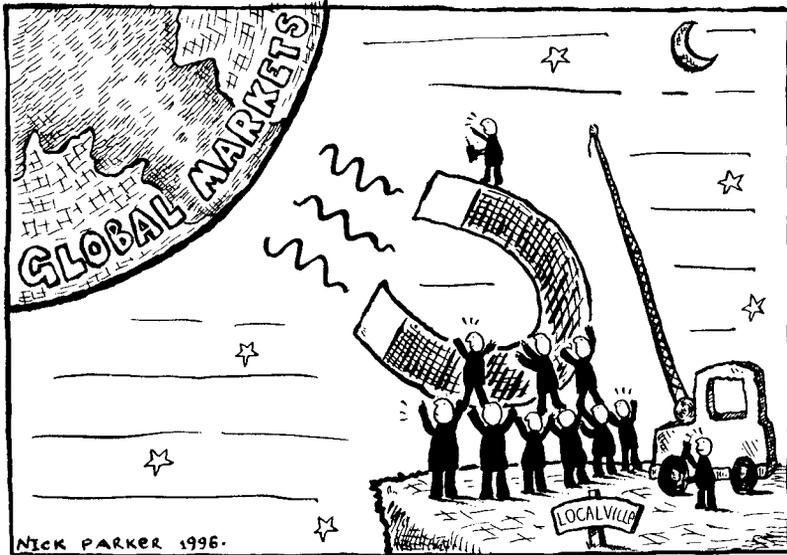
What do we mean by the competitiveness of an area? Porter's definition lays emphasis on the productivity with which the area's capital

and labour resources are employed. Competitiveness ‘depends on both the quality and features of products... and the efficiency with which they are produced.’³ He identifies four main elements of an economy which enable it to sustain the development of internationally competitive companies and industries:

- Sophisticated demand from local customers which sharpens a company’s performance in its home market. A company can be world class without strong local demand – by relying on external demand to help shape product quality and development – but this is much harder;
- a sophisticated supply base of clusters of local companies in related and supporting industries boosts competitiveness;
- a conducive environment incorporating positive attitudes to business, an entrepreneurial culture and, crucially, the pressure of intense local competition, will influence company performance and raise competitiveness;
- finally, the creation and retention of key factors of production is vital, both for an area as a whole and for individual firms. Key factors include skilled labour, investment capital and a modern telecommunications infrastructure.

This framework helps explain why regional factors matter so much in explaining local competitiveness.⁴ Because gross domestic product per head in the South East is by far the highest in the country (indeed, East Anglia is the only other British region in which it is above the European Union average), local businesses benefit from strong and sophisticated local demand for their products. Significant regional clusters of companies have developed, particularly in financial and business services and high-technology manufacturing, and the south is the centre of the country’s entrepreneurial activity. Most tellingly, southern regions are best able to attract and retain skilled labour, firms and investment capital.

Although educational systems elsewhere in Britain may produce as good or better results, they are unable to retain all of the skilled labour in which they invest. More highly skilled workers still tend to migrate



southwards, whether or not the south is in recession, which further enfeebles depressed regions. The distribution and investment of foreign investors and major corporate headquarters shows the same pattern.

Rosabeth Moss Kanter has identified strategies most conducive to local economic success. She argues that local communities can connect with the global economy by specialising their capabilities in one of three key roles:⁵

- Thinkers specialise in concepts. They are magnets for brain power channelled into knowledge industries, whether in the service sector, product innovation, research and development, or design. They export knowledge and knowledge-based products. A British example of a thinker city might be Cambridge;
- makers specialise in technical competence. They have superior production skills, are magnets for world-class manufacturing and have skilled blue-collar workforces.

In Britain, the North West and the Thames Valley are fitting examples;

- traders specialise in business and commercial connections. They sit at the crossroads of culture and ‘manage the intersections’, They make deals and transport goods and services across borders, The City of London and Felixtowe are obvious cases of trader cities.

Moss Kanter goes on to argue that, in order to keep them there and working together, communities need both ‘magnets’ – to attract people and firms – and social ‘glue’ or public-private partnerships, wide community involvement and a shared vision. Without magnets and glue, a locality cannot create and retain Porter’s four key factors of production. However, both magnets and glue are often best put in place regionally. In short, social cohesion and regional economic health make for local economic competitiveness.

This enables us to develop a fourfold classification of the competitiveness conditions that indicate the longer term health of a local economy.

- virtuous circle;
- vicious circle;
- potential for growth;
- facing decline.

Areas performing well on both the short-term and long-term sets of indicators (for example, St Albans, Windsor, Maidenhead, all of Powys and Warrington) are in a ‘virtuous circle’ of growth. Here, competitive business performance enables the continuous upgrading of the locality’s competitive environment. This enables them to succeed in attracting more investment and skilled labour.

At the opposite end of the spectrum, other areas have neither a successful business base nor a competitive environment and are caught in a ‘vicious circle’ of relative decline. Many depressed inner city areas such as Gateshead and some London boroughs, and coastal areas such as Hastings, Great Yarmouth, Blackpool and Grimsby fall into this category.

In between these extremes, some areas are 'facing decline'. That is, they perform well on the short-term performance indicators concerning their competitive business base, but poorly in terms of their competitive environment. This group includes a number of relatively wealthy areas in the south such as Chelmsford, Harrow, Horsham, Salisbury and Christchurch in Oxfordshire; Huntingdon in East Anglia; South Kesteven and Babergh in the East Midlands; and Craven, Harrogate and Hambleton in Yorkshire and Humberside. Such areas will ultimately lose ground if they fail to improve and upgrade their social capital and other aspects of their competitive environment.

A final group is categorised as having 'potential for growth'. Such localities, including a number of Scottish cities (such as Dundee, Glasgow and Motherwell), parts of the Welsh valleys and surrounding areas (Lliw Valley, Rhymney Valley, the Rhondda and Neath) and depressed areas in the North (Sunderland, Tyneside and Newcastle) and North West (Liverpool, Knowsley and St Helen's), all score rather poorly in terms of their competitive business performance. However, high social capital or quality of life, good connectivity or simply access to high levels of public funding, give them rather better scores on the competitive environment index. They may therefore be able to attract businesses and people in the future and begin to improve their economic performance.

This suggests that, when we look both at qualitative indicators of competitiveness such as social cohesion and quality of life, as well as the long-range indicators of potential for local development, the prospects for the English regions look very different. Measured in this way, parts of the affluent South East score rather worse than today's wealth indicators would suggest, while some currently depressed areas have more potential for regeneration than presently seems obvious.

Policy for local competitiveness

A serious examination of the prospects of different localities in Britain suggests that, even though the north south divide will remain with us for some time, that is no reason for despair in the north or

complacency in the south. Many northern areas may have better magnets and stronger glue than some southern ones that today imagine they are well-positioned. The challenge for national policy-makers is to make sure that the regional tier of governance has the capacity to foster these conditions. The global economy of the next century will be one in which some very old-fashioned social virtues make for local economic competitiveness.

Notes

1. This article draws on new research and consultancy by the Henley Centre on local economic development: see *Planning for local change*, 1996, Henley Centre, London
2. Porter, M.E., 'The competitive advantage of the inner city', *Harvard Business Review*, May–June 1995.
3. Porter, M. E., 1990, *The competitive advantage of nations*, Free Press, New York.
4. In theoretical terms, models of cumulative causation that highlight the role of agglomeration economies reinforcing core-periphery disparities, are better able to explain the regional data than the standard neoclassical approach, which predicts convergence between regions as firms exploit cost advantages in the periphery.
5. Moss Kanter, R., 1995, *World class: thriving locally in the global economy*, Simon and Schuster, New York.

Creating social capital

Alan Whitehead and Judith Smyth†*

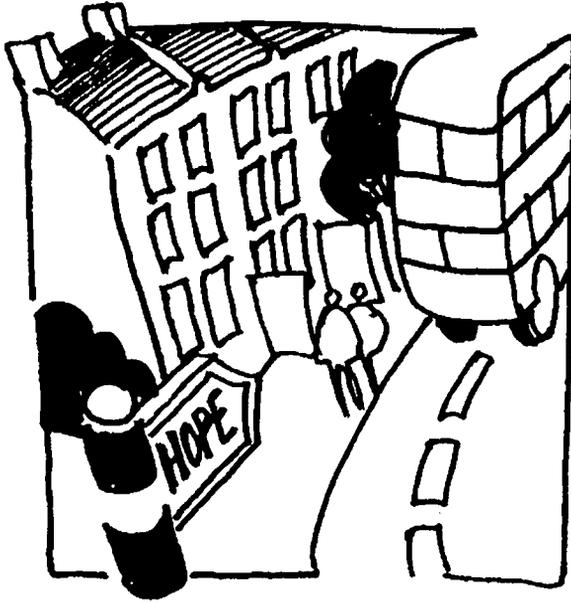
Slow-burning capacity building in cities may not be fashionable or instantaneous, but its time has come again.

Cities that seek to improve the quality of their citizens' lives can adopt one of two main strategies. They can concentrate on competing with other cities for mobile investment and professionals. Alternatively, they can start with the resources and people they have got and try to develop them.

The first strategy is currently in vogue. It is derived from the economists' idea that people will rationally maximise their utility, that they have their price and respond almost exclusively to incentives. It is also failing, for reasons that economists should have been able to predict. While some cities can do well for a while with this approach, all cities in a country cannot do well if they all use it. It simply inflates the price the most fashionable investors and professionals can demand before they will relocate: a scenario economists call 'zero-sum competition'. The other strategy ought to be more fashionable with city leaders than it is. For it belongs to the rhetoric of communitarianism, trust and building social capital that some of them are already talking. This new

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language as yet possesses little in the way of practical guidance. It is now time to put this into place.

Boosting

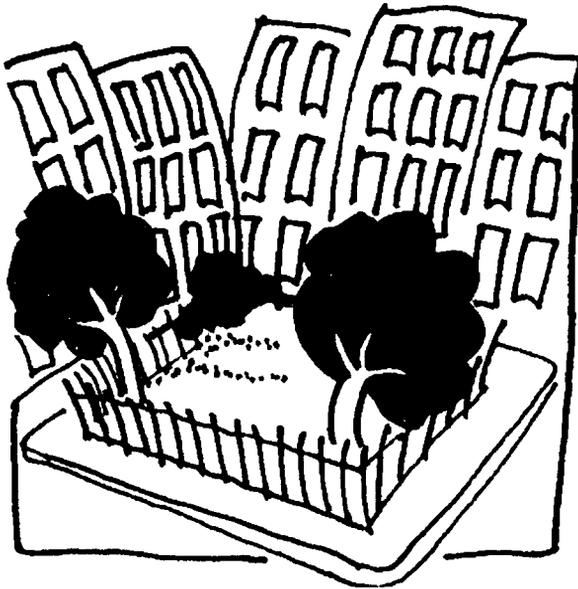
Let's call the first strategy 'civic boosterism', and the second 'capacity building'. Civic boosterism involves offering tax incentives to employers and investors, providing leisure facilities that mobile, high-earning professionals want, and supporting prestige projects – symphony halls, huge city centre shopping malls – to advertise the grandeur of the city. It's all very Victorian. To understand why we've reached the limits of civic boosterism, we need to question its assumption, for the theory behind it is most un-Victorian.

Civic boosterism is based on public choice theory – a crude economic approach to people, investment, skills and cities. Working on the principle of the individual as rational calculator of his or her economic

interests, this theory sees the politician and the bureaucrat, also rational 'utility maximizers,' as enemies of the voter or customer. This is an individualised world in which cities are no more than the sum of the calculating individuals within them. Government's role is to hold the ring. It need not develop any shared vision or agenda beyond that which is necessary to design incentives. Such theory is most forcefully articulated in the work of Tiebout, Peterson and Schneider. It assumes that citizens have no loyalty or commitment to their city. As Peterson predicts, if not offered economic reasons to stay, they will go elsewhere, so the job of the city manager is to keep them.

This is inadequate because it misdescribes city dwellers and the strategy leads to perverse results, but also because it is actually damaging: at most, fifteen per cent of the population of the majority of most British cities would ever have the wherewithal to behave in this way. The perversity comes from bidding up the price of satisfying this fifteen per cent with cash alone. Worse, it reinforces individualism and the lack of civic community, responsibility and trust that really make a city worth living in for most of the population.

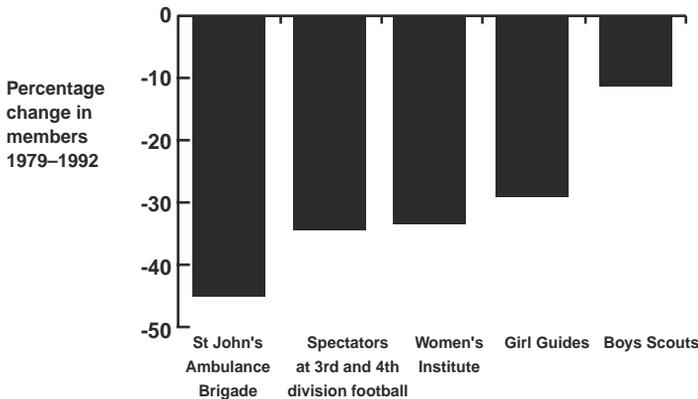




Building capacity

Capacity building is a strategy whose starting point is to encourage, reinforce and build social capital. The challenge for the city manager is to increase trust and the enjoyment of social interaction, while minimising isolation and distrust; in short, to build 'loyalty'. We have experience to draw on here, from neighbourhood forums with very limited advisory powers, to the delegation of small budgets to the sort of decentralised administration found in Tower Hamlets. Neighbourhood development cannot be undertaken, contrary to what some communitarians suggest, without strong local government, or balance between communities of interest. Communities are not governments, but good local government recognises that it will only work if the process is a negotiation between representative government and participative democracy.

Much community activity arises from frustration with government's unpopular decisions. But what else could capacity-building involve?



Source: *Local Futures, 1994, The Henley Centre*

Figure Old Fashioned organisations are losing member fast.

Here are five suggestions:

- Robert Putnam has carried out interesting studies of social capital development in the USA and Italy. His methods can be fruitfully applied in the UK to closely examine a city's ability to form and sustain social capital. This entails an audit of the extent to which communities in the city organise themselves and the extent to which citizens engage in the civic process. These can be assessed by establishing associational indicators such as membership and activity within sporting clubs, allotment societies, voluntary welfare groups, children's football leagues, voter turnout at local elections, and soon.
- On the basis of this audit, a programme of investment in the city's ability to build capacity which develops the facilities which make self-organisation possible. These include safer streets, cheap room hire, secure storage for community property, playing fields with changing rooms and social facilities, broad-based cultural activities such as evening classes and amateur cultural groups.

- The active encouragement of community leadership in cities. This involves a long term commitment to supporting and nurturing associative groups and enabling the development of representative forums of community voice. Such policies should encourage communities of interest and communities of locality.
- The relegation of civic boosterism to a subordinate role. While prestige projects are important, they only merit the city's assistance if a broker's role can secure jobs or facilities, such projects tend to follow the establishment of a healthy city, rather than leading it.
- New forms of practice for local political parties are necessary, both to prevent them being marginalised by the transfer of political representation to often unelected community groups, to ensure they bring overall political shape to a city, and encourage the growth of inclusive social capital through clearly defined policies. This means completely rethinking the way local political parties organise and operate.



Many local authorities are taking up these ideas through 'community governance' initiatives. Poverty, street crime, drug abuse, environmental sustainability and child neglect cannot be tackled without involving a wide range of agencies. It is local government's job to broker and lead these coalitions in response to differing local circumstances.

Capacity building and community development are ideas whose time has come again. The recent rash of civic boosterism belongs with the economic and individualistic politics of the 1980s. We don't want to romanticise the power of community – one failure of the civic boosterists was that they romanticised the power of incentives. But social capital is what makes a city liveable, lived-in and lively. Each city has to find its own way. It won't be quick, but then, civic boosterism failed as quick fixes always do. Communities can organise themselves, but – paradoxically – they will need the help of local government to do it.

New kids on the block

Helen Wilkinson

Angry, resentful, disruptive. A new generation of unemployed young men has become the thorn in the side of Middle England. But far from salving the problem, policy-makers have consistently rubbed salt in the wound by neglecting local cultures.

Not so long ago, the goal of almost every young man was to flee the clutches of home and seek the bright lights of the big city or the escape routes of the army and navy. But with the disappearance of manufacturing and apprenticeships, traditional rites of passage into adulthood have been cordoned off into no man's land, leaving thousands of men facing 'lifelong adolescence'.

Their postponed adulthood has become a primary concern of Middle England and policy-makers spanning the political spectrum. In cities, towns and villages, young men's relationship to the local has become a cause of concern because it is in local, shared spaces – parks, streets and shopping centres – that the 'problem' of young men is most visible.

Enforced idleness means there are more young men on the streets with nothing to do. As recent crime figures tellingly reveal, most crime is committed by men and 46 per cent of known offenders in Britain

Project Director at Demos.

are under the age of 21, while the peak age for criminal activity sits as low as 18. Riots have become familiar fare, not just in inner cities but in outer urban estates and small towns.

But why have so many young men come unhinged from the local communities they grew up in? At Demos, We have set about identifying the sources of their disconnection from the local community through a series of nationwide focus groups. We also analysed the British Household Panel Study which examined three indicators of an individual's social isolation, or conversely, sense of belonging: sources of social support, patterns of friendship and membership of civic and social organisations.

Lean on me: patterns of social support among young men

Men have lower levels of informal social support than women, and those most in need of help are also the least likely to get it. As Table 1 shows, the unemployed have less social support than the employed, especially if they are young.

Weeks spent in relative isolation mean almost 9 percent of unemployed young men have no one to listen to them, compared to just

Table 1 Percentage of respondents (18–30 yrs) who ‘do not have anyone to ...’ by employment status and gender

	men		women	
	employed	unemployed	employed	unemployed
listen to them	5.4	8.7	1.9	2.9
help in a crisis	3.1	4.7	1.6	4.4
relax with	3.7	7.3	0.9	7.4
appreciate them	3.1	4.0	1.6	2.9
offer them comfort	5.4	7.4	1.7	4.4

Source: British Household Panel Study.

2.9 per cent of unemployed women, and 7.4 per cent have no one to offer them comfort, compared to 4.4 per cent of unemployed men.

Men in partnerships fare better than those who are single (see Table 2), and it is noticeable that singledom is more detrimental to young men than women.

For unemployed men, who are increasingly susceptible to ill-health, depression and suicide, the problem can become acute. That greater numbers of young men are predicted to remain single can only exacerbate their vulnerability.

The young men we interviewed acknowledged their depression and many admitted to using drugs and alcohol as habitual props to get them through the day. It also became clear that an unemployed person's own awareness of what they have *not* got contributes to their troubled state of mind. As one man from Rainham, Essex, put it, 'I get depressed a lot. You see other people doing things. You see those 16 and 17 year olds coming out of school and mum's bought them a new motor, so I go down the pub to stop getting depressed. For others, the cocktail of drink and drugs and the desire for the risk and excitement missing in their lives leads them into low level crime. One man from Burnham, on the south coast, told us, 'It's a rush. When you're doing it, your heart's beating faster. You're thinking, am I going to get caught?'

Table 2 Percentage of respondents (18–30 yrs) who 'do not have anyone to ...' by cohabitation status and gender

	men		women	
	cohabiting	single	cohabiting	single
listen to them	4.7	9.0	2.7	5.9
help in a crisis	3.6	6.2	2.4	4.4
relax with	4.0	6.8	1.8	4.0
appreciate them	2.3	5.3	2.2	3.5
offer them comfort	3.9	10.1	2.2	4.3

Source: British Household Panel Study.

Circle of friends: the role of friends in socialisation

Despite many admitting they find it more difficult to talk about problems than their female peers, unemployed young men cited networks of friends as the most reliable source of support. Virtually all young men in our study had one or more friends (not a spouse or cohabitee) who they made contact with at least once a week. It was only in the oldest age group that there were significant numbers of men who were friendless.

But networks of friends are not a guarantee of connectedness to the wider community. People's friendship patterns are structured in part by employment, so unemployed people of keep like company. While 27 per cent of unemployed men under 30 have a best friend who is unemployed, the figure drops to less than 9 per cent for employed and non-employed men (see Table 3). Additionally, low (employment stability appears to promote close friendships with the unemployed (see Table 4).

This can be a source of resentment. The men in our discussion groups clearly felt the experience of unemployment cut them out of normal



Table 3 Men's employment status by closest friend's Status (18–30 yrs)

	employed	unemployed	non-employed
employed	82.3	55.1	40.2
unemployed	8.6	26.9	8.1
non-employed	9.1	17.9	51.1

Source: British Household Panel Study.

Table 4 Employed men's educational attainment and employment stability by closest friend's employment status (18–30 yrs)

	employed	unemployed	non-employed
ed-low–low emp. stability	74.6	15.3	10.2
ed-low–high emp. stability	87.5	8.6	3.9
ed-low–low emp. stability	66.7	25.9	7.4
ed-high–high emp. stability	77.1	8.6	14.3
ed-high–low emp. stability	80.4	2.2	17.4
ed-high–high emp. stability	89.4	2.1	8.5

Source: British Household Panel Study.

patterns of leisure and consumption, making it difficult to maintain friendships with people who were in work. As one man commented, 'It's just simple things like going for a drink down to the pub. If you haven't got the money, you don't want to go. You feel like people will think you are sponging off them. And yet your mates don't want to sit in watching the TV with you either.' This impression, of two autonomous and distinct communities of the unemployed and the employed, was particularly evident when the men described their daily routines. In contrast to the nine to five lives of working people, their days often began at midday – and continued late into the night.

Club 18–30: members only

Just as the experience of unemployment influences the friends people make, so too it affects their involvement in local organisations. Just 36 per cent of unemployed men under 30 are members of one or more civic, social or sports organisations, compared to 62 per cent of employed men of the same age (see Table 5).

And there are further disparities, even among unemployed men, which reflect differences in educational qualifications. Of young men, just 23 per cent of the unskilled, relatively uneducated are members of one organisation or more, while 48 per cent of the highly qualified maintain such memberships.



Table 5 Men's membership of one or more listed organisation by employment status and age group

	18–30	31–40	41–50	51–60
employed	61.9	73.6	74.9	76.7
unemployed	36.4	47.8	43.6	70.3
non-employed	64.2	58.3	58.3	73.6

Source: British Household Panel Study.

Table 6 Men's membership of one or more listed organisations by combined education/employment stability and age group

	18–30	31–40	41–50	51–60
ed-low–low emp. stability	38.2	52.1	59.6	66.7
ed-low–high emp. stability	58.4	68.8	64.9	79.3
ed-med–low emp. stability	48.0	59.1	51.9	63.6
ed-med–high emp. stability	67.2	78.8	79.1	76.4
ed-high–low emp. stability	57.7	59.6	64.1	81.8
ed-high–high emp. stability	72.3	80.2	81.2	85.0

Source: British Household Panel Study.

Again, the degree of employment stability, especially for those with low educational achievement, affects the likelihood of men belonging to a civic organisation. 38 per cent of men with low level qualifications and low employment stability are members Man organisation, compared to over 58 per cent of men with comparable qualifications but high employment stability (see Table 6). Union membership suffers similarly.²¹

Out on a limb – but enjoying it?

Unemployed young men constitute one of the most disconnected groups in society. They are also most likely to actively take pride in

being out of the system.² But this pattern of disconnection is not consistent. In areas like Rainham, the sense of exclusion from the rest of society and local communities is strong. 'Why do they want us in the community?' said one man, 'We're criminals.' Another pointed out that, once the commuters had left for work, there was actually little 'community' to speak of. In contrast, young men in places like Burnham had a highly developed notion of their own community and were dismissive about migrating to anyone else's. One young man simply said, 'The thing is, you've got your own community. You don't want to be in any other community. They're all a bunch of arseholes. You don't want to be in a community where everyone's the same. There are a lot of people out there who work and think that anyone who hasn't got a job doesn't have a life.' There were also clear cultural differences between old manufacturing areas and new towns, the North and the South.

Shrink-to-fit policies

There currently appear to be two main political responses. The first, prevalent on the left and the right, has been to focus on containment through crackdowns, curfews, workfare and tagging. The second, which has been variously employed throughout the ages, is to try and redirect these energies in more positive ways, primarily through job creation and national or community service.

The dangers of the first approach are self-evident. Young men are more likely to be the *victims* of crime than its causes, and there is a danger that if this generation is pathologised, it will simply become more disconnected. Yet there is widespread cynicism about the viability of more positive policies, perhaps because they have not been designed well enough to tackle a long term motivational crisis or appeal to the self-interest of the unemployed.³

Given the variety in local cultures of unemployment, it would be unwise to expect standardised policies to work everywhere. Responses to initiatives such as community service schemes and training programmes actually vary widely. Consequently, generic policies which look neat in economists' models have consistently come unstuck when

they interact with the everyday attitudes and motivations of young men who find themselves out of work. If they are to work more effectively, they need to be customised to local conditions, built to fit the diverse cultures which envelop shared economic circumstances. The British Government's belief in one-size-fits-all appears to be standing on shaky foundations.

Special thanks to Jonathan Scales, a research fellow at the ESRC Research Centre on Micro Social Change, Essex University, who analysed the British Household Panel Study for Demos and from whose work all tabulated data have been drawn. This article forms part of Demos' young men project. A final report will be published in Spring 1997.

Notes

1. If young unemployed men are members, they are more likely to be members of sports or social clubs than environmental, religious or voluntary groups.
2. See Wilkinson, H. and Mulgan, G., 1995, *Freedom's Children: work, relationships and politics for 18-34 year olds in Britain today*, Demos, London. This study reported that as many as one third of under 25 year olds took pride in being out of the system.
3. See Briscoe, I., 1995. *In whose service?: Making community service work for the unemployed*, Demos, London.

Catch them while they're young

Jon Bright

Invest early in a child's social and educational development and chances are, you won't be giving chase when they grow up.

Crime is local yet it also transcends social and geographical boundaries.¹ It is compounded by high rates of repeat victimisation for residents of low income urban communities, yet is not solely a symptom of poverty. The middle classes living in inner-urban neighbourhoods are often heavily victimised, small businesses in many areas experience very high levels of crime, town and city centres can be blighted, even rural areas aren't immune to its onslaught. Fear of crime is pervasive, even in areas where there is little justification for it. Indeed, regardless of apparent reductions in the recorded crime figures over the past two to three years, trends suggest insecurity and public concern about crime is still set to increase.

Over the past ten years, a great deal has been done to address these problems. The Home Office has promoted the partnership approach and established the Safer Cities programme. The Department of the Environment has funded security improvements to housing estates and the Department for Education has sponsored youth crime Prevention programmes. The police and local authorities, together with the private

Director of Operations, Crime Concern.

and voluntary sectors, have developed many local initiatives. However, there remains a gross disparity between the resources spent on preventive rather than curative measures. Most local crime prevention has been on a small scale, sometimes unfocused and amateurish.

However, before we can develop an effective local crime prevention policy, we must dispense with some popular myths.

The first is that the criminal justice system actually prevents crime. Whilst the police, courts, probation and prison services have a major role in *responding* to crime, they have been shown to have only a limited effect in *controlling* crime. There is little evidence that people are deterred from crime by the prospect of being caught and sentenced. Further, in the UK, only about 25 per cent of crime is actually reported to the police of which about 35 per cent is cleared up. The criminal justice agencies deal effectively with most serious, violent crime but this constitutes a very small minority of all crime that takes place. Most of their resources are devoted to responding to less than 10 per cent of all the crime that is committed. The second myth is that community residents and their organisations can be the principal force for preventing local crime in high crime areas. Reviews of the research into community crime prevention conclude that anticrime community activities are least common and least successful in the areas in which they are most needed namely poor, ethnic minority, high crime neighbourhoods. They are more common and successful in moderately cohesive, homogeneous, middle and working class areas. In such circumstances their results have been impressive. However, crime often tends to *undermine* the capacity of communities to organise in high crime areas. Community crime prevention programmes have yet to show they can increase levels of interaction, solidarity and intervention, the processes which are supposed to induce informal controls and thereby reduce disorder and crime. In short, a policy which assigns a leading role to voluntary organisations places poorer communities at a distinct disadvantage relative to middle class groups.

The third myth to be debunked is that crime is a single solution problem. Among such proposals touted in recent years have been more police, tougher sentences, more jails, and crime prevention on

the school curriculum. There are two ways to prevent crime. The first is to make crime more difficult to commit, more risky and less rewarding, by introducing measures such as better security, increased surveillance and property marking. This is called situational crime prevention. The second approach aims to prevent criminal behaviour by influencing the attitudes and behaviour of those most likely to offend so they are less inclined to do so. This means reducing the *risk factors* long known to be associated with offending (such as poor parenting and school failure) and enhancing protective factors by increasing the attachment of young people to key social institutions, namely the family, school and the community. This is called social crime prevention. Both approaches are essential since single preventive measures are usually insufficient to impact on crime problems in most urban areas. This is because high levels of crime and fear of crime reflect multiple problems which need to be addressed by multiple solutions.

A local culture of prevention relies on a varied and multi-dimensional, customised approach. For example, improving management on an estate with a high child density may not be successful unless it is accompanied by play and recreation facilities for children and young people. The benefits from investing in pre-school provision for disadvantaged children will be maximised only if they transfer to effective schools and live in a well managed neighbourhood. Measures to reduce one risk factor will only work if applied in conjunction with other approaches. To build a framework for local action that emphasises reinforcement and continuity, the themes of early childhood development, opportunities for young people and safer neighbourhoods all need to be considered.

Early childhood development

There are clear links between early childhood experiences and later offending, and increasing evidence that interventions can be successful. The main aims of early childhood services are not to reduce crime but rather to improve health, intellectual and emotional development, to reduce child abuse and improve family functioning. However there

is strong evidence – much from the USA – that they can reduce the risk factors associated with later offending.

Preventive services in early childhood include prenatal and infant development, family support, parental training and pre-school education and child care. Family and parental support programmes vary according to the intensity of the service being provided. Evaluations of preventive services in early childhood show that quality services for disadvantaged children can improve parenting and family functioning, reduce family breakdown and improve the developmental and educational performance of young children.

Similarly, high quality pre-school provision raises achievement, improves social skills and builds self-esteem. The High/Scope Perry Pre-School Programme strikingly demonstrates that pre-school participation can increase the proportion of young people who are literate, employed and enrolled in post-secondary education come 19, and can reduce the proportion who dropped out of school, were labelled mentally retarded, had been arrested or were on welfare.

Opportunities for young people

Pupils, especially boys, who under-perform or fail at school are more likely to become involved in anti-social and delinquent activities than those who succeed. Factors that contribute to school failure such as disaffection, poor attendance and disruptive behaviour also increase the risk of a young person becoming delinquent.

Many commentators have observed that schools cannot compensate for society. There is a weight of evidence, however, which strongly suggests schools do have considerable impact on young people. Many studies have identified the power of teachers and the school (through all ages) in shaping the self-image and consequent behaviour of young people. Measures that help schools to increase their effectiveness will reduce the risk of disaffection and school failure, and thereby the incidence of anti-social behaviour, delinquency and truancy. A key element of this is the promotion of that sense of achievement and self-esteem which is a precondition of good behaviour among the less academically gifted.

However, much learning occurs as a result of pupils soaking up or internalising the ethos and values of the school. This can have a far-reaching, beneficial effect if schools are able to promote positive moral and social values in a way that includes the majority of pupils.

Children and young people who have a lot of unsupervised leisure time spent with friends are at increased risk of behaving anti-socially and drifting into crime. Much petty crime and anti-social behaviour could be prevented by making available recreational, sporting and social activities supported by skilled staff able to motivate and involve young people. In addition, there is a need for more focused work with those young people who are, or may become, persistent offenders. This might involve holiday activity schemes and youth initiatives in high crime neighbourhoods. These programmes can be put in place fairly quickly, are not prohibitively expensive, offer immediate and tangible evidence of progress, are an effective platform for multi-agency work, and can reduce crime problems. Schemes working with higher risk potential offenders revolve around smaller numbers and require longer-term funding commitment. They might include social action youth projects, detached youth work, housing and employment initiatives and community mentoring schemes.

Safer neighbourhoods

A family's ability to function as an effective 'agent of socialisation' is likely to be influenced significantly by the physical design of their neighbourhood and the support they receive from community organisations and services.

Well designed and managed neighbourhoods naturally support families because they create a context in which supervision of the young is more easily undertaken. Informal controls rise naturally to check anti-social behaviour and young people quickly learn what they can and cannot do. In areas where informal controls are weak, parents find it much more difficult to exercise control over their children because their efforts are not reinforced by the community outside the family home. It is at the neighbourhood level that social and situational crime prevention come together. Most of the measures advocated so far are aimed at reducing

the predisposition of young people to offend through supporting and strengthening the family and increasing the effectiveness of schools and youth services (social crime prevention). They are most likely to be successful if they are complemented by measures aimed at reducing opportunities for crime and anti-social behaviour (situational crime prevention).

The socio-economic status of residents and child density are often more significant factors in influencing crime rates. Crime rates are higher when there are concentrations of disadvantaged households and a high proportion of children relative to adults. To some extent, this can be influenced by housing managers through the allocation process. Housing managers can, in some cases, ensure there is a match between the design of estates, the types of household that are allocated accommodation on them and style of management, although often the scope for them to do this is limited.

Good neighbourhood management should help prevent both crime and what have been 'neighbourhood disorders' or incivilities such as drunkenness, hooliganism and vandalism. If left unchecked, they generate fear and create the sort of disorderly, uncared for environment which attracts offenders, causes individuals and businesses to leave, and results in neighbourhoods tipping into a spiral of decline from which it can be very difficult to recover.

Neighbourhoods, particularly those characterised by a high proportion of council or housing association stock, are dependent for their viability on housing management and a range of related services such as maintenance, repairs, allocations, cleansing, caretaking and refuse collection. The quality of life in such areas can be improved substantially if such services are delivered effectively and responsively. A necessary condition for reducing offence and offender rates on housing estates is proactive, local housing management.

It is the responsibility of housing managers to ensure estate design is matched with household type and that the number of children is not allowed to rise above a certain threshold. High child densities are invariably associated with vandalism and the problem is intensified if large numbers of children are housed within multistorey blocks.

Good community policing is a key part of a community safety strategy. The most promising models involve partnership with the community and its agencies and assigning officers to permanent neighbourhood beats. In places with high levels of crime and disorder, a law enforcement approach is necessary to stabilise the situation.

It would require officers to work in areas two to three years to ensure consistency of policing style, as well as personnel. This is crucial if relationships are to be built up and preventive projects given time to work. It would mean the police would come to know many of the young people on their beat who are most at risk of offending.

National policy; local governance

To achieve an effective local strategy a preventive culture must be incorporated into national policy and local governance. The new National Crime Prevention Agency should provide leadership and guidance on legislation, policy and resources. Yet, it is at the local level that the real work needs to be done.

A statutory obligation should be placed on unitary local authorities and district councils to prepare annual, costed, community safety plans, in consultation with the chief constable and other relevant agencies. However, the greatest opportunity for reducing crime and enhancing safety is by incorporating preventive objectives within mainstream services and by delivering these services more proactively than is commonly the case. Detailed recommendations are set out in my forthcoming pamphlet for Demos, but the most important services in this regard are policing, housing management and youth provision. In the past, the problems these services exist to address have all too often been contained rather than solved.

Note

1. These are early extracts from a forthcoming Demos Argument on national crime prevention strategy.

Solution: Someone to watch over you

Ian Taylor

Dutch attempts to exert a more direct and personal surveillance of public space has led to a greater public sense of well-being. Their solution, the civic guard, may soon be on a street corner near you ...

City governors throughout Britain, in an attempt to enhance the public's sense of security and well-being in city centres, seem to be marrying two strategies. On the one hand, they are introducing closed circuit television into public spaces, with local authorities being given major financial support through the Home Office competitive bidding programme. On the other, they show increasing interest in the more direct and responsive surveillance of public space offered by 'community safety wardens', modelled on the example of the *Dutch Civic Guards*.

The idea of the *Civic Guards* (the *Stiching Stadswacht*) emerged in Holland in 1986 in the report of a national enquiry (the Roethel Committee) into petty crime. It was a response to what was perceived as a 'weakening of social control' over behaviours in public space. This lack of social control was seen to result from a reduction in the supervisory officials responsible for everyday public behaviour (not least,

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the displacement or diversion of local police into more serious criminal work). The Roethel Committee's other important insight, however, was to argue that this 'crisis of social control' was also a clear job creation opportunity for public authorities, especially for publicly committed young people still without employment.

Young people could be employed as City guides while also acting as extra eyes and ears in general supervision of public space, liaising with, and assisting, existing public authorities. The idea was first put into practice in Dordrecht in 1989, and has been copied very quickly throughout the Netherlands. In July 1996, there was a *Civic Guard* presence in 120 Dutch towns and cities, employing over 2,000 young people full time, though initially on short-term contracts. On the initiative of the Dutch Social Services Minister, A Melkard, the funding of guards for 49 towns has now been agreed by central government, and the long-term future of the scheme seems assured.

Interest in the *Civic Guard* scheme is intense throughout Europe, not least because surveys show an increase in public well-being in Dutch cities and increased patronage of cities and towns where guards are operating. In Britain, the Liberal Democrats have officially called for the introduction of similar schemes and some local authorities (for example, Stockport and Bury in Greater Manchester) are showing a great deal of interest, especially in respect of the upcoming Single Regeneration Bids. The pioneering lead in introducing a version of the *Civic Guards* programme has been taken by Hyndburn Borough Council, based in Accrington, and its 'partners' in the *Lancashire Partnership Against Crime* (the Lancashire Constabulary and Guardhall, a private security company).

Since October 1995; the town centre of Accrington has been patrolled from 8a.m. to 8p.m. on a rota basis by a team of nine community safety wardens. The wardens were chosen from over 90 applicants and include two women, and two wardens of Asian background. As in the Netherlands, these young staff wear uniforms and carry radios (directly linked to the Lancashire Police communications room). They have no special powers, other than those of making a citizen's arrest, but they do assist in managing incidents, as well as performing

what is described by the town centre manager, David Brown, as an ambassadorial role. Local response to the wardens has been very positive, with local MP Greg Pope drawing attention to local perceptions of the scheme in an early day motion in the Commons earlier this year. The challenge facing Hyndburn Council, and the local authorities contemplating this type of community safety initiative, will be that of underwriting these schemes through the Single Regeneration Budget process or by other means.

Learning beyond the classroom

Tom Bentley

Formal education is failing to equip young people with the understanding and motivation they need for life. Schools can tackle this, and the growing crisis of citizenship, by looking outside their walls and establishing learning relationships in local communities.

Who are schools for? This question is at the core of a fierce ideological battle for control of British state education, and will be central to the next general election campaign. But the political posturing masks a deeper and more important question: how should schools be serving their local populations, and how, practically, can they do this best? This article argues that the school's role as creator of social capital, through its unique position at the hub of diverse social and learning networks, is as important as their delivery of standard, easily measurable, educational outcomes. This function is important not just in social terms, but also for learning and understanding. Done properly, it will enrich and reinforce the achievements of formal educational processes.

School uniform-ity

The century-long integration of schools into a national system of regulation and control, culminating in the introduction of the National

Researcher at Demos.

Curriculum in 1988, has produced unprecedented standardisation of the processes and outcomes of school education. While local management of schools has bestowed managerial freedom, the model and measurement of attainment is increasingly imposed from elsewhere. Paradoxically, this trend is reinforced by both the right wing consumer model, in which schools compete to produce a standard product (examination results), and the left wing bureaucratic model, in which education authorities strive for attainment and accountability through a top-down model of schooling.

Despite their dominance, these models ignore a dimension of learning which is crucial to successful education: the creation of active, independent learners with the motivation and means to learn for themselves throughout life. This is why educationalists worry about understanding and motivation, employers worry about communication and entrepreneurial skills, and society worries about values and civic life. A crisis of educational failure, alienation and disillusionment among the young is widely lamented. For schools, the solution is in their relationship with the communities beyond their gates.

Peace of mind, piece of the action

Schools face a daily dilemma. Their immediate practical obligation is to their pupils, and this requires a learning environment: a physical and cultural space in which study, discussion and reflection are respected, encouraged and undisturbed. Creating this space makes the school a sanctuary, a designated place in which pupils are protected from the threats and pressures of the outside world while they develop knowledge and skills.

Set against this is a need for schools to reflect and engage with their pupils' wider social experience, and with the people – parents, siblings, neighbours, employers and peers – they live with. This engagement can heighten the productiveness of pupils' formal education, as it draws on the many resources and gifts of the wider population, and relates teaching and learning to young people's experience and interests. The tension between openness and seclusion has been brutally

illustrated by recent attacks on children in schools and the murder of headteacher Philip Lawrence. Simultaneously, exclusion rates have been boosted by increasing league table competition between schools because exam passes are the measure of success, and the criteria most troublesome pupils are unlikely to attain. As long as schools try to operate as exam factories, isolated from their local context, the imbalance will continue.

During the 1960s and 1970s, many new schools were built to incorporate adult and community education. These experiments were often unsuccessful because the ethos of the archetypal adult education institute is not compatible with that of a successful school. However, it is possible to marry the ethos and culture of the two facilities in ways which benefit all users. Schools which do so because integrated centres of learning, offering diverse opportunities and encouraging interaction between different community members.

For example, Impington Village College in Cambridgeshire runs learning activities for people aged from six months to 90 years. Though funded separately, the adult and school facilities share the same strategic management team, ensuring they are complementary and contribute to a common ethos. This maximises what users of the college learn from each other, as well as what they get from formal courses.

The college's Warden, Sylvia West, describes the school's approach as deliberately 'integrative, participative, and inclusive'. This extends beyond joint management to the inclusion of a wide range of people and learning opportunities. The college runs a busy youth club, integrates children with severe physical disabilities and learning difficulties and has a sixth form which teaches the International Baccalaureate to young people from twenty four different countries. The college also hosts international language schools, producing 'a feeling that you're connected to the whole world, and not just a school stuck in a little village somewhere'.

Can this be done without purpose-built facilities? On average, school buildings are used to teach the formal curriculum for 15–20 per cent of the available time. The potential for increasing their use is enormous. Most schools run some kind of extra-curricular activity, but it is

usually small scale, often only for the school's pupils and organised ad-hoc. Strategically managed provision of other learning opportunities could have a dramatically different impact.

But how does this relate to a school's core mission? Why should it be done if it detracts from its pupils' education? The answer is that diverse opportunities for a range of people to engage with schools, so long as they do so for the right reasons, can only enhance the learning experience of regular pupils. Superficially, time spent in informal learning situations is time not spent preparing for formal tests. However, genuine learning for understanding, as advocated by Howard Gardner and others, is enriched and strengthened by the opportunity for children to learn from, and interact with, problems, stimuli and people from the outside world.¹ The experience and talents of local parents, workers, employers and residents are thus resources for knowledge and understanding. Similarly projects which establish relationships and encourage mutual learning will build trust and reciprocity into the web of relationships which condition young people's social experience.

A project which illustrates this process is the Columbia School Mosaic. Columbia, a primary school in East London, decided to undertake a local history project. After extensive pupil interviews with local residents, they produced a mosaic on the outside wall of the school, sixty feet long and seven feet high, depicting scenes from the area's history, economy and cultures. The work was designed and executed by every pupil and adult at the school, and sponsored by local businesses, establishing relationships with people who had lived and worked nearby for decades without any contact.

Columbia, recognised as a school which successfully overcomes the disadvantages faced by its pupils, has discovered that drawing parents and others into its life has tangible educational results.² The school is now seeking to establish a parents' centre to provide learning opportunities in basic literacy, parenting and other skills, which further involve parents in their children's learning. Like Impington Village College, Columbia is a school where a particular ethos – one of mutual respect, responsibility and inclusiveness – is explicitly encouraged and actively developed.

Citizenship

Building social capital requires more than open schooling. It needs young people to face outwards and engage actively in community life. Again, although many schools run community activities, they are often seen as marginal, an added extra rather than an integral part of pupils' education. This view is reinforced by the continuing emphasis on formal attainment, but is countered by a growing number of projects which show the benefit of engaging young people in ways which *they* find relevant and interesting.

In its most basic form, this means young people *choosing* and *managing* their forms of engagement. Changemakers, a project with a national network of advisers supporting groups of secondary pupils, does just that. Young people decide what they could usefully and enjoyably do, and are then supported to do it for themselves, learning to communicate, compromise, and make collaborative decisions in the process. Current Changemakers' initiatives range from a countywide anti-litter project to a young people's newspaper providing features, debate, information and advice which are distributed via local taxi ranks and kebab shops.

This is a far cry from current calls for young people to become 'better citizens' by learning, for example, about the workings of parliament and the legal system, or being taught from the top downwards what is right and wrong. But for young people themselves, it has more immediate relevance and practical benefit, and contributes to the long term development of trust and civic engagement, as well as their own moral and social values.

Towards learning communities

School education and learning for understanding should not be divorced in practice. Increasingly, pressure on schools to perform in league tables and the standardisation of the curriculum are forcing the two apart. The linguistic and logical-mathematical intelligences those used in the traditional 'three Rs' curriculum – are undeniably a foundation of basic education. But learning for understanding and development of the other intelligences – spatial, inter-personal, and crucially,

intra-personal or self-understanding – are still seriously neglected in our schools.

This growing crisis is unlikely to be solved by government crusades to improve standards which do not fundamentally question *what* and *how* young people learn and understand. The debate over what kinds of schools we want to see will reach fever pitch in the next nine months. The harder question of how to teach for genuine understanding and how to motivate young people to become independent, life-long learners should appear, but it is likely to receive less political attention. To address this Demos has established the *Forum on Active Learning in the Community*, chaired by David Hunt MP, and including educationalists, teachers, youth and employers' organisations. The Forum is investigating models of 'active learning' in the current practice of educational and volunteering organisations, and examining their potential use in modernising the education system and engaging young people in citizenship and local communities.

These issues will also be debated at a major national conference, *Educating beyond the classroom: young people, active learning, and community engagement*, on November 20 1996 at Church House, London (further details available from Demos). Speakers include Charles Handy, Professor Michael Barber and Miles Templeman, Managing Director of Whitbread plc. The conference's findings will contribute to the final report of the Forum, to be Published next spring.

As I have argued, schools can serve their local populations and boost the quality and effectiveness of formal education, by building mutual relationships with the people and institutions around them. Rather than buildings with high walls, they should become open, interactive centres for multiple and diverse learning networks. *How* we can do this is only partly set out in this article. The agenda for change needs further development, and new ideas and solutions must be proposed and debated. In a society where life-long learning will be a key to prosperity and fulfilment, our conceptions of learning, understanding and education must be updated. How we do this is yet to be decided, but the consequences of these decisions will remain with us for generations.

Comments and contributions to the Forum on Active Learning in the Community are welcomed. Please contact Tom Bentley at Demos. Details of Educating Beyond the Classroom are also available from Demos, or from Lynne Allison at Changemakers, on 0171 278 6601.

Notes

1. Gardner, H., 1991, *The unschooled mind: how children think and how schools should teach*, Basic Books, New York, and 'Opening minds', 1993, *Demos Quarterly Issue 1*. Demos, London.
2. *Success against the odds; effective schools in disadvantaged areas*, 1995, National Commission on Education, Routledge, London and New York.

First aid for local health needs

David Colin-Thomé

A sticking-plaster approach to health care provision has restricted GPs' ability to take care of wider issues. Castlefields Health Centre in Runcorn has developed a working model for a local primary care-led NHS.

The idea of locally based healthcare is at odds with the current trend towards ever larger public service organisations. This trend is especially pronounced in the NHS, and applies to the new GP purchasing mechanisms such as fundholder consortia, multi-funds and total purchasing sites. Most purchasing units comprise several GP practices and more than 30,000 patients. In the extreme, a single purchasing group can cover a whole town of 300,000. Even GPs who are not fundholders often still come together to advise a health authority about its purchasing decisions, though the locality is usually defined by the health authority's designated area rather than any real community boundaries. The opportunity to develop population-based approaches has not been grasped, despite the fact British general practice is unique in having a locally registered population of patients.

I am attracted to the idea of the local for both services and community development work. The Castlefields practice, in Runcorn, has set

General practitioner at Castlefields Health Centre in Runcorn, Cheshire.

itself the key task of bringing these two concepts together, becoming both a central resource for its community and a *local* public health organisation to meet the health needs of its registered population. To achieve these objectives, we undertook a health needs assessment. Its outcome, after much soul searching, was an application for fundholding status, in an area of social stress with 12,000 patients. We informed our patients of our plans, and of our conviction that we could manage the budget to offer better services and release resources to fund health promoting activities. Our practice developed its needs assessment through the following framework:

Information management

Now that almost eighty per cent of GPs have computers in their surgeries, general practice is the most computerised part of the NHS. Yet this information technology remains heavily under-utilised. At Castlefields all clinical contacts are stored on computer, producing a database which allows for future planning against need and greatly aids clinical audit.

Community involvement

We established a health forum of local residents to provide a better understanding of community needs. It offers comments about the practice and voices complaints from patients who do not have the confidence to do so themselves. Proposed changes in contracts for hospital or community services as well as other health related matters, are also discussed. The initiative is widely supported by local councillors.

Public health

By using local information bases, we developed rapid response techniques for appraising need. A more sophisticated health profile helps the primary health team in identifying formal tasks. Environmental quality, informed parenthood and disaffected youth were all highlighted as issues which have led to local initiatives, such as the health forum, healthy cooking, keep fit and youth health projects.

‘Some competition between GPs ensures choice. But there are inherent dangers that networks of GP practices could become cartels’

The youth project tried to identify and meet the needs of young people through a steering group, chaired by a local GP and involving local residents, local government representatives and young people themselves. First, a parenting group produced community information and training facilities, and called for health visitors to work more closely with their pre-school colleagues. Second, a group concentrating on 16–25 year-olds liaises with educational establishments to introduce and has introduced such schemes as arts projects and conflict clubs. It is now searching for resources to fund a community development worker and future projects including setting up local community enterprises for the young and unemployed. Third, an education group is exploring ways of involving schools – we have already received funds from the health authority to address sexual health and substance abuse issues with the youth service and all local schools. Finally, a housing group is exploring accommodation problems. Apart from its general support, the practice also funds nursing time to serve the young persons’ drop-in centre.

Social care

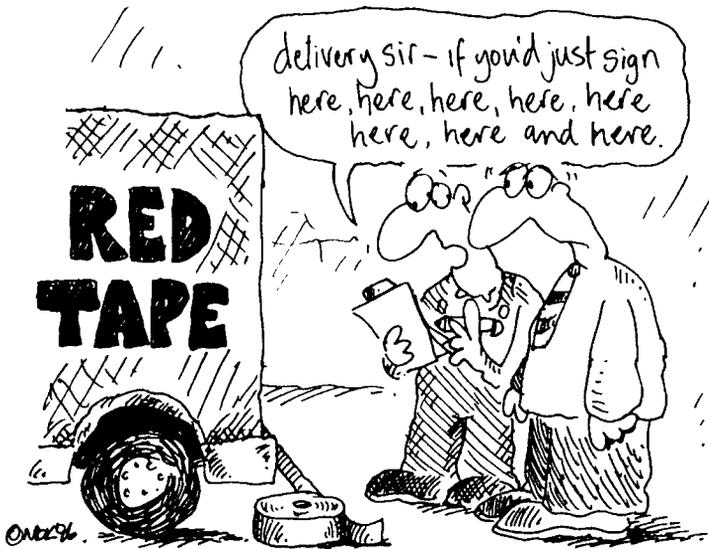
The practice is currently working with social services to improve care for the over-sixties. Within general practice, the assessment process has been reviewed to ensure the flow of quality information for the development of care management. The practice is a focal point for social care management, the coordinating point of access to all primary and community care for which the practice population is used as a base for assessing local health care needs. The importance of multi-disciplinary assessments for people with complex needs is recognised and our key goal for the future is to focus health and social care resources on the practice population. A care manager has successfully developed this objective over two years.

Managing for need

'Many authorities seem determined to run centrally controlled organisations, playing the devolutionary card to be politically correct without ever delegating budgets and executive decisions'

In addition to our new understanding of local needs, we decided better management of the budget was needed to achieve our fundholding aims. To improve budgeting we improved our clinical resource management and introduced total purchasing. On the one hand, provision and purchasing should be informed by both research and audit to identify best practice and cost effective procedures. As providers and purchasers of services, GP fundholders are well placed to do this. Their extra dimension is that they bring clinical knowledge to bear when managing the budget. GPs are in a key position to challenge clinical inappropriateness. By purchasing for clinical outcomes, we have released resources to meet often newly acknowledged wider health needs. And the second initiative involved extending fundholding so that GPs purchase all activity, rather than the twenty per cent rate for standard fundholding. This enables us to set capitation-based budgets, rather than historic cost-based ones. Combined with our clinical efforts, this move can release significant resources. But there is a snag. Our local Health Authority still holds the non-fund holding budget and is unable to release this money from their institutional contracts, even though it would help us meet other health needs and fund some of the approved community initiatives described.

Things have moved on from early conceptions of a primary cared NHS. The policy we have developed depends on two further operational principles. Providing high quality primary care services must constantly be our focus. At times, there has been an over-emphasis on GP involvement in purchasing. But a GP cannot be a good purchaser without also being a good provider. The two roles are clinically inextricable. The Castlefields practice offers standards in clinical, patient access and organisational areas which could be linked to future practice-based



contracts or accreditation. Secondly, the care manager or coordinator function must be clearly identified and performed. The care manager must ensure that primary care team members guarantee quality care of patients wherever it is delivered. So for instance, the practice can offer a skilled midwife to the individual pregnant woman, an experienced psychiatric nurse to the mentally ill. Other models will follow but freeing a budgetary resources is common to all of them.

Public health warning

The growth of large GP organisations with significant purchasing power could be inimical to primary care. Some competition between GPs ensures choice. But there are inherent dangers that networks of GP practices could become cartels. In my view, all GPs should be involved in some form of purchasing and multiple-practice options, although single-handed practices should also be available.

The local NHS or local government could facilitate community-based approaches by working with local organisations. Many authorities

seem determined to run centrally controlled organizations, playing the devolutionary card to be politically correct without ever delegating budgets and executive decisions. Yet such devolution could be within a framework of accountability which facilitates responsiveness and good performance rather than restricting it.

'Can the public sector rid itself of tribalism, professional parochialism and centralism to be a proper resource for its local communities? Is it to be forever structurally obsessed and controlling?'

Fundholding is already more accountable than its non-fundholding counterpart, and this could be further elaborated upon. If fundholding was abolished, would the NHS revert to health authority control, with devolution at their whim? Is there other local leadership? Our local council is keen to roll out the youth project to other parts of the town to be locally led by whichever agency shows sufficient commitment. Can we encourage and facilitate organisations like schools to lead community development? Pre-school education leads to better outcomes than much health service work and could be supported and funded by local finance. Can there be models of devolved budgets for housing estates that foster community ownership and remove perverse incentives that often hamper employment seeking? Can the public sector rid itself of tribalism, professional parochialism and centralism to be a proper resource for its local communities? Is it to be forever structurally obsessed and controlling?

The developing primary care organisations offer genuine opportunities to deliver this agenda but the current NHS is too hierarchically constructed. Two-way accountability needs to be developed so that the health authority and primary care organisation are accountable to each other, and the latter is usually responsive to its patient population. Our challenge is to formulate non-hierarchical frameworks for accountability, frameworks that lead to inter-agency working and overall improvement of practice. The public sector, and in particular the NHS, urgently need to rediscover the local.

Book marks

Beyond Westminster and Whitehall: the sub-central governments of Britain

R. A. W. Rhodes

Not an easy read and slightly dated, but the most comprehensive academic handbook for specialists on health authorities, local authorities, lobby networks, quangos and non-departmental public bodies. The book provides a solid history of their proliferation and a theory that partly undermines the conventional wisdom that Britain is a highly centralised state. How? By showing just how much power is devolved to the vast nexus of agencies and how much the centre depends upon them. Not for the fainthearted.

(1992, Routledge, £14.99)

P6

Rethinking Local Democracy

Edited by Desmond King and Gerry Stoker

This volume, as the title suggests, is the most theoretical of the *Government Beyond the Centre* Series. Beginning with an informative and critical account of the orthodox debate about local government and localism from John Stuart Mill onwards, the book devotes itself to extensive normative debate about the proper role of local government

and the value of local democracy in the context of 1980s centralisation and fiscal reform. Its essays include green, feminist and communitarian contributions to local democratic theory, and the book helpfully concludes with an essay asserting that the book's other contributors have missed the point. This, according to Desmond King, is the fundamental question of whether local choice can really be reconciled with a concern for equality of treatment of all citizens – a point which is usefully drawn out with reference both to local politics in Tower Hamlets and the less savoury varieties of American localism.

(1996, Macmillan, £12.99)

NB

Accountable to None: the Tory nationalisation of Britain

Simon Jenkins

Times columnist, Millennium Commissioner and Chair of the Commission for Local Democracy, Jenkins presents a slightly quirky, high-Tory history of Thatcherism, in which local government, universities, schools, the police and the health service appear as innocent victims of a ruthless centralising plot. Thatcher, Major and senior civil servants are cast as its henchmen. In the Ferdinand Mount tradition of old-Toryism, this is a grand lament for the 'ancient constitution' in which, supposedly, central state power respected and was checked by the never explicit rights of a myriad other public and semi-public bodies, professions and where both lord-in-his-castle and beggar-at-his-gate knew their place. Concluding with a paean to Tocquevillean associationalism and Burke's little platoons, Jenkins disdains to tell us what is to be done *now*, or whether he thinks the work of a generation of centralising power can simply be undone. Influential, readable, a barometer of the politics of the post-Thatcherite right. But too simple a story of villains and victims to convince, and too lacking in practical solutions to satisfy.

(1995, Penguin, £7.99)

P6

Strategic Changes and Organisational Reorientations in Local Government: a cross-national perspective**Edited by Nahum Ben-Elia**

This whistle-stop tour through post-Thatcherite Britain, Canada, Norway, Israel, the Czech Republic and Russia attempts to chart the new pressures and environmental forces that form the backdrop to local government reorganisation. Based on the premise that local government is the most creative level of government, innovating faster than national government and learning from local innovations, the book argues that it will increasingly be seen as a barometer and forecaster for change at a national level. The international case-studies make interesting reading, but the book's rosy view of local government and its academic tone (witness the catchy title) might prove a barrier to some.

(1996, Macmillan, £35)

ML

The Politics of Decentralisation: revitalising local democracy**Danny Burns, Robin Hambleton & Paul Hoggett**

Based on a study of what went right and wrong in the contrasting Islington and Tower Hamlets experiments with decentralisation, the authors try to situate the whole decentralisation debate in the wider context of public and community involvement in local decision-making. Although written from a left-of-centre perspective, the authors are critical of both authorities and of the tendency towards bureaucratic power in local government generally. No more than the sum of its parts, but the parts – both theoretical and empirical – are useful, and it is more readable than one might expect.

(1994, Macmillan, £12.99)

P6

Enabling or Disabling Local Government

Steve Leach, Howard Davis and Associates

Framed as a response to the review of local government in the early 1990s, this is a fairly, technical account of the way opportunities for a fundamental rethink of the nature and purpose of local government were lost. In its favour, it is well structured and prescribes how things should be done by setting out a framework for assessing policy options for local government and by showing, through case studies, the way local authority discretion has been restricted by legislation since 1979. In the conclusion, Leach asserts that these restrictions are not necessarily a bad thing and allow councils to concentrate on higher order strategic decisions without worrying about the minutiae of direct service provision. He also cautions that appeasing popular sentiment to maintain the status quo is backward looking and has failed to take account of the emerging imperatives of EU membership.

(1996, Open University, £15.99)

NB

Unleashing the potential: bringing residents to the centre of regeneration

Marilyn Taylor

This report concludes the JRF *Action on Estates* programme, which has produced thirty-three studies from over a hundred different housing estates involved in regeneration programmes. It has the difficult task of drawing out the conditions for creating a practical reality from the well-worn theory of participation. By identifying the common themes of the different studies, Taylor produces an admirably clear account of such processes. Her conclusions? A clear understanding of the specific local problems and conditions, including early involvement of residents, and a clear commitment to developing the expertise, skills and latent energy they possess, prove essential. High profile flagship projects come under attack – unless they are set in the context of more strategic development. The report includes ‘Action Sheets’ on subjects such as tackling crime and the availability of government regeneration

funds, gives a clear guide to best practice, an intriguing snapshot of success stories and a useful set of pointers for future action.

(1995, Joseph Rowntree Foundation, £10)

TB

Reviewed by Perri 6, Tom Bentley, Nick Banner and Mark Leonard.

A New Social Atlas of Britain

Daniel Darling

‘How many people live in your street? Fifty? One hundred? One thousand? What do those people do? How many of them are ill? How many children are there?’ Social Statistics have been the lifeblood of researchers, politicians and social reformers for at least a hundred years. The crusading efforts of Booth and Rowntree were founded on extensive statistical surveys in the early years of the century, and today’s politicians argue more about statistics than anything else. The UK government has changed its definition of claimant unemployment almost 40 times since entering office in 1979. Numbers matter.

Aside from these squabbles, a debate is emerging about the terms of reference used to produce official statistics. Researchers are increasingly realizing that aggregating social characteristics is of limited use, since it reveals little about their distribution within a defined area. The most accurate unit of analyses is the parish or ward, but understanding national trends and variations from this level of detail is difficult. This is why the *New Social Atlas of Britain* is such a boon. It presents a massive set of data in an accessible way by taking population rather than physical size as the unit of graphical representation, so that maps of Britain bulge in major cities and in the South East where population is most dense.

The result is a fascinating array of social characteristics. Maps of negative equity distribution, psychiatric patients as a proportion of the ward population, and the mean value of people’s shareholdings are presented alongside more traditional variables such as mortality, unemployment, and family structure. For example, the chapter on society presents changes in car ownership at ward level from 1971–1991 and then

contrasts car surplus (households with more cars than people) with car deficit (households with no cars and at least two people). The result is a surprisingly extensive, accessible picture of the UK population and its characteristics.

If the book has a shortcoming, it is that the tables are so intriguing you want to pull out more detailed data for individual regions, which is impossible with the paper copy. However, Dorling himself clearly constructed his maps from detailed local data sets. The rest of us will just have to wait to see if a CD Rom version appears.

(1995, John Wiley and Sons, £35)

TB

Media watch

The New Enterprise Culture, Demos Quarterly No. 8

Published May 1996

The introduction by business guru Charles Handy sets the tone for this collection of articles on the coming of the information economy and the challenges of creating a 'new enterprise culture'. This collection is essential reading for anyone who wants to understand the driving forces shaping our economy now and in the future. Quarterly articles were excerpted in *The Independent*, *The Observer*, *The Guardian* and *The Times Higher Education Supplement* and the journal was covered in *The Independent on Sunday*, *The Scotsman*, and *The Guardian*.

Revolutionising Share Ownership

by Jeffrey Gates

Published May 1996 to coincide with *The New Enterprise Culture*, this Argument makes the case for wider employee share ownership and was reported on by the *Financial Times* and *The Guardian*.

On the Cards: Privacy, identity and trust in the age of smart technologies

by Perri 6 and Ivan Briscoe

Published May 1996, This book is the UK's first comprehensive report on the technological, economic and social dimensions of smart cards

and the far-reaching challenge they pose to existing rules on information and data protection. The book was covered in the specialist press as well as the *Financial Times* and twice in *The Times*.

Animal Rights and Wrongs

by Roger Scruton

Published July 1996. Against a background of mounting public concern about issues ranging from BSE to the export of veal calves, and from fox hunting to vivisection, this essay brings much needed clarity to the complex question: do animals have rights? With a book launch at Church House, Westminster, this was a major media hit and was the focus of news stories, features, and rave book reviews as well as catching the eye of columnists as varied as Suzanne Moore, Janet Daley and Melanie Phillips who all found themselves agreeing with Scruton's arguments and thus each other, which must be a first! Excerpted in the *Times Higher Education Supplement* and *The Times*, Scruton's arguments were also covered, often on more than one occasion, in *The Evening Standard*, *The Observer*, *The Daily Telegraph*, *The Times*, *The Sunday Telegraph*, *The Daily Express*, *The Independent* and *The Catholic Herald*. Extensive print coverage was also matched by prominent broadcast coverage on the BBC's *Today* programme, *The Moral Maze*, and several regional radio networks as well as Channel 4's *House to House*.

The Self-Policing Society

by Charles Leadbeater

Launched on 2nd September, our latest Argument chimed with Home Secretary, Michael Howard's proposals to name and shame offenders. Subsequently, Demos made the front page of *The Sunday Times* for the first time. Leadbeater's ideas gained attention from newspapers as diverse as *The Guardian*, *The Daily Mirror*, *The Observer* and *The Daily Express*, radio slots such as Radio 4's *Nick Ross Programme*, the *Breakfast Programme* on Radio 5 Live and a host of regional stations, together with BBC 1's *Kilroy*.

Employee Mutuals: the 21st century trade union?

by Geoff Mulgan with Tom Bentley

Launched to coincide with this year's TUC Congress, the paper formed the basis of an opinion piece in *The Guardian* which printed two rounds of letters in response. While *The Economist* and key regional titles such as *Scotland on Sunday* and *The Yorkshire Post* reported on its proposals, Bentley went head-to-head with John Taylor MP on *Sky News*, Mulgan with Rodney Bickerstaffe (Unison) on Radio 4's *The Afternoon Shift* and Brendan Barber (TUC) on Radio 5 Live. We plan to follow up the publication with more detailed work on how the idea might operate in practice.

General Coverage

The launch of Demos' forum on young people and citizenship was reported on in *The Times Educational Supplement* on June 7. Demos has maintained a strong presence in broadcasting, including Helen Wilkinson on *Breakfast TV* (on the future of the family), Perri 6 on ITV's *Agenda* (managing the housing deficit), Tom Bentley on Radio 4's *The World Tonight* (community service for young people). More generally, Demos' books and projects continue to inspire TV and radio programmes, most visibly with Channel 4's *Genderquake* series which brought Demos' ideas to a wider audience by drawing on many of the arguments and ideas contained in *No Turning Back: generations and the genderquake* and *Freedom's Children*. Meanwhile, Geoff Mulgan and Helen Wilkinson have become regular players in the fictional diary of *The New Statesman's* Charles Lynton MP.

Projects update

- **Parental leave** The UK's first systematic study of the costs and benefits of different forms of parental leave. Demos is also backing a paternity leave campaign led by *Baby* magazine.
- **Young men** Study of troubled young men in Britain.
- **European integration** Examines the tensions between globalisation and Europeanisation and their likely future impact on the course of European integration and Britain's relations with the continent.
- **Drug abuse and social policy** Looks at the diversity of local cultures of drug abuse in order to identify strategies for more finely tuned policy design.
- **Futures for dentistry 2010** Scenario building study examining policy choices for government, professions and business. Book to be published October 21st.
- **Savings** Looks at the role of attitude and culture in personal financial planning. Identifies effective policy options to stimulate saving.
- **Creative cities** Develops proposals for urban innovation and assesses the impact of new information and communications technology.
- **Information society** Series of seminars with scenario building research on such issues as privacy, information justice and access.

- **Alternative white paper on cities** Review of urban policy and strategy for the next decade.
- **Smart cards** Further research on trust and smart technologies drawing out implications for business and government policy.
- **The trust business** Study of how business can develop greater public trust.

Practicals

This year Demos has begun to put some of its ideas into practice with a series of hands-on projects:

- **Job creation** Series of experiments around the UK to create work for long term unemployed people in new types of industry. Utilises public-private partnerships.
- **Schools** Forum chaired by Rt. Hon. David Hunt MP on school in the community and research on new strategies for the role of information and communication technologies in education.
- **Social entrepreneurs** Studies ways of encouraging and empowering new social entrepreneurs in Britain.

Demos staff

Demos' Director, Geoff Mulgan, has been consolidating the organisation's success over the last few months with a major expansion of staff. The research team now includes: Perri 6 (Research Director), Helen Wilkinson, Tom Ling and Adrian Fletcher (Project Directors), Tom Bentley (Researcher and Executive Assistant), Mark Leonard, Nick Banner, Ben Jupp, Jamie Sainsbury and Tristram Hunt (Researchers). We have also had a number of student interns over the summer: Rachel Jupp, Rachel McGough and Ravi Gurumurthy. Rowena Young is Demos' full-time Communications Manager and the administrative team includes: Richard Warner (General Manager), Joanna Wade (Publications Manager). Debbie Porter (Marketing and Events Manager), Alison Beeney (Publications and Marketing Assistant), Manica Power (Design Assistant), Laura Wilkinson and Annie Creasey (Office Assistants) and Gordon Willis (Book-keeper). Demos Associates also contactable through the Demos offices include: Robin Murray, Ken Worpole, Liz Greenhalgh, Charles Leadbeater, Rod Paley, Professor Sue Richards, Charles Landry, Professor Ray Pahl, Jonathan Scales, David Cannon and Mark Perryman.

Subscribe here

Subscriptions to Demos are £50 (individuals) or £100 (organisations). Subscribers receive at least eight Demos books and four issues of the Quarterly per year, as well as substantial discounts on all Demos events. Call Joanna Wade on 01713534479 for full details.

The current quarterly rate by direct debit is £12.50

Facts

- **If Britain were to equal the average ratio of local representatives to people in the developed world, it would need a further 120,000 councillors.**
In Britain there is one local representative for every 1,800 people. The average for the rest of the developed world is one for every 350.¹
- Tower Hamlets is the local council with both the highest expenditure per capita and the highest cost of council tax collection in the country.
Tower Hamlets' expenditure per person: £1.382.
Expenditure on council tax collection: £63.
- **When moving house, 84% of people living outside London will stay within the same region. In London, 40% move away.**³
- Since 1991, a growing number of people have felt they get good value for money and a better quality of service from their local council.
Those who agree councils give residents good value for money: 1991, 35%; 1995, 40%.
Those who agree council gives good quality local services: 1991, 51%; 1995, 61%.⁴
- More than ten times as many firearms certificates are issued in the urban Metropolitan Police area than in the rural Cleveland Police area.

Number of firearms certificates issued in: Metropolitan area, 9,345; Cleveland area, 881.

- **Hull is the largest city with a football club that has never been in the Premier League or the old first division.**
- The productivity of Italian car workers at the Fiat factory in Turin falls immediately after the local football team, Juventus, is defeated, and rises after an important victory.⁶
- It costs almost twice as much to educate a child in the Scilly Isles as it does in the rest of England.
 - Unit cost of secondary education, Scilly Isles: £4,484.
 - Unit Cost of secondary education, national average: £2,270.⁷
- **Total loss from fraud in the private sector is 360 times greater than in local government.**
 - Reported local government loss from fraud: £25 m.**
 - Estimated loss: £9 bn.⁸**
- As four in five Londoners contemplate the onset of turning thirty-something alone, over half their peer group living outside the capital could have been married for nearly half their existing lifetime.
 - Single adults under thirty in London: 80%.
 - Married adults over sixteen in other large cities: 55%.⁹
- **If everyone who wanted to move to rural retreats did, city populations would nearly halve. Given a choice 45% of people would choose to live in a country village.**
 - Proportion of people currently living in cities: 80%.¹⁰**
- Entry requirements of further education establishments offering 'A' Levels stipulate a minimum of five GCSE passes at grade C or above.
 - Proportion of children living in areas where schooling is likely to lead to qualifications of less than five GCSE passes at grade C or above: two thirds.¹¹
- 62% of people who work in their local area feel part of the community. 55% of those who work further away feel as much a part of their local community.¹²

- Average distance travelled to work by car: 1994, 8.2 miles; 1962, 5.2 miles on average.¹³
- **In the average London Borough, 13% of the population owe more than 13 weeks' rent.**
38% of tenants in the London Borough of Brent owe more than 13 weeks' rent.¹⁴
- Over a third of those concerned about local government corruption say they worry the most about police.¹⁵
- From 1973–1994, the UK received over £8bn in EU funds for regional development.¹⁶
- **70% of the public are in favour of direct election of the leader of their Council.**¹⁷
- From October 1990 to January 1996, 73 local government services were privatised without an in-house bid being allowed.¹⁹
- The introduction of compulsory competitive tendering accounted for the majority of 114,000 manual jobs lost from councils in Britain between 1988 and 1991.²⁰
- Northern Ireland is the most tranquil place in Britain.

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Signs of the times

Coal mining	Urban mining
Brasilia	Curitiba
Globalisation	Glocalisation
Town hall	Out of the town mall
Compulsory competitive tendering	Compulsory sustainable tendering
Single Regeneration Budget	Sustainable Regeneration Budget
SSA	DELFI
Internal market	Local primary care market
CCTV	Civic guardian
Nation state	Micro-state
UDCs	BIDs
Area patrol car	Street corner police box
Shire county	Rurban neighbourhood
School	24-hour local learning network
National competitiveness	Local preparedness
Teenage curfew	Pre-natal crime prevention
BSkyB	Citycable
Quango	Qualgo
Rubbish	Secondary material
Greenfield assembly plant	Brownfield disassembly plant
Macro	Metro
Dallas	Home and away
My beautiful launderette	Smoke
Monopoly	Sim City 2000
Group 4	Local licensed security firm

Cottaging
National ID card
InterCity
Multiplex
TV anti-heroin campaign
Swindon

Tele-cottaging
Smart citycard
Great Northern Virgin Railways
Cine-brasserie
Local harm reduction initiative
Thurrock

'A study of Italian car workers at the Fiat factory in Turin found that their productivity, fell in the days after the, local football team, Juventus, was defeated, and rose after an important victory.'

Facts

'Whisper it quietly. Many English people favour a revised system of local government which resembles that in France. Yes, Even those living in shire counties.'

Brian Gosschalk and Warren Hatter

'Total loss from fraud in the private sector is 360 times greater than in local government.'

Facts

'Capacity building and community development are ideas whose time has come again. The recent rash of civic boosterism belongs with the economist and individualistic policies of the 1980s.'

Alan Whitehead and Judith Smyth

'If you now phone for a domestic reservation, Britain's national carrier will connect you to a sales representative in Bombay. Best western hotels use the inmates of the Arizona Women's Penitentiary to take reservations.'

Peter Hall

‘Without the central economic relationship between customer and supplier, the city centre has only ceremonial and historic significance.’

Tony Travers and Jeroen Weimar

‘If everyone who wanted to move to rural retreats did, city populations would nearly halve.’

Facts

‘Local authorities can once again become local *government*, but they must expect to earn that right, and earn it individually service by service.’

Geoff Mulgan and Perri 6

‘If today’s local politicians are not up to the task, we can find a new generation to represent us better.’

Gerry Stoker

‘If Britain were to equal the average ratio of local representatives to people in the developed world, it would need a further 120,000 councillors.’

Facts

‘In the UK, only 25 per cent of crime is actually reported to the police. 35 per cent is cleared up and most police resources are devoted to responding less than 10 per cent of all crimes committed.’

Jon Bright

'A scale-barrier has come down, permitting in principle a far wider spectrum of political development than did the stilted norms of pre-1989.'

Tom Nairn