

LOCALISM AND THE DESIGN OF POLITICAL SYSTEMS

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ABSTRACT

Localism places a special value on the local, and is increasingly prominent as a political doctrine. The literature suggests localism operates in three ways: bottom-up, top down and mutualistic. To assess its impact, localism needs to be seen within the broader context of multi-level governance.

Here localism is examined in relation to three major themes: place, public value (PV), and institutional design. Regarding place, a key distinction is drawn between old and new localism. Old localism is about established local government, while new localism highlights the increasing room for manoeuvre that localities have in contemporary politics. This enables them to influence wider power structures, for example through trans-local organizing. With regard to public value, localist thinking makes a key contribution to core PV domains such as sustainability, wellbeing and democracy, as well as to others like territorial cohesion and intergovernmental mutuality. As for institutional design, the study is particularly concerned with 'sub-continental' political systems. A set of principles for the overall design of such systems is proposed, together with a framework of desirable policy outcomes at the local level. This can be used to evaluate how effective political systems are at creating public value in local settings.

The thesis presents a comparative study of localism in two significant, sub-continental clusters: India/Kerala/Kollam and the EU/UK/England/Cornwall. Both can be seen as contrasting 'exemplars' of localism in action. In India, localism was a major factor in the nationwide local self-government reforms of 1993 and their subsequent enactment in the state of Kerala. In the EU, localism has been pursued through an economic federalism based on regions and sub-regions. This is at odds with the top-down tradition in British politics. The tension between the two approaches is being played out currently in the peripheral sub-region of Cornwall/Isles of Scilly. Cornwall's dilemma has been sharpened by Britain's recent decision to leave the EU.

The thesis considers the wider implications of the case studies, and presents some proposals for policymakers and legislators to consider, together with suggestions for further research.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS WITH BRIEF EXPLANATIONS

AD – Anno Domini

ASEAN – Association of Southeast Asian Nations

BBC – British Broadcasting Corporation

BC – Before Christ

BJP – Bharatiya Janata Party (Indian political party. Currently holds power in India)

BL – The British Library

BPT – British Political Tradition (see also glossary and definitions)

BT – British Telecommunications

CA – Combined Authority (formally constituted group of English local authorities with powers to exercise devolved responsibility for strategic functions such as economic policy, higher education and transport)

CAA – Comprehensive Area Assessment (a system for assessing the effectiveness of local public services in England. Used for one year only before being discontinued in 2010)

CCTV – Closed Circuit Television

CEC – Commission of the European Communities (official title of the European Commission)

CERT – Community Energy Reduction Target (UK energy initiative)

CESP – Community Energy Saving Programme (UK energy initiative)

CNA – Community Network Area (formed by a cluster of town and parish councils in Cornwall)

CO₂ – Carbon Dioxide

CRE – Community Renewable Energy

CUC – Combined Universities Cornwall (A partnership of four universities and colleges aiming to give more people the chance to pursue their further and higher education studies in Cornwall. Includes Exeter University)

DCLG – Department of Communities and Local Government (UK central government department formed in 2006)

DECC – Department of Energy and Climate Change (UK central government department, 2008–2016)

DETR – Department of Environment, Transport and the Regions (UK central government department, 1997–2001)

DOE – Department of the Environment (UK central government department, 1970–1997)

DTLR – Department of Transport, Local Government and the Regions (UK central government department, 2001–2002)

EGTC – European Grouping on Territorial Cooperation (European legal instrument designed to facilitate cross-border co-operation between regions)

ELG – English Local Government

EPI – Environmental Performance Index (international measure of states' performance against a range of environmental standards)

ERDF – European Regional Development Fund (EU funding stream aimed at supporting economic development in less well developed regions of the EU)

ESF – European Social Fund (another of the EU's regional development funds, intended specifically for tackling social deprivation)

ESRC – Economic and Social Research Council (UK government agency which distributes funding to support academic research in the social sciences)

EU – European Union

GDP – Gross Domestic Product (internationally recognized measure for assessing the overall economic performance of states)

GhG – Greenhouse Gas (a gas which produces pollution in the atmosphere, e.g. carbon dioxide)

GOSW – Government Office of the South West

GS – Governance Space (see glossary and definitions)

GVA – Gross Value Added (a widely used measure of the value of goods and services produced in a specific area, industry, or sector of the economy)

HDI – Human Development Index (internationally recognized measure of human wellbeing based on indicators of health, education and prosperity)

HM – Her Majesty's (as in 'Her Majesty's Government')

IAS – Indian Administrative Service

IBSS – International Bibliography of the Social Sciences (leading online resource for social science and interdisciplinary research)

I&DeA – Improvement & Development Agency (was the name of a government agency that worked with local councils to improve their performance. Since July 2010, it has been known as Local Government and Improvement)

IE – Implementation Executive (temporary representative body which oversaw the establishment of Cornwall Council in 2007–2009)

IGR – Intergovernmental Relations (see glossary and definitions)

IPCC – Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (international body responsible for assessing the science related to climate change)

ISI – Institute for Scientific Information (organization offering bibliographic database services, especially citation indexing and analysis)

KILA – Kerala Institute of Local Administration

KSEC – Kerala State Election Commission (public body responsible for organizing and overseeing local and state elections in Kerala)

LDF – Left Democratic Front (electoral alliance of left-wing political parties in Kerala)

LEP – Local Enterprise Partnership (type of locally based partnership body in England, with responsibility for economic development within a particular sub-region. First established in 2011)

LSGI – Local Self-Government Institution (abbreviation used particularly in India to refer to the different types of local government body)

LSP – Local Strategic Partnership (local multi-agency partnership bodies in England which matched local authority boundaries. Established under the Local Government Act 2000, but now almost entirely superseded)

MEA – Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (major assessment of human impact on the environment carried out under the auspices of the United Nations. Published in 2005)

MLG – Multi-Level Governance (see also glossary and definitions)

MK – Mebyon Kernow (Cornwall's main 'nationalist' political party. Wants greater self-rule for Cornwall)

MRes – Master of Research degree

NDA – National Democratic Alliance (national coalition of centre-right political parties in India. Led by the Bharatiya Janata Party or BJP)

NGO – Non-Governmental Organization

NHS – National Health Service (UK and England)

NLGN – New Local Government Network (group of some 50 organizations working to promote the local government sector in England)

NOMIS – Service provided by the UK's Office for National Statistics giving specific access to labour market data

NUTS – Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics (hierarchical system for dividing up the territory of the EU. Used particularly for economic analysis)

ONS – Office for National Statistics (the UK's official statistical agency)

OVO – Energy company based in Bristol. Established in 2009 and specializing in sustainable energy supply

PhD – Doctor of Philosophy degree

PRI – Panchayati Raj Institution (type of local government body found in rural parts of India. Since 1993 PRIs have formally been part of India's constitution)

PV – Public Value (see also glossary and definitions)

RDA – Regional Development Agency (UK non-departmental body responsible between 1998 and 2010 for economic development in each of England's nine administrative regions)

ScS – Scalar Structuration (see also glossary and definitions)

SEAP – Sustainable Energy Action Plan (official document in which organizations that are signatories to the European Covenant of Mayors for climate and energy set out their carbon reduction and renewable energy targets)

TC – Territorial Cohesion (see also glossary and definitions)

TPC – Town and Parish Councils (the most local tier of governance in England)

TSD – Time-Space Distanciation (see glossary and definitions)

UDF – United Democratic Front (alliance of centre-left political parties which regularly contests elections in Kerala, India. Its most prominent member is the Congress Party)

UK – United Kingdom

UKIP – United Kingdom Independence Party

UNDP – United Nations Development Programme (global development network of the United Nations Organization)

UPA – United Progressive Alliance (national coalition of centre-left political parties in India. Its most prominent member is the Congress party)

USA – United States of America

VCS – Voluntary and Community Sector (UK collective term for referring to not-for-profit and charitable organizations as a whole, and distinguishing them from organizations in the ‘public’ and ‘private’ sectors)

VTC – Voluntary Technical Corps (cadre of retired public servant volunteers recruited to support Kerala’s local government reforms from 1996 onwards)

WCED – World Commission on Environment and Development (special body set up by the United Nations to unite all countries of the world around the idea of sustainable development. Its influential report entitled ‘Our Common Future’ was published in 1987)

WREN – Wadebridge Renewable Energy Network (community enterprise aimed at promoting energy and economic sustainability in the Wadebridge area of North Cornwall)

YCELP – Yale Centre for Environmental Law and Policy (publishes the influential Energy Performance Assessment of countries every two years)

TEXT OF THE THESIS

PART I

Introducing and Situating the Research Study

Chapter 1: Introduction and Research Aims

In the past 20 years localism has become one of the fastest-growing themes in the academic study of politics. Since the millennium, localism has also become a popular policy idea in the United Kingdom (UK), with growing support from across the political spectrum.

Some scholars argue that the growing ferment around localism represents nothing short of a localist ‘turn’ (Hickson, 2013: 408). At the same time others assert that there is nothing really new about localism. After all, it was only in the nineteenth century, with the onset of industrial revolution and the drive towards imperialism, that there was any decisive shift away from the local scale of organization. While the local dimension continued to be important for certain government functions, it was the ‘national’, and later the ‘global’, scales that came to dominate economic and political activity (Evans et al., 2013a: 401). Despite these differing perspectives, scholars do seem to be agreed on one thing: that localism is a highly contested political idea. This makes it a suitable topic for a doctoral research project such as the one which I present in this thesis.

In this introductory chapter, I outline my reasons for selecting localism as a topic. I also set out my research questions and aims, my overall research design and the structure of the thesis. Finally, I set out the contribution to knowledge that I am expecting the thesis to make, as well as my overall conclusions.

1a. Why localism?

My interest in this topic has been shaped by a 35-year career working in public services and English local government. As a practitioner, and later as a manager, I was routinely required to carry out the government’s policy for the sector I worked in. And yet sometimes, I also had the satisfaction of helping to

devise a local or community solution to a service issue, reflecting the consensus of those working most closely to it on the ground; or else, of helping to shape a policy which all the main political parties represented locally had discussed and were fully agreed on.

In my current role as an academic researcher, I am especially interested in the mechanisms by which public policy may be created and driven from the bottom up, as well as more often than not from the top down. Furthermore, whatever the source of a particular policy initiative may be, its implementation always has to take place at the individual, community, or local level. So it is with that level that my commitment as a researcher ultimately lies.

Most importantly of all, the putative turn to localism highlighted earlier speaks to a range of contemporary concerns in politics, governance, policy and theory. This means that, as an ‘essentially contested concept’ (Gallie, 1956), localism can be approached, studied and presented in a variety of different ways. I will try to reflect some of this variety in the account which follows.

1b. Research questions and aims

The core research question that I intend to address in this thesis is ‘***what is localism about, and what does it involve as a concept?***’ This is an issue which I examine in conceptual and analytical terms in Chapter 2 below.

As a subsidiary to this core question, I am also keen to address the question ‘***how useful and important a concept is localism?***’ What interest me here are two things in particular: firstly, from an analytical point of view, how can one apply the term ‘localism’ convincingly in other political settings beyond those in Europe and North America? These are issues that I explore in theoretical and policy terms in Chapter 4, and then later, empirically, in the two comparative case studies set out in Chapters 7–9. Secondly, I am also keen to examine whether in the current state of world affairs, the idea of localism has any kind of normative purchase. Assuming this point can be demonstrated, what would the basis of localism’s normative purchase actually be? These are issues which I explore in some detail particularly in Chapter 5 below.

As a final extension of my core research question, I also explore the question ‘***how can localism make a meaningful contribution to the task of institutional and system design?***’ This issue is addressed most directly in

Chapter 6 below. It is also a theme which runs through the three case study chapters that form Part III of this thesis. Both of the case studies that I present here can be seen as exemplars of effective institutional and system design, inspired to a significant extent by localist thinking.

This brings me to my overall aims in undertaking and presenting this research topic. The first aim is to establish localism as a serious political doctrine in its own right. My intention here is to help localism shed any residual associations it may still retain with parochialism or ‘low politics’ (Bulpitt, 1983). Ideally, I would like localism to be able to ‘walk tall’ and to stand comparison with other more ‘high-end’ political concepts such as globalism, human development and democracy.

The second aim of this research project is to point towards a more effective way of designing political systems; one which has localism and public value principles at its heart. In this connection, it is worth pointing out that Gerry Stoker (2013: 174–181) argues for a political science that is oriented towards solutions rather than problems. This implies a greater shift towards design thinking and a focus on how intentional change can be brought about within the political arena. This involves a willingness to grapple with normative questions as well as with analytical ones. It also links to the expectation that academic research in the UK should be able to demonstrate relevance and the potential to achieve impact in the real world (Flinders, 2013).

1c. Research design and structure of the thesis

Stripped to its essentials, the design of this research study is to link a substantive theoretical analysis with a detailed comparative study of two contemporary political systems, and then to draw conclusions from both these principal elements. The research is also designed in such a way as to present a variety of different perspectives on localism, ranging from the conceptual and theoretical (including the analytical and normative dimensions of the latter), to the empirical and the comparative. The intention is to allow a comprehensive understanding of localism to emerge from the study, including how it relates to, and potentially enhances, other significant dimensions of politics.

The design of the research is clearly reflected in the way in which the thesis is structured. After briefly outlining my research methodology in [Chapter 2](#), I set

about developing a detailed conceptual understanding of localism in the following chapter. This includes how localism fits in to the wider landscape of political concepts and its purpose is to situate the research study in its intellectual time and space.

In Part II, the overall intention is to develop a broad theoretical understanding of localism. Thus Chapter 4 addresses localism from the point of view of the existing scholarship on place, scale, territory and multi-level governance. The focus in this chapter is predominantly analytical. Chapter 5 discusses localism in relation to three of the most prominent themes within the public value (PV) spectrum, namely: environmental sustainability; human development and wellbeing; and democracy and accountability. The focus in this chapter is predominantly normative, particularly in relation to how localism relates to the theme of democracy/accountability. In Chapter 6, the theoretical focus shifts to institutional design, and particularly to the design of whole political systems. This chapter is intended to link theory with practice and critique. It does so by developing a localism ‘outcomes framework’. This contains a set of key indicators specifying a range of ‘good localism’ outcomes which government and policy should be seeking to address within a multi-level governance context. This sets up the comparative study which forms Part III of the thesis.

Part III presents a comparative case study of two contemporary multi-level political clusters, one drawn from the Global South and the other from the Global North. The study is set out in three chapters. Chapter 7 provides an extended introduction to the comparative study. It presents a range of background data about the two sub-continental political clusters of India/Kerala/Kollam on the one hand, and the European Union (EU)/UK/England/Cornwall on the other. Both studies are presented as exemplars of good-quality localism in action. Chapter 8 sets out the Indian case study in detail, and Chapter 9 the European one.

In Part IV of the thesis, the intention is to draw out comparative conclusions from the two case study areas and to assess their broader significance for theory, system design and further research. Chapter 10 also touches on some of the implications of the UK’s recent decision to leave the EU.

1d. Expected contribution to knowledge

Most previous academic writing about localism approaches it from the point of view of current policy debates, rather than as a political idea in its own right. By contrast, this thesis presents two substantive explorations of the term 'localism', one from a conceptual point of view, and the other from the perspective of social and political theory. The aim of these explorations is to 'raise the bar' as far as academic discussion of localism is concerned, and to help raise its profile as a political doctrine.

With this ambition in mind, the thesis presents a detailed analysis of localism in relation to public value. However, the analysis presented here assumes a much more extensive understanding of PV than is generally current in the academic literature (Moore, 1995; Benington and Moore, 2011). In this study, the hitherto rather managerial notion of PV is broadened to include major political themes such as environmental sustainability, human development and wellbeing, and democracy and accountability. It is also used to encompass system-based political qualities such as territorial cohesion (TC) and intergovernmental mutuality (IM), and it is advanced as a key principle of political system design. PV plays a fundamentally important role in the theoretical scheme of this thesis.

From the point of view of methodology, few if any political research studies that I am aware of have presented case studies in the form of multi-level political clusters or systems. The complex case studies set out in Chapters 7–9 are intended to offer a more realistic insight into how governance operates within contemporary political systems. In each case they aim to show how the different scales of governance within the cluster have evolved in the recent past, and how the balance between them is shifting currently.

Also from the point of view of methodology, relatively few research projects have attempted comparative studies of political systems in the Global North and the Global South directly alongside each other. Clearly there are many sensitivities and potential pitfalls in attempting such a research design. Certainly it is an undertaking which needs to be handled with some care. In Chapters 7–9, this thesis presents a thoroughgoing comparison of localism policies in the EU/UK and in India/Kerala.

Unlike many previous political studies this thesis first elaborates, and then applies, a practically-based framework of indicators showing what effective governance outcomes should look like at the local level. The framework is partly inspired by a short-lived policy initiative introduced a few years ago in the UK¹. This framework can either be used to guide the design of political systems, or to assess the overall effectiveness of public policy within individual localities.

The thesis emphasises the value of bottom-up localism both as an analytical concept and as a key element of good governance and of normative public value. In particular, the thesis makes the point that democracy and accountability for the individual citizen are significantly enhanced when they are aligned with collective-level democracy for localities and communities. The thesis also sets out some specific principles and governance proposals, particularly around the possibilities for enhancing the constitutional status of localities and of local and sub-national governments, and for embedding the ideas of cohesion and mutuality at all levels of governance practice.

¹ This was the Area Assessment Framework introduced in the UK by the now defunct Audit Commission (Audit Commission et al., 2009). The framework will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 6.

Chapter 2: Research Methodology

2a. Overview

As stated in the preceding chapter, the main design aim of the thesis is to present a range of varying perspectives on localism, and to integrate these within a coherent structure. The specific methodology I have used for achieving this aim is set out in this chapter.

Overall, my intention is to have a broadly equal balance of academic argument on the one hand, and contemporary case study material on the other. These two elements are in turn bound together by a focus on the design of political systems. The ultimate importance of political system design is clearly signalled in the title of the thesis. This is where the main relevance of the research project and its intended real-world impact are to be found.

Taken together, this set of priorities lends itself to a mixed-methods approach (Bryman, 2006). This is indicated by the differing focuses of three research questions (RQs) set out in the previous chapter.

RQ1. What is localism about, and what does it involve as a concept?
(semantic/conceptual)

RQ2. How useful and important a concept is localism? (analytical/normative)

RQ3. How can localism make a meaningful contribution to the task of institutional and system design? (empirical/comparative)

2b. Methodology: how the different perspectives on localism are set out within the thesis

The conceptual examination of localism is set out early on in the thesis. It is presented in such a way as to emerge naturally from the broad intellectual landscape sketched out at the beginning of Chapter 3 below. This then leads into the literature review which is set out later in the same chapter. This chapter is specifically intended to address RQ1 above.

The analytical perspective on localism is set out principally in Chapter 4. The main theoretical perspectives used in the construction of this chapter are place, globalisation, multi-level governance and, most importantly of all, the increasing emancipation of local communities within current international relations.

The normative perspective on localism is set out principally in Chapter 5. The main theoretical perspective used in the construction of this chapter is that of public value. Public value is addressed in connection with five fundamental public goods: environmental sustainability; human development; democracy and accountability; territorial cohesion; and intergovernmental mutuality.

The two theoretical accounts presented in Chapters 4 and 5 are intended to provide the essential building blocks for the design principles and the framework of localism design indicators outlined in Chapter 6. This chapter forms the main policy core of the thesis.

The thesis is also designed to present two contrasting empirical perspectives on contemporary localism in action. These are set out in Part III of the thesis in Chapters 8 and 9. These chapters are specifically intended to provide the empirical evidence to address RQs2 and 3 of the thesis.

Finally, the two empirical case studies are formally compared in Chapters 7 and 10, in the latter case using the system design framework elaborated earlier in the thesis. Between them, these two chapters are intended to address RQ3 concerning the potential value of localism as a key feature in the design of contemporary political systems.

2c. Methodology: how the two case studies were selected and how they fit in with the overall scheme of the research

As stated, the two case studies are specifically intended to provide empirical and comparative perspectives on this research project's broadly-based study of localism. As to what precisely these two studies are cases 'of' (Walton, 1992: 121), they each show contemporary political localism in action, but embedded within a broader multi-level political and social context.

The rationale for selecting these two cases is based on three mutually reinforcing lines of reasoning. Firstly, in a thesis that aspires to be globally relevant, it is important that the case study areas should be drawn from political configurations that are prominent in world terms. Secondly, the two cases selected offer strongly contrasting social, economic and political conditions. With one located in the Global South and the other in the Global North, they can be seen as contrasting archetypes: the first of a region which is developing rapidly in economic terms, and the second of a region which is already

significantly developed. Thirdly, it can be argued that, rather than being just a random example of localism in practice, the Indian case in particular is an important ‘exemplar’ of localism (Gallie, 1956: 180). In a well-argued paper on this issue, Patrick Cockburn makes the point that ‘exemplars are *foundational* to lines of reasoning, while examples are more like *building blocks* laid upon that foundation’ (Cockburn, 2014: 7 – emphases in the original).

In terms of the insights they provide, the case studies should be considered as very much on a par with the theoretical elements of the thesis. Their function is neither to prove nor disprove any particular theoretical proposition, but to provide their own distinctive ‘account’ of, and perspective on, localism. That said, each of the two case studies has been chosen with a particular purpose in mind.

Firstly, they are both very broad in their scope. They are deliberately presented as ‘sub-continental’ political entities. This lends them to a substantial multi-level political analysis.

Secondly, with their comparative possibilities in mind, the two case studies are deliberately intended to provide a strong contrast with each other in social, economic, cultural and geopolitical terms.

Thirdly and most importantly, while the European case and its Cornish element in particular are likely to be of interest mainly to UK scholars, the India/Kerala case can be regarded as a global exemplar of localism and intergovernmental relations in action. Certainly Kerala has acquired a very positive profile in the international research literature over the past 20 years, particularly within the fields of development studies and deepening democracy (Fung and Wright, 2003).

2d. Design framework for the two case studies

The case study section of the thesis is governed by its own particular set of research questions (see section 7a below). These are distinct from the three main RQs for the thesis as a whole. The two case study research questions (CSRQs) are as follows:

CSRQ1. To what extent do these two multi-level clusters and the sub-national settings highlighted within them meet the standards set out in the framework of

indicators for an effective localism in Chapter 6? What is the pattern of strengths and weaknesses in each case?

CSRQ2. What are the underlying reasons for the above findings, and what are the prospects for change for each of the clusters concerned?

The case studies have both an empirical and comparative function within the overall research design. The empirical element consists in a ‘regime-evolution’ account (Hathaway, 2016: 122–123) of the development of intergovernmental processes within each of the two case study areas. This highlights top-down, bottom-up and mutualistic patterns of interaction between the main levels of governance concerned. This aspect is presented principally in Chapters 8 and 9 of the thesis. Within each of the two case study accounts, there is also a specific policy focus on environmental sustainability.

As for the comparative element of the case studies, this is presented in two ways. Firstly, it provides the main focus for Chapter 7, which presents a formal and extended introduction to the two case studies. The purpose of this chapter is to establish that there is a valid basis for comparison between the sub-continental clusters concerned. The comparative element is addressed again in Chapter 10, where the two case studies are explicitly assessed in accordance with the seven-point localism outcomes framework elaborated earlier in the thesis, in Chapter 6.

A fundamental assumption of the research design is that both the empirical case studies are to be seen as very much more than mere ‘cases’, subordinate to some broader theoretical framework. Instead, the thesis aims to present each case study cluster as a significant end in itself and as independent of any comparator. This is why CSRQ2 focuses on the deeper causal factors and the likely future prospects for each of the two cases featured. This is very much in line with the thesis’s wider commitment to localism.

2e. Operationalizing the case study research and dealing with the practical issues encountered

Two practical issues that had to be addressed in relation to the case studies were, firstly, the discrepancy in my previous knowledge of the two geographical areas selected, and secondly, the degree of practical access that I had to them. I had much greater familiarity with the EU/UK/England/Cornwall cluster than

with the Indian one. I also had opportunities and resources to carry out a much greater depth of qualitative research in the former than in the latter. For example, in Cornwall I was able to carry out a good deal of primary research, undertaking direct observations, attending key meetings and carrying out interviews with relevant individuals, as well as having ongoing daily access to local news and media in that area.

By contrast, my access to the Indian case study was mostly via secondary sources and through the online scrutiny of relevant news media and organizational websites. However, during the course of the research, I was able to carry out a two-week cultural visit to Kerala and to its neighbouring state of Tamil Nadu.

The relative lack of access and direct contact that I had with the Indian/Keralan case study should, however, not detract from the overall validity of the research. As highlighted in section 2c above, the Indian case has already been covered extensively by a number of international researchers, and I was able to draw on their studies to a considerable extent. Also, one of my main reasons for selecting it was to be able to compare the EU/UK/England/Cornwall case with one of the relatively few acknowledged global exemplars of localism in action.

2f. Data collection

For both case studies, relevant empirical data was collected on a systematic basis from libraries and research collections, organizational websites and resources, and press and media outlets. In the case of India, I was also able to undertake some detailed observations of social and cultural life, and scrutiny of the local press and media during the course of my study visit there in January 2015.

For the Cornwall element of my ‘home’ case study, I collected data in a number of direct ways, including:

- Being resident full-time in the county between 2008–2014 and experiencing daily life there
- Attending council committee meetings as a member of the public
- Participating in relevant conferences and seminars either as a member of the public, or as an Exeter University researcher

- Carrying out qualitative interviews with local politicians, public officials and community leaders.

The main series of recorded interviews that I carried out was with the officials and political leaders responsible for developing Cornwall Council's localism policies both before and after the establishment of the new unitary council in April 2009. During 2009–2010, as part of my Master of Research (MRes) degree, I undertook a series of seven in-depth interviews on the establishment and early progress of the new council. Following this initial series, I carried out a further sequence of annual interviews with the officials and councillors most directly responsible for determining localism policy in Cornwall. I carried out seven interviews in this series from 2011 to 2017. During the same period, I carried out four other interviews with officers and with a local community leader. These additional interviews were on key policy issues that were particularly relevant for the thesis, including renewable energy developments in Cornwall, and devolution and self-government in localities. A full list of the dates, locations and durations of all the primary interviews that I conducted, as well as some details of the 13 participants involved in them, can be found in Annex 1.

All 18 of the primary interviews that I recorded were semi-structured, and based around a core of 6–13 main 'areas of questioning'. The detailed format for each interview was always prepared and sent to the participants in advance. A comprehensive list of the outline questionnaires used for this purpose is set out in Annex 2. Whenever the interviewees concerned were new to or unfamiliar with the research topic, my opening questions to them tended to concentrate on establishing a basic picture of the role and professional background of the interviewees themselves, and of the characteristics and core functions of their organizations. Where the organization in question was located outside of Cornwall Council, the interview schedule always included questions about the organization's working relationships with the Council. In the case of Cornwall Council interviewees, many of the opening questions in my interviews with them focused on eliciting detailed updates on the progress of policies and initiatives that had been discussed in previous interviews. Additionally, all interviews asked subjects to evaluate the success of their particular area of work and to look ahead to likely future developments.

With regard to analysing the qualitative data gathered from the interviews, in most cases this was done by listening back several times to the sound recording, making rough notes at each listening in order to establish as full a record as possible, and then finally writing up a comprehensive account (or 'meta-analysis') of the interview. Usually this ran to six or more sides of unspaced A4 typescript. This draft account was then sent, together with a copy of the sound file, to each of the interview participants concerned within a month or so of the date of interview. The participants were invited to comment on, and correct, the draft record. After that, the record and the participants' comments or amendments were filed in my research records. Many of the points made in the interviews have been drawn on again as this thesis has been drafted, and have been suitably referenced in the text where appropriate.

2g. Ethical considerations relevant to the research

Ethical approval for the empirical research element of the project was obtained in May 2014. A copy of the proposal information that I provided to the university, including a draft consent form is attached at Annex 3.

All thirteen of the individuals I interviewed for the project could reasonably be said to belong to local elites (Harvey, 2011). Six were senior elected councillors, five were senior local government officials, one was a senior regional government official and the final one was a former university professor and chairman of a local social enterprise with a strong public profile in Cornwall. All but one of the subjects I interviewed were initially approached to take part in the interview through senior members of staff at Cornwall Council. Given my own previous role as a manager in local government, I regarded all the interviewees as broadly equal in status with myself. For this reason I believe I enjoyed a high degree of trust with all the individuals concerned and was able to interview four of them on more than one occasion.

The main purpose of my interviews with officials and councillors was to obtain insight and privileged information about the conduct of localism policy within the council. This was key policy information that simply could not have been gathered in any other way. Within the thesis itself, my approach has been to use the information gathered to present a broadly factual and (I would argue) judicious picture to support my overall account, but not necessarily to subject their comments to a rigorous or sceptical critique. In the thesis I have referred to

all interview subjects anonymously. However, I know that most of them would have had no objection to my identifying them individually.

2h. Claims to knowledge

Both the thesis itself and the research project of which it is part are based on a theory of knowledge which assumes that there is no single truth about social and political reality, rather a multiplicity of competing accounts and perspectives. Taken together, these differing accounts are probably able to reach closer to the truth than any single one of them is able to do on its own. That is why this thesis has been consciously constructed as a series of distinct and varying perspectives on localism. But ultimately the view of localism that it offers is still only a partial and incomplete one.

This disclaimer applies particularly strongly the two case studies areas that have been selected for closer analysis in this thesis. For all their interest, they are limited in scope and in some senses imperfect. Despite that, they add a distinct dimension to the thesis and are an integral part of the picture that it presents.

Chapter 3: Assumptions, Concepts, Perspectives, Orientations

The aim of the chapter is to set out where this study is ‘coming from’. The chapter opens with a brief section on ontology, and is followed by a much longer one on epistemology. The latter reviews a number of major political concepts, and the connections that can be traced between them. The intention is to map out an intellectual landscape from which the term ‘localism’ draws its key meanings and associations. The chapter then goes on to locate localism within this overall landscape, and thereafter to outline the main currents in the academic literature on ‘the local’, from the early twentieth century onwards. This is followed by the core of the chapter: a detailed analysis of the different ways in which the idea of localism can be understood. The chapter concludes by highlighting some critical orientations which are important for the way in which the thesis is read.

3a. Core assumptions and beliefs

This study starts from the assumption that social and institutional facts exist and that, ultimately, these can always be traced back to ‘brute facts’ in the physical world (Searle, 1996). It is also accepted that the physical and the social/institutional worlds are both infinitely complex and that they continually oscillate between relative order and chaos. As far as the physical world is concerned, it is known that the particles which compose life and matter are constantly organizing and re-organizing themselves, and that the thrust for such activity typically comes from the bottom up rather than from the top down (Waldrop, 1992). In the social and institutional worlds, the flow of events is often structured and patterned, but it is also liable to sudden change – in the same way that a river might flood its banks, or change course after an incident of extreme weather (Kingdon, 2003: 222).

This suggests a view of politics as multiple flows of events taking place within certain social and institutional boundaries. Many of these flows will straddle different geographical scales at the same time (Brenner, 2001). Thus the main ontological assumption behind this project is that we live in a ‘polycentric world order’, where organizational structure and political scale are constantly being constructed, eroded and reconstituted in different ways, and over differing – and sometimes very extended – periods of time.

3b. Towards localism: mapping the intellectual and conceptual landscape

Building from this ontological base, the methodology used for this research project is shaped by a particular combination of epistemological orientations. These are encapsulated in a range of concepts and ideas which, taken together, may be seen as constituting a kind of intellectual field or landscape (Bourdieu, 1971). However, in the following paragraphs I do no more than sketch out the main concepts that I shall be concerned with in this study. I outline some of their relevant defining features; ones which for the most part I shall be taking for granted as the study unfolds. I also present them in an order which reflects the overall shape of the argument that I wish to present in this study. However I avoid entering into substantive discussion of any of the concepts highlighted below at this stage. Rather, my purpose is to map out a broad conceptual terrain so that I can establish more precisely where localism fits within it. ‘Locating’ localism is a task which I will turn to specifically in the section after this one.

This study makes considerable use of geographical notions such as place, locality, space and territory (Massey and Jess, 1995; Massey, 2005; Keating, 2008) to express the ideas and policies it is most directly concerned with. Spatial approaches are an effective way of anchoring institutional and political events to ‘brute facts’ in the physical world. After all, places and territories provide the locus for all forms of social and institutional life. John Searle (Searle, 2000) argues that social and institutional facts are part of a continuum of socially constructed realities – both organizational and ideational – which human beings create through their use of language. However, institutional facts lie further along the continuum of abstraction than social ones; they make greater use of symbolism and tend to be more heavily rule-bound in the way they operate.

The scholarship in this study is also influenced by another powerful concept; one which combines both spatial and socio-institutional connotations within its overall meaning: namely scale. The concern here is with how social and institutional scale are constructed, and with how particular forms of ‘scalar political fix’ – most notably the sovereign state – have become established during the course of history (Smith, 1995; Brenner, 1999). Scalar transformations lie at the heart of the contemporary turn to localism, and of how

communities of place and interest are being re-imagined. Two essentially political components which drive the evolution of scalar organization are social conflict and the will for power; so a focus on scale is a particularly useful way of capturing their impact.

Further, this study accepts that in all contemporary communities of place, at whatever territorial scale they are constituted, there are certain fundamental modes of co-ordinating social and institutional life. These correspond to the three main organizational realms of government, the economy and civil society. Each of these realms possesses its own distinctive mode of co-ordination. While government and the economy are broadly institutional in nature and are typically systemic and rule-bound in the way they achieve co-ordination, civil society operates much more on the basis of unfettered association between individuals, and very often of personal acquaintance as well (Young, 2000: 159). It is important to note that co-ordination may take place either from the top down or from the bottom up. Civil society, in particular, tends to be characterized by a bottom-up approach to co-ordination, whereas government is generally much more top down in the way it operates.

The study makes ubiquitous use of the terms 'government' and 'governance'. Broadly speaking this thesis adheres to the standard distinction that political scientists draw between these two concepts; with 'government' being used to indicate the decisions or actions of an institutionalized and properly constituted jurisdiction, and political 'governance' being used to indicate the wider co-ordination of public purposes within a particular territory or jurisdiction. Governance is generally regarded as the more complex and amorphous of these two notions, and it clearly has a strong social dimension as well as an institutional one. Governance entails a much more prominent role for civil society and the economic sector in the co-ordination of public purposes, and in decision-making processes generally. However, a difficulty with the terms 'government' and 'governance' is that the boundary between them is quite fluid, and as a result often they end up being used interchangeably. With this in mind, I will make all reasonable efforts to avoid such confusion in this study, even it means using both terms alongside each other in certain contexts.

Also fundamental to this study is the notion of the state. The modern sovereign state is a very specific kind of governmental institution, with a distinct set of sub-

systems (Dunleavy 2014: 49). According to Dryzek and Dunleavy (2009: 18–32), modern states have five core functions in relation to the territories they occupy, namely: providing external security; maintaining internal order; raising revenue; promoting economic growth; and providing income security and social support. Across the world, states now provide the main organizational framework for ensuring that political decision-making is seen as legitimate and that fundamental human freedoms and rights are respected (Eckersley, 2004). However, a curious point to note about the list of world's 195 internationally recognized states² is that statehood seems to bear little relationship to population size or geographical scale. Almost a fifth of the world's states currently have populations of less than half a million people (UN Department of Social and Economic Affairs, 2017). This should give scholars pause for thought when considering how the possibilities of localism as a political idea might play out in future.

One of the most distinctive functions of government as a form of social co-ordination is to serve as the principal arena for the practice of democracy. Democracy can be characterized as the most advanced method so far devised for constituting and conducting government. Democracy is considered normatively superior to other forms of governing because it relies in principle on the primacy of peaceful debate over the use of physical force, as well (in principle) as on the participation and involvement of all the relevant members of a polity. As a form of governmental co-ordination, democratic practice is based on clear expectations of inclusion, transparency and accountability in the conduct of public affairs. However, while democracy is a critical aspect of the way in which modern government is expected to function, it is often considered to be less relevant for contemporary governance. Indeed some commentators have even questioned whether democracy and governance networks are compatible with each other at all (Klijn and Skelcher, 2007). This is a key issue for localism, as this thesis will explore later in Chapters 4 and 5.

Under the transforming influence of democracy, the scope of modern government has become increasingly complex in nature. And as this transformation has occurred, so the sheer amount of public policy activity

² i.e. those which are either members of, or have observer status, at the United Nations General Assembly

undertaken by governments has burgeoned as well. Once implemented, public policies are essentially governmental intentions transformed into institutional and social fact. Gary Marks and his colleagues (Marks et al., 2008: 177) argue that in most Western democracies there has been a huge diversification of public policy activity in the period since 1950. This has been mainly in the direction of welfare, education, environment, infrastructure and economic development. Unlike military conflict, however, these policy areas do not drive authority in the direction of a centralized state. However, what they have brought about instead is a huge expansion both in public services and in the impact of state decision-making on people's daily lives (Hirst, 1994). This raises questions about the optimum scale at which both government and governance activity are most effectively organized, and how democratically elected governments should go about conducting their 'relationships' with citizens (Cooke and Muir, 2012).

The escalation of public policy activity has had a number of consequences for the governments of sovereign states. In many cases, it has led them towards a greater decentralization or devolution of their burgeoning powers and responsibilities. As Marks et al. (see op. cit. above) conclusively demonstrate, de-concentration of state powers is typically directed towards the regional or local tiers of government. But in some states, most notably in the UK, devolution of powers has often been to the advantage of semi-autonomous public bodies (James, 2003), or even of private contractors operating on a multinational scale, rather than of sub-national government. Meanwhile, in some cases the state itself has gradually transformed its modus operandi into a more remote and more distantly controlling form of 'meta-governance' (Jessop, 2004). This is where the notion of strategy comes to the fore. Strategy offers governments the means of getting a grip on an increasingly overcrowded and contested policy landscape (Mulgan, 2009).

Government strategies may reflect various ideologies, and there is no doubting that some of these are the subject of deep political contention. For example, using the notion of the 'competition state', Philip Cerny (1995) has highlighted the strategic priority that some governments have given to creating a suitable investment climate for transnational capital. This has led to the general dismantling of many welfare and employment policies in the states concerned,

thus reinforcing the impression that the machinery of state is being ‘hollowed out’ (Harmes, 2006). In broad terms this is often regarded as government ceding some of its rightful functions in order to further the interests of the economic realm, with potentially detrimental consequences for civil society and for ordinary citizens.

By contrast, another strategic priority that governments have been urged to adopt in recent years is sustainable development (WCED, 1987), thus enabling economic growth to be balanced with social justice and environmental protection. Mention of sustainable development brings into play two other concepts which will feature prominently in this study. These are sustainability and resilience. ‘Sustainability’ is an extremely broad term with many institutional applications (Cox and Béland: 2013). As highlighted above, these include the wide-ranging notion of sustainable development which embraces economic prosperity together with social inclusion, environmental stewardship and good governance (Sachs, 2015: 11–13). For reasons of space and academic focus, the emphasis in this thesis is specifically on sustainability in its environmental sense. The most salient feature of environmental sustainability is its overriding concern with the ecological systems that support human life. A further feature of sustainability more broadly is the emphasis it places on decision-making for the longer term. As for resilience, it is quite closely related in meaning to sustainability. It denotes the ability of social systems and institutions to ‘retain function’ in the face of an environmental or other ‘external’ shock (Shaw and Theobald, 2010: 6). It also implies thinking about systems and institutions from a long-term perspective, as well as improving the connectivity between their constituent parts (Owen, 2009).

A systems-based, strategic approach to policy making takes scholars a good way towards considering how political institutions should be designed, and how territorial, scalar, democratic and policy ideas such as sustainability and resilience should influence the design process. Indeed, it is hard to overestimate the power of institutional and system design as a potential means for achieving desirable political ends such as greater legitimacy and effectiveness in government. In essence, ‘design’ is an enlightenment concept that emphasizes the importance of rational thinking about ends and means (Goodin, 1996a). Thus, during the past 200 years, it has become increasingly

common for state institutions to be created afresh through a conscious process of design. This is particularly the case with some of the world's more recently established states such as the United States of America, Canada, Australia, India and modern Germany, all of which have been designed according to some understanding of democratic principles. A feature of the particular states just mentioned is the way in which the design of their institutions is based on federal lines, with governmental powers being shared constitutionally between a central (or 'federal') government and a number of constituent territorial units such as states or provinces. Federalism is a particularly useful mechanism when it comes to designing government for a geographically extensive territory, or for one which is very heavily or densely populated.

Two other territorial concepts which have come to prominence relatively recently in connection with institutional design are subsidiarity and territorial cohesion. Much more will be said about these two concepts in Chapters 4 and 5 below. Briefly, subsidiarity focuses on the importance of government decisions being taken as close to the individual citizen as possible (Vara Arribas and Bourdin, 2012: 13). Essentially, subsidiarity is a rather 'top-down' notion and it very much presupposes the existence of a federal or decentralized political system. As for cohesion, this is an idea which potentially has significant implications for localism. Like subsidiarity, it is being developed principally within the context of the European Union. It is aimed at promoting the 'balanced and harmonious development' of all the diverse territories that form part of the EU. Because of its territorial nature, it cuts across most other 'sectoral' policy areas. It can thus help to promote both policy integration and a sharper focus on overall public service outcomes within a subsidiary part of a larger jurisdiction (Commission of the European Communities [CEC], 2008: 4).

Finally, a key integrative concept that many consider to be important for the conduct of institutional life, as well as in the design of political systems, is public value (PV). As John Benington points out, PV may be thought of in one of two ways: firstly, as that which is valued by the public, and secondly, and more importantly, as that which adds value to the public sphere. PV may be generated within a number of different realms: social, cultural, economic, environmental or political. It will normally take the form of particular 'outcomes' that are achieved through the policy realm in question. Usually PV outcomes

will be either medium- or longer-term in nature (Benington, 2011a: 42–49). Two characteristic features of the PV concept are, firstly, that from a normative point of view its connotations are inherently positive; and secondly, that its semantic content is highly flexible and open-ended. It is therefore a concept that invites reflection, deliberation and analysis. It also implies a clear sense of collective impact. To this end, John Alford makes the point that PV is ‘public’ not because it is produced by public organizations, but because it is ‘consumed’ collectively by citizens. In fact PV may be produced by a range of different stakeholders, including private companies, community organizations and individuals (Alford, 2011: 144).

3c. Locating localism

How does localism fit in to the intellectual and conceptual landscape that has been sketched out above? In this section, attention is drawn to localism’s associations with the notions of scale, place, social co-ordination, governance, the state, decentralization and institutional design. As part of the analysis, a number of further concepts which are relevant to localism are mentioned for the first time.

The suffix ‘ism’ suggests that localism places a positive value on the local dimension of social and political activity. So localism’s most obvious association is with the notion of scale or level. In political terms, the ‘local’ can be used refer to almost any size of spatial entity below that of the nation state. However, much depends on the overall size and population of the state in question. For most states above a certain size and population, it is normal to distinguish between a ‘regional’ and a ‘local’ tier of political organization at the sub-national level (EU Committee of the Regions, 2009). In these circumstances, the ‘local’ level will typically encompass spatial entities and population clusters such as ‘areas’, ‘districts’, ‘towns’, ‘villages’ and ‘neighbourhoods’.

Mention of local geographical entities such as the above also indicates localism’s strong association with the idea of place or locality. In this connection, localism conveys a strong attachment to the particularity of individual places. Again, the scale of organization encompassed by a ‘place-based’ or ‘locality’ approach can be fairly flexible. As far as the term ‘place’ is concerned, it may be used to indicate any spatial entity ranging from an individual neighbourhood at the ‘micro’ level, right up to the level of city or sub-

national region. As for the term 'locality', it often denotes a more limited geographical coverage than the term 'place' (Jones and Woods, 2013). It usually excludes the 'meso' level of the city or the sub-national region.

In addition to the above, localism as a concept has strong associations with the three major forms of social, economic and political co-ordination outlined in the previous section. Indeed civil society, government and the economy all have significant local dimensions of their own. Together with place, these often become fused together within the broader notion of community (Young, 2000: 160). However, as an idea, community is by no means entirely synonymous with the local. Communities are often 'national' in nature, or they may be widely dispersed across physical space, or else they may be virtual. Nevertheless, as Gerard Delanty recognizes, there are many points at which the ideas of localism and community do overlap with each other (Delanty, 2003).

Localism often manifests itself either as a reaction to political centralization or to the impact on local communities of economic and political globalization. In this respect localism has a clear association with questions of governance and government, and to the manner in which they are (or should be) conducted. A number of scholars have seen the local as being the ultimate testing ground for modern-day public policy. On this account, the local is the site where policy choices made further up the chain of command actually work themselves out in practice, and where any contradictions that they contain have to be reconciled (Bailey and Pill, 2013: 291).

As mentioned in the previous section, many modern states have sought to address the challenge of ensuring effective policy outcomes, both for citizens and for local communities, by devolving powers to regional and local governments (Goldsmith, 2004). With this in mind, localism can be seen as having a degree of conceptual linkage with terms like 'decentralization', 'devolution' and 'subsidiarity'. However, quite how far this linkage goes will depend on the way in which the divestment of state powers takes place in each case. Generally speaking, localism conveys a preference for bottom-up or even 'mutualistic' approaches to governmental and economic co-ordination, rather than top-down ones (Pratchett, 2004).

As mentioned at the start of this section, the term 'localism' implies a clear valorization of the local dimension in politics, often in direct opposition to the

power of the state and/or to the impact of globalization. As such it poses a challenge for the design of contemporary political and economic systems. In recent times a growing number of scholars have tried to grapple specifically with this design question³, as well as with the policy implications of localism more generally. They have explored localism in terms of a wide variety of concepts such as sustainability, resilience, community, democracy, empowerment, mutuality and inclusion. With this in mind, the main strands in the academic literature on localism to date are set out briefly in the next section.

3d. The turn to localism: overview of the literature so far

As mentioned at the very start of this thesis, localism has been a fast-growing theme in academic writing about politics. This is borne out by any high-level analysis of recent academic works containing the word 'localism' in their title or abstract. For example in Autumn 2016, the British Library's (BL's) main catalogue, which includes reports and web pages as well as books and articles, showed that of the 1234 individual titles shown on its localism list, all but eight of them (i.e. well over 99%) had been published since 1992. Indeed, more than 1000 of these titles (or just under 83% of them) had been published since 2003 (British Library, 2016).

A similar picture emerges from other prominent academic databases. At the time of writing of this chapter, the ISI Web of Science indicated that 728 out of the 919 titles listed on its database in connection with localism (i.e. 79.2%) had been published since the millennium, and that the publication rate for localism titles had been accelerating markedly since 2010. Indeed, the five highest publication years to date had spanned the period 2011 to 2015. As for the International Bibliography of the Social Sciences (IBSS), its database in 2016 showed that 85.2% out of 589 titles listed on it as relating to localism had been published since the year 2000. The Web of Science is the only one of the three databases consulted which offers an analysis by country of publication and language. In 2016 it showed that the vast majority of academic writing on localism (96.5%) had been published in English. As for country of publication, the USA led the way with 346 titles (or 37.6% of the total), followed by the UK

³ For a particularly heroic example, see Paul Hirst's book *Associative Democracy* (1994). This is discussed in more detail in Chapter 5

with 307 (33.4%), followed in turn by Australia (56), Canada (35) and the People's Republic of China (17).

As for the range of subject disciplines in which localism titles have been published, the BL catalogue showed a spread of 18 principal disciplines headed by social science (120), political science (104), economics (97) and law (78). There was also significant representation in the BL catalogue from engineering, community development and earth sciences (58, including geography). By contrast, the Web of Science's localism archive showed the earth and environmental sciences to be much more strongly represented; with geography showing the second-highest number of entries at 118 and environmental studies the third highest at 108. The related discipline of planning development had the fourth-highest number of references at 90. Meanwhile, even though political science did top the Web of Science's localism list in 2016 with a total of 133 references, it was not by a particularly wide margin.

Looking at the whole of the literature on localism to date, including a very large number of relevant titles which are not listed in the main academic databases, three disciplinary traditions seem to stand out. These are geography, environmentalism, and political science. Historically, the first and second of these disciplines seem to have become interested in locality and localism at a somewhat earlier stage than political science. However, the analyses presented in the geographical and environmental literatures have often highlighted questions of policy, political organization and collective decision-making. In effect they have addressed issues which are fundamentally political in nature.

For geographers, the starting point for their discipline's contribution to the literature on localism is its enduring focus on locality. Indeed, as Nick Clarke points out: 'since the earliest forms of geographical enquiry, scholars have sought to identify and describe localities, places and regions' (Clarke, 2013: 495). Clarke highlights three of the most recent approaches to locality studies within geography. Firstly he identifies the 'natural localities' literature which he notes is based on regional and humanistic geography, and spatial science. This 'National Geographic' approach to localities, which dominated the discipline for much of the twentieth century, tends to see localities as unchanging 'naturalistic phenomena', with an infinite number of variations. (Clarke, *op. cit.*: 495). However, during the 1970s a more Marxist-inspired, political-economic

geography came to the fore. This viewed localities as products of uneven capitalist development. The crucial contribution of this strand was to open up the idea of localities being ‘made and unmade over time’. Indeed, this is where geography and politics first started to make common cause with each other, particularly in the field of urban studies. (Clarke, op. cit.: 496–497). The academics most closely identified with this approach are David Harvey and Erik Swyngedouw. Even more recently however, since the 1990s, a distinct form of ‘poststructuralist’ geography has emerged. This is less concerned with economic determinism, and more with seeing localities as phenomena which are open, permeable, heterogeneous, dynamic and incomplete. One of the principal exponents of this approach is Doreen Massey, and this thesis will draw heavily on her ideas, particularly in the next chapter. The poststructuralist approach developed by Massey and others has significant implications for politics. This is because it tends to see the governance of localities as a ‘loose and negotiated set of political arrangements of central, regional and local institutions, along with private and third-sector agencies’ (Clarke, op. cit.: 499-500). This has distinct resonances with multi-level governance (MLG), a key analytical framework as far as this study is concerned. MLG will be outlined in more detail in the next section below, as well as in Chapter 4.

Unlike geography, the literature on environmentalism has always had a marked political edge, ever since it first began to appear in the USA in the early part of the twentieth century. The environmental literature has always contained a strong critique of social and economic phenomena such as industrialization, urbanization, population growth, and unsustainable lifestyles. One of its foremost figures is the American economist Herman Daly, whose influential titles, *Steady-State Economics*, with its four key principles of sustainability (1977 and 1991) and *Beyond Growth* (1996) set out a number of key operational principles for sustainable development. Within the UK, one of the first popular writers to capture the link between the environmental critique, alternative economics, and localism was the British-based economist E F Schumacher. This was in his highly influential, best-selling book *Small is Beautiful* (Schumacher, 1973). Schumacher’s book was almost certainly the earliest localism manifesto to appear in Western political and economic

thought⁴. Subsequently his ideas have become a major element in Green political thinking (Dobson, 1990: Chapter 3), and they have also become the basis of the Transition Movement's contemporary appeal in communities of all types and sizes across the world (Hopkins, 2011). A key issue of contention within the environmental approach to localism is the extent to which it favours a 'defensive' withdrawal from the national and global economy, and the extent to which it advocates a more open, but largely self-sufficient engagement with the world at large.

The initial contributions of politics and political science to the academic literature on localism were centred on 'new localism', a concept which resonated in many urban neighbourhoods in the latter part of the twentieth century. It first made its appearance in the USA (Morris and Hess, 1975; Goetz and Clarke, 1993), and then later in Britain (Filkin et al., 2000; Corry and Stoker, 2002). In the United States especially, the new localism was seen as a kind of radical awakening, capable of inspiring local communities to rise up and challenge the regulatory state. After being introduced in Britain in 2000, new localism was almost immediately adopted as official policy by the then Labour government (DTLR, 2001). However under Labour, new localism quickly became distorted into something very different from the American original, to the extent that Lawrence Pratchett, writing in 2004, was able to criticize Labour's new localism as a 'sophisticated tool' for ensuring that localities deliver even more effectively on government policy (Pratchett, 2004: 371).

Pratchett's critique highlights a key issue that localism raises for the study of politics and political science in general. To what extent can, or does, a commitment to localism enable governance from the bottom up, from the top down, or of a genuinely 'mutualistic' character as between the different levels of government, to develop? This in turn raises even bigger questions about the ultimate ends of politics, rather than its means. Certainly there is scope for a much more coherent theory of localism to be developed, perhaps as part of a more 'political' approach to political theory in general (Waldron, 2016). But with some recent exceptions (e.g. Ercan and Hendricks, 2013; Davoudi and

⁴ Of course, Mahatma Gandhi had written in very similar terms for an Indian audience in the early part of the twentieth century (see Chapter 8 below)

Madanipour, 2013), this is not a perspective which has been prominent in the localism literature so far.

3e. Analytical perspectives on localism

This section sets out a number of analytical perspectives on localism and highlights those which will be particularly important for the rest of this study.

As suggested earlier in the chapter (see section 3c), it can be useful to think of geographical scale in terms of standard levels of social, economic and political organization. In this connection, broadly-based bandings such as ‘micro’, ‘meso’ and ‘macro’ can help to frame the analysis of complex phenomena, and to orientate the academic discussion of them. Clearly, opinions will differ as to which particular spatial concepts should be allocated to categories as broad as these, especially where one is dealing at the margins. However, a classification of this type is crucial in helping to situate the ‘local’ and its particular family of spatial concepts more precisely within the overall scalar landscape. At the micro-end of the spectrum, for example, it would not be too controversial to place the concepts of ‘neighbourhood’, ‘village’, ‘town’, ‘district’ and ‘area’. Meanwhile at the meso-level, would probably regard it as reasonable to place the concepts of ‘city’, ‘sub-region’, ‘region’ and ‘state’. Finally, the concepts of ‘sub-continent’⁵, ‘continent’ and ‘world’ would seem to belong most appropriately within the ‘macro’ category.

Looking at how the term ‘localism’ fits into this broad categorization, it quite obviously belongs within the micro-level of social and political organization. One might say that this is localism in its core sense. However, there is also a case for arguing that localism might in some cases apply to the meso category as well, particularly to the levels which lie below that of the sovereign state. This would be a much more relative or secondary use of the term ‘localism’. In the rest of this thesis, both the core and the secondary variants of localism will feature prominently in the analysis, particularly in the two case studies in Chapters 8 and 9.

From a core localism point of view, the analysis in this thesis will focus on organizations across the three main realms of social and political organization

⁵ This concept, which I argue also includes the European Union, will be discussed in greater depth in Chapter 6 below

(see section 3b above). In particular, these will include local governments at area, district, town and neighbourhood level, and local civil society organizations across a similar range. This reflects a methodological commitment to combining social and institutional factors alongside each other as part of the same analysis. Such an approach would seem to follow on logically if the intention is to treat government and governance as a continuum, given that there is such a strong civil society element in the latter (Young, 2000). More importantly, a broader analytical approach is seen as essential for a study such as this, as it provides a more holistic evidence base upon which to draw conclusions and to make judgments (Bridge et al., 2013). For example, social factors will feature prominently in the discussion on sustainability, climate change and economic and community resilience in Chapter 5.

A second key axis for understanding and analysing localism is to look at it from the point of view of the power relationships that exist between different spatial levels of organization and government. In this connection, one can identify three basic power dynamics: top-down, bottom-up and mutualistic. These are reflected in Paul Hildreth's influential localism typology (Hildreth, 2011: 704), within which he sets out the three main variants of political localism:

- Conditional localism – i.e. a commitment by central government to decentralize powers to a local tier of government, conditional upon the latter's agreement to support the centre's national policy objectives or to abide by certain performance standards
- Representative localism – i.e. devolution to local, democratically elected bodies in accordance with widely accepted principles of local self-government, for example the European Charter of Local Self-Government based on the principle of subsidiarity
- Community localism – i.e. devolution to citizens and to local communities with the explicit aim of engaging and empowering them.

The first of Hildreth's three 'ideal types' broadly represents a top-down localism dynamic. The second essentially reflects a mutualistic dynamic, while the third type seems intended to represent a bottom-up approach to localism. However, though these three ideal types offer useful tools for analysis, when one examines the different approaches that governments have taken towards decentralization, devolution and localism, what one tends to find is that two or

more of these dynamics are often present at the same time. It is really the mix between them that matters (Evans et al., 2013b: 614).

For each of the three main localism dynamics outlined above, there are some characteristic themes and tropes to be found in the political science literature. Top-down approaches to localism are often accompanied by terms such as ‘strategy’, ‘value for money’, ‘customer service’, ‘delegation’ and ‘earned autonomy’ (Stoker, 2004). In recent years some scholars have developed a trenchant critique of top-down localism and what they see as its hollow use of terms such as ‘big society’ or ‘community empowerment’. Localism on this account is typically seen as a tool of ‘neoliberal governmentality’ (Davoudi and Madanipour, 2013), or of ‘depoliticisation’ (Newman, 2014: 117–118).

As far as bottom-up approaches to localism are concerned, these are also typically associated with the themes of community and neighbourhood empowerment (Lowndes and Sullivan, 2008: 64–5). However, bottom-up approaches to localism tend to emphasize the importance of empowerment as ‘an open-ended process’ which takes place in ‘governance spaces’, which have been ‘claimed and created’ by communities and by neighbourhoods themselves (Bailey and Pill, 2013: 292). Bottom-up approaches to localism also tend to be linked with concepts such as community ownership (Bunt and Harris, 2010) and resilience (Shaw, 2012). In the particular sub-strand inspired by Green political theory, a distinctive theme is that of communities taking back not so much political, as economic control of certain fundamental processes that support human life, such as food production and energy generation. Rob Hopkins, founder of the Transition movement, has used the term ‘localization’, rather than ‘localism’, to describe Transition’s particular approach to these issues (Felicetti, 2013: 565). Finally, an intriguing strand of the bottom-up literature on localism is that which sees places and localities as political, economic or cultural ‘players’ in their own right (Cox and Mair, 1991; Barber, 2013). If followed through systematically, the ideas raised within this sub-strand of the literature have the potential to radically transform the design of political institutions and systems.

With regard to mutualistic approaches to localism, these are most typically found in the academic literature on federalism. One of the most eloquent expressions of this approach is set out in Mark Landy and Steven Teles’s

chapter entitled 'Beyond Devolution: From Subsidiarity to Mutuality'. This is part of a book entitled *The Federalist Vision* edited by Nicolaidis and Howse (2001: 413–426). With this particular vision in mind, 'mutuality' is proposed as a key principle for the design of political systems in Chapter 5 of this thesis. In addition, there is much implicit material on intergovernmental mutuality in the EU's recent papers on cohesion policy (CEC, 2008). Since Lisbon in 2009, the principle of cohesion has been fully enshrined within EU's Treaties. For a UK perspective on this issue, some of the reports from the now defunct Political and Constitutional Reform Committee of the House of Commons are relevant. In 2013, for example, the Select Committee argued – unsuccessfully – for a systematic codification of the relationship between central and local government in Britain (House of Commons, 2013).

A third important framework that will be used to analyse localism in this study is that of multi-level governance (MLG). As an essentially polycentric notion, MLG opens up the way for a much more sophisticated analysis of how political power is wielded across different territorial levels and also by different types of political actor. In this connection, one of the most striking features of MLG is the extent to which it assumes absolutely equal status between jurisdictions of all types and at all levels, at a theoretical level at least (Piattoni, 2009: 164). This 'equalizing' aspect of MLG is one of the most important analytical assumptions underlying this study.

Not only is MLG a useful framework for policy analysis, it also carries increasing weight as a normative idea. For example, having reviewed a number of different scholarly literatures across a range of sub-disciplines, Hooghe and Marks (2003: 235) conclude that all the literatures examined have one basic assumption in common: that dispersion of governance across multiple jurisdictions is more flexible than concentrating it within a single jurisdiction alone. Broadly speaking, an MLG approach allows more scope for the design of institutions and political systems to reflect heterogeneity, complexity and the wider social and economic environment inherent in the idea of a polycentric world order.

3f. Critical orientations

In concluding this chapter, it is important to underline that the aim of the thesis is to present localism as an important policy and design principle in its own

right. With this in mind, the two case studies featured in Part III focus on contexts where ‘localist’ thinking features prominently in the design of political institutions and systems, even in contexts where it is not necessarily thought of as ‘localism’ at all by those most directly involved⁶. Although written from a UK and European perspective, this study is concerned to give due emphasis to evidence from the Global South as well as from the Global North. This decisively influences the comparative approach that has been adopted for the study.

Gulrajani and Moloney (2012: 84) note that public policy study of the developing world tends to be ‘small-scale, disparate, descriptive, qualitative/empirical, (and) non-comparative’. It also tends to be concerned with capturing ‘local realities’ in their full contextual specificity, rather than with building a coherent and cumulative body of knowledge across topics and geographies. It is not therefore seen as critical for building a more informed understanding of policy and administration in the developed world. However in establishing principles for institutional and system design, it is important to be able to draw on the widest possible evidence base. In this way it is hoped the present study will go some way towards counteracting a ‘Western’ bias that has been built into many studies of public administration and policy in the past.

This chapter has sought to address the first of the three research questions outlined at the start of the thesis (see section 1b above). A clear understanding of what is at stake as far as the term ‘localism’ is concerned should now be established within the reader’s mind. In Part II, the thesis will go on to examine how the ideas which are inherent in localism can be applied within the fields of governance, public value and the design of political institutions and systems.

⁶ Particularly for example in India and Kerala, where the term ‘localism’ may even be accompanied by certain pejorative connotations (see Chapter 8, section 8c)

PART II

Theoretical and Policy Perspectives

Chapter 4: Localism, Place and Multi-level Governance

Part II forms the theoretical core of this thesis. As a way of contextualizing the recent turn to localism, the account in this chapter draws on the poststructuralist literature regarding place and scale, and also from global social theory. According to these perspectives, places and localities are essentially open, dynamic and pluralistic in nature. This contrasts with the way in which they are often framed in the mainstream literature on politics and public policy (Evans, Stoker and Marsh, 2013b: 613).

A dynamic approach to place is very much in tune with the assumption of a 'polycentric world order', which underpins this study (see section a in Chapter 3 above). It also chimes in well with the notion of multi-level governance (MLG), which is the overarching analytical framework that will be used here. Over the past twenty years, an understanding of the implications of MLG has gradually taken root within academic thinking. An MLG perspective opens up the possibility for a more bottom-up political localism to emerge and flourish, as this chapter will seek to demonstrate.

4a. Place, space and scale: fundamental elements of social and political organization

The starting point for the account is the notion of place. According to Doreen Massey (1995), places are both 'meeting points' and constellations of social relations. Through the activity patterns of their residents and users, places may have stronger or weaker links with the rest of the world. Of course this has always been the case, but the essential difference today – in this current period of 'late modernity' – is the intensification of the links that nearly all places are forging as a result of the globalized compression of time and space (Giddens, 1990). The boundaries of most places are now far more open than they ever were in the past. Massey and Jess (1995) argue that while physical environment is an important element in the idea of place, its most significant features are almost always socially constructed. All places are unique in the sense that each one is characterized by a specific combination of images,

which in turn interact in different ways with the wider social and political environment. Also, each place has a unique historical identity which has contributed to the way in which it is seen and thought about today.

In her book *For Space* Doreen Massey (2005) notes that places are located within a wider geographical space. Both place and space are essentially public in character. Social relations within them invariably have to be negotiated in some way, and this in turn brings into play questions of politics. In defiance of a long tradition in Western thought, Massey makes a strong case for the revalorization of space/place as a dynamic entity in its own right, particularly given the present conjuncture of global and international flows. This is based on what Massey describes as the ‘thrown-together’ quality of space, and its ability to contain the many ‘intertwined trajectories’ of individuals, groups and organizations.

As part of being socially and geographically connected with each other, places are also organized into groupings and hierarchies extending across territorial space and time. Thus, according to Massey (1995: 69), places are not just interconnected, but interdependent as well. They are bound together by ‘geographies of power’. Despite their unique features, places are also unequal since they are differentially located within these wider power geographies. The inequality here is not just about variations in income or prosperity between different places, but is also inherently linked to their social and cultural positioning in relation to each other. This is where the politics of scale and theories of ‘scalar structuration’ play a defining role.

According to Paasi (2004), scale is a complex concept because it is capable of implying both horizontal and vertical organization. Thus, Howitt (2002, 2003) analyses scale along three different dimensions: as an ‘areal’ concept (i.e. scale as size); as a hierarchical one (scale as level); and also as a ‘relational’ one. The latter is particularly concerned with the boundaries of scale. It sees such boundaries as interfaces at which different ‘scale entities’ or ‘levels’ interact with each other. This approach effectively views scale as a ‘technology of bounding’, which serves to make the division of space around conventional political and cultural markers (such as different levels of government) possible. With this in mind, it has been suggested that scale is best regarded as an epistemological

framing device, rather than as an ontological category in its own right (Jones, 1998: 28).

With regard to Howitt's 'horizontal' notion of 'scale as size', it is important to bear in mind the way in which social and political co-ordination across physical space has developed over the course of human history. Anthony Giddens notes how the limitations of individual 'presence' are transcended by the 'stretching' of social relations across time and space (Giddens, 1984: 35). He draws attention to a whole set of cultural and technological innovations, such as the invention of writing and money, and modern developments in education, travel and communications. In recent decades these have given rise to an exponential increase in the intensity of co-ordination across social, economic and political systems worldwide. For the first time in history, agents have been able to achieve such a high degree of 'time–space distancing' that physical absence in space no longer poses an obstacle to system co-ordination (Giddens, 1984: 185)

As for Howitt's 'vertical' notion of 'scale as level', Neil Brenner draws an important distinction between the 'contexts' of scale and the actual 'processes' by which scaling and rescaling occur. According to Brenner, it is the latter which should be really understood as embodying the idea of a 'politics of scale'. On this basis, he sets out 11 propositions which may serve as a starting point for a theory of 'scalar structuration' (ScS). In particular, these propositions include the following (Brenner, 2001: 604–609):

- Processes of ScS are constituted and continually reworked through everyday routines and struggles
- Processes of ScS generate contextually specific causal effects
- Processes of ScS constitute geographies and choreographies of social power
- Processes of ScS may crystallize into 'scalar fixes' and such fixes may serve to constrain the evolution of further scalar processes.

Neil Smith (1995: 228) argues that geographical scales should be seen as essentially mutable constructs. They are the product of particular economic, political and social relationships and they represent the 'spatial resolution of contradictory social forces'. So while place and space are important, it is

ultimately scale which decides. Scalar processes are fundamental to ensuring the temporal fixing of power relationships, and any reconfiguration of scale is likely to challenge existing political settlements and fixes (Swyngedouw, 1997: 145).

4b. Communities of place and their governance

Doreen Massey's highly generic view of place, set out in the previous section, should not obscure the fact that actual places themselves may be of many different types and scales. So what features should one generally look for in order to identify somewhere as a 'place'?

Firstly, the term 'place' implies a specific geographical location, usually with some kind of built component – this may often be a very significant feature of the place in question. Secondly, it implies a recognizable community of residents and regular users. Thirdly, as Massey herself argues, a place needs to have a unique 'identity' comprising at least a name and incorporating a set of meanings and images associated with the name itself and with its physical location. In addition, one would expect most places to have a social structure and a number of informal groupings, associations, organizations and institutions specifically identified with the location in question. Finally, depending on the circumstances, a place may also possess some site-specific element of formal political leadership and/or governance. Each of these markers can be seen as constituting the core elements of any particular community of place.

Given the huge variation that exists between different types of places, it is useful to establish some sort of typology for the purposes of effective description and analysis. Broadly speaking, one can identify the following principal categories of place:

- Single places: by which is meant a simple, identifiable, bounded community such as a neighbourhood or village. This type will be designated formulaically in this thesis as P1;
- Aggregated places: such as towns or cities, which are made up of a number of individually identifiable, but geographically contiguous, neighbourhood-type (or P1) communities. This type will be designated as P2; and
- Extended places: such as districts or regions which are made up of a number of separate, bounded P1- and P2-type communities, often of varying

size, spread across a wider bounded territory. This type will be designated formulaically as P3.

Generally speaking, the terms ‘place’ or ‘community of place’ are not applied to sovereign states or to wider groupings of states such as the European Union. But where such references do occur, they can normally be taken to indicate an ‘extended’, P3-type community of place.

Just how the affairs and relationships of the vast number of different communities of place that exist across the world come to be co-ordinated horizontally and vertically is determined by the processes of scalar structuration outlined above. And as Neil Smith (1995) and Neil Brenner (2001) point out, what such processes will usually result in, sociopolitically speaking, is some kind of ‘scalar fix’. Such fixes allow the affairs and relationships of geographic communities and collectivities of all types to proceed in an orderly and predictable fashion. Generally speaking, such a state of affairs requires some institutional mechanism, for example a government and/or a system of law and order, in order to help maintain it. However, much useful co-ordination can also often be achieved through individuals’ and communities’ own self-directed efforts. The concept that best captures this multi-directional co-ordination of public affairs, both within communities and across territorial space, is governance.

Governance can be conceived of either as a process whereby actors collaborate to achieve common objectives, or else as the collective process of rule through which order and goals emerge (Harris, 2011: 639). On this account, governance is about much more than just the actions and decisions of the formal institutions of government. It is about how governments and other interests in society – markets; civil society and the public sphere; communities of place and citizens – work together in order to achieve public purposes.

4c. The sovereign state and the limits of government

A useful way of distinguishing ‘governance’ from ‘government’ is to think of the former as something relatively fluid and processual, and the latter as something that is essentially institutionalized and fixed. Due to its institutional nature, government has to operate at fairly standard and predictable scales: national, regional, city and local. However, beyond the national and the local scales, institutional government tends to be somewhat patchy. Co-ordination of public

purposes at these extreme macro and micro levels tends to be much more reliant on the fluid and amorphous processes of governance. In this context, institutional government is perhaps best seen as the archetypal embodiment of Neil Brenner's idea of the 'scalar fix'. This in turn is most clearly exemplified in the form of the modern, liberal-democratic nation (or sovereign) state. According to Neil Smith (1995) nation states emerged in Europe in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries as the geographical means for coordinating economic competition between different territories and cities. Although deeply ingrained in our current thinking about politics and society, the nation state is in fact only one historically contingent way of organizing space, people and resources.

John Loughlin (2007: 387) argues that the rise of the first-world nation state is closely linked to other forms of modernity such as the emergence of industrial capitalism and the creation of national markets; the rise of the industrial class; and the establishment of representative democracy and of rational public administration. According to Loughlin, the first-world nation state reached its zenith in the post-1945 period with the creation of the welfare state. The welfare state's key features are that:

- it was based on the notion of equity between individuals and across the various constituent territories of the state
- there was broad acceptance of its aims from across all parts of the political mainstream
- there was widespread acceptance that the state could intervene in the economy in order to achieve welfare objectives.

Michael Keating (2008: 60) claims that throughout much of the twentieth century the dominant paradigm for the understanding of territory and politics was provided by theories of national integration and assimilation. During this period the state became the default unit of analysis so far as social and political change were concerned. Territorial resistance to the state was seen as something problematic, whereas sustaining national unity was regarded as self-evidently a good thing. For instance, Karl Deutsch (1972: 80) saw national states as being formed around centres which gradually extended their reach into peripheries, absorbing them economically, culturally and politically. Central states were to be seen as 'modern' institutions and as 'having history on their

side'. The ultimate goal was to create sovereign governments which had 'no critical or community cleavages'. In contrast to this, Keating highlights the importance of 'bringing territory back in' to debates about national politics and public policy.

Over the same period, there was also a significant increase in the degree of international co-operation between sovereign states, particularly following the Second World War, with the creation of organizations such as the United Nations Organization (UN) in 1945 and its various agencies (including the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund), the World Trade Organization, the Organization of American States, the Council of Europe and the European Common Market⁷. These and many similar organizations, governmental as well as non-governmental, that were formed over the same period, can be described as institutionalized forms of 'governance' rather than as 'government' in the strict sense. Typically, such international bodies may meet and agree measures together as sovereign states, but formally speaking at least, they have limited jurisdiction over their members. However, in recent years one international organization in particular – the European Union (EU) – has shown an increasing tendency to act as if it possessed some of the features of a sovereign government in its own right. This is evident in the powers which the EU wields through its now very highly developed legal, regulatory, banking and financial systems.

Loughlin (2007: 390–392) traces the 'multiple crises of the welfare state' during the latter part of the twentieth century. These pathologies became apparent in a number of ways, for example the severe limitations that had to be imposed on state spending during the 1970s; the two oil crises of 1973 and 1979; and the economic pressures felt by Western industrial capitalism and its ageing Fordist production methods. According to Loughlin, Western capitalism responded to the challenge by moving much of its heavy industrial production over to the Far East and by concentrating its efforts instead on developing service industries in the formerly industrialized parts of the USA and Western Europe.

The above developments have had a significant impact on the internal organization of nation states and on the international world order generally. Neil Brenner for example (1999: 41) argues that 'the state-centric form of capitalist

⁷ which has now evolved into the European Union of today

territorial organization that prevailed throughout most of the twentieth century' is now being eroded. What we are now seeing is the creation of new forms of territoriality at both the sub- and supra-national levels. Typically, these take the form either of megacities and city regions, or of transnational economic and political blocks such as the European Union or the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). Brenner even goes so far as to argue that urbanized regions are now fast replacing national economies as the basic building blocks of world capitalism. This is a view that has also been advanced strongly by other scholars, for example Jane Jacobs (1984) and also, much more recently, by Benjamin Barber (2013).

Another indication of the scalar pressure being experienced by sovereign states is the steady trend towards decentralization that is evident in many countries across the world. Gary Marks and his colleagues (Marks et al., 2008), reporting on their comprehensive, longitudinal study of 42 countries going back over nearly 60 years, find that in more than two-thirds of their sample (i.e. in 29 out of 42 states) the extent of regional authority and powers has increased over the duration of the study. In most of the remaining cases (11 out of 42 states), the 'index of regional authority' has stayed broadly the same. Most states with a population of more than 2.5 million have shifted significantly in the direction of regionalization over the period in question. The authors also note (Marks et al., 2008: 177) that in the century preceding the Second World War, the trend within the same group of states had overwhelmingly been towards centralization. More recently, Anjali Bohlken has argued that since 1950 a similar trend towards decentralization can also be observed in most parts of the developing world (Bohlken, 2016). In her analysis of 68 developing countries, Bohlken notes that only four have experienced no decentralization reforms at all during the past 60 years. By contrast, over the same period many of the nations she surveys, most notably China and The Philippines, have experienced several successive rounds of decentralization. Interestingly, Bohlken presents convincing evidence to show that such reforms have taken place not only in states with democratic regimes, but in those with autocratic governments as well.

For Benjamin Barber, sovereign states were once the perfect political recipe for liberty and for the independence of autonomous peoples and nations. Today, however, 'states are parochial and limited' in their outlook; and they are too

small either to regulate or to contain global centres of power (Barber, 2013: 77). Barber argues that states are defined by their nationality and their sovereignty, and this makes them incapable of co-operating across national borders. States are also built on the idea of a sovereign people. In former times this was an effective way of persuading disparate tribes, clans, cities, regions, counties and duchies – previously often at war with each other – to form a larger, more integrated society. In recent times, some larger states (e.g. USA, Canada, India, Brazil) have been built on the basis of multi-cultural, rather than mono-cultural identities. But despite this, states have always found it hard to surrender their vital interests except in times of military conflict. According to Barber, it is cities that seem to speak for the cosmopolitan interest, whereas nations speak for parochialism and for special interests.

4d. The global and the local

The developments outlined in the previous section are symptomatic of the increasing impact of globalization on sovereign states. According to Held and McGrew (2002: 7–8), globalization is principally about power and how it is organized and exercised. Globalization is also about how the territorial principle which lies behind our widely accepted notion of the state is being transformed. Dryzek and Dunleavy (2009: ch.14) argue that globalization is primarily a financial and economic phenomenon, but that it also impinges on many other aspects including culture, communications and mobility. However, one realm of activity that seems to have resisted the impact of globalization more effectively than most to date is politics itself, thus fuelling the perception that globalization has broken free from the control of national governments (Dryzek and Dunleavy, 2009: 313). Of course those states which are fully integrated into the global financial system do enjoy a considerable degree of security, but this is partly at the expense of their autonomy in the social and economic fields. In this context, states increasingly have to take into account the reaction of international markets to their economic policies and performance.

Many of the scholars who have written about globalization have commented on its impact on local communities. Massey and Jess (1995: 227) have argued provocatively that the global and the local are actually constitutive of each other. A similar idea is expressed by James Rosenau in his book *Distant Proximities* (2003). Rosenau's central argument is that human affairs are currently passing

through a period of ‘fragmegration’. The oxymoron is intended to capture the tension of ‘localizing, decentralizing or fragmenting dynamics that are interactively and causally linked to globalizing, centralizing, and integrating dynamics’ (Rosenau, 2003: 11). This in turn leads to the notion, encapsulated in the title of the book itself, of ‘distant proximities’, i.e. of events and decisions in one part of the world impacting directly on individuals and localities in distant continents many thousands of miles away. For Rosenau this is the feature which more than any other defines the nature of our ‘emergent epoch’.

Rosenau’s thesis is based on a theory of change that focuses on the link between the micro and macro dimensions of social and political life. This emphasizes the fundamental importance both of individual actors, as well as of groups and local collectivities. Each of these are important ‘variables’, but tracing their impact on the macro dimension of human affairs and vice versa is a difficult task to attempt, not only from a theoretical point of view, but also in practical terms (Rosenau, 2003: 26). Rosenau argues for the merits of complexity theory as a way of understanding the huge transformations that are currently taking place in our world. For him complexity theory ‘lies somewhere between order and disorder, predictability and surprise’ and it is compelling for that very reason. It is also useful for analysing questions of stability and change, and the extent to which change is seen as acceptable at the micro level of local communities (Rosenau, 2003: 219–230).

For Ann Cvetkovic and Douglas Kellner the globalizing effects of trade and capitalism had already long ago been recognized by thinkers such as Adam Smith and Karl Marx. Cvetkovic and Kellner also make the point that culture has become a major area of conflict and an important dimension of the struggle between the local and the global (Cvetkovic and Kellner, 1997: 9). There has also been a significant eruption of sub-cultures of resistance that have attempted to preserve specific forms of life and social relations in the face of globalization and the homogenization that is perceived to be part of it. Nevertheless ‘although global forces can be oppressive and can erode cultural traditions and identities, they can also provide new material to rework one’s identity and can empower people to revolt against traditional forms and styles to create new, more emancipatory ones’. With regard to politics and democracy, Cvetkovic and Kellner argue that changed ways of thinking are needed to

respond to the new configurations of the global and the local (Cvetkovic and Kellner, 1997: 13). In order to capture the relationship between the two, the authors advance the concept of ‘articulation’. However, while this concept appears promising at an intuitive level, it is not fully analysed or developed within the book itself. It does, however, carry a distinct relevance for the argument being developed in this thesis and it will be picked up again in a later later chapter.

Heather Voisey and Tim O’Riordan (2001: 3) draw an important distinction between the terms ‘globalization/localization’ on the one hand and ‘globalism/localism’ on the other. While the first pair of concepts refers to the processes of change currently taking place across the world, the second expresses contrasting ‘perspectives’ or ‘orientations’ in relation to these change processes. And the two sets of terms need not necessarily be contradictory either. Localism can be insular, reactionary and exclusive, but it also can be open to the wider world. O’Riordan argues that the expanding world of globalization can be knitted together through local identities, so long as it is accepted that the ultimate goal is to achieve connectedness and security rather than simply to create wealth or power (O’Riordan, 2001: 240). With this in mind Voisey and O’Riordan highlight sustainability as a fundamental ‘organizing idea’ which can potentially affect a very wide range of policy areas including business and commerce, national accounting practice and taxation, civic empowerment and democracy and constitutional reform. This line of thinking will be explored further as Part II of the thesis unfolds.

Finally, in seeking to understand and theorize the relationship between the global and the local, one needs to be wary of valorizing either one of these two concepts at the expense of the other. Each of them can be the starting point for analysis depending on what one is setting out to show. This means that in theoretical terms no geographical scale need necessarily be given priority over any other (Swyngedouw, 1997: 144). As far as political governance is concerned, the theoretical perspective that corresponds most closely to this way of looking at social and political systems, and which captures its essence most closely, is that of multi-level governance (MLG). One of the main advantages which MLG has over rival theories is that it is well suited to analysing the

articulation of whole systems of governance as opposed to single institutions and regimes, and it can be applied at whichever level the analyst may choose.

4e. Multi-level governance and polycentrism

Simona Piattoni (2009) suggests that MLG is a powerful way of conceptualizing some of the contemporary challenges to our view of the sovereign state. Not only are states under pressure to cede powers to supranational jurisdictions, in particular for example to the European Union (EU), but also internally through the blurring of the public and private realms and the increasing assertiveness of their regional governments and their constituent territories (Keating, 2008). A number of key criteria may be invoked in order to assess whether a particular policy initiative or reform may be construed as a genuine instance of MLG. According to Piattoni (2010), an MLG initiative or reform needs as a minimum to involve more than two geographical levels of government. Secondly, such a phenomenon needs to show evidence of non-governmental actors being involved across different levels in the making of policy. Finally, it is necessary to be able to see these actors working together in non-hierarchical networks in order to pursue the policy initiative or reform in question.

Piattoni's outline of the key analytical dimensions of MLG suggests that governing across different geographical levels has become an increasingly complex process. The main steps through which this state of affairs has evolved over the past hundred years are set out by Robert Agranoff (2011) as follows:

- Firstly, there was the 'law and politics' phase. This coincided with the creation of central state institutions, with the centre being mainly concerned with 'high politics' and the localities with 'low politics' (Bulpitt, 1983)
- Secondly, there was the 'welfare state interdependency' phase. In this period, the state used local governments to help it implement the expansion of social welfare programmes and entitlements
- Thirdly, there was the 'government/NGO partnership' phase. This was characterized by an increasing use of New Public Management approaches such as contracting-out mechanisms in the public sector, resulting in a gradual hollowing out of the state
- Currently there is the networked governance phase. This is characterized by 'multiple organizational involvements across levels and sectors' and it is also

happening at a time when global and local concerns are coming more strongly to the fore (Agranoff, 2011: 73).

The networked approach to governing that characterizes MLG is indicative of a major transformational change taking place within institutional government itself. Many institutional settings are themselves taking on the characteristics of 'governance' as described in section 3b above). This phenomenon is analysed by Gary Marks and Liesbet Hooghe (2004) using the terms 'Type I' and 'Type II' governance. Type I governance denotes general-purpose, institutional government for a defined territory at a particular scalar level, operating within a relatively permanent framework of laws and procedures. As for Type II, this denotes a more fluid type of governing in which official interventions are designed to address the requirements of a specific policy area or set of issues. Type II arrangements will often involve either single-purpose administrations or governmental and non-governmental actors working in partnership and across scalar levels. Many scholars accept that these two broad dimensions of governance frequently exist alongside each other within government in a kind of 'negotiated order' (Piattoni, 2009).

Chris Skelcher argues that the 'Type II' or (to use his own term) 'polycentric' style of governance is generally embedded within a basic Type I governance framework upon which modern nation states and sub-national governments are essentially constructed. According to Skelcher, polycentric governance generally flourishes in situations where mainstream government is unable to respond flexibly enough to deal with major, cross-cutting policy issues (Skelcher, 2005: 94). A common pattern is for Type I bodies within a polity to retain responsibility for traditional functions of government, and for specially created Type II bodies to manage and deliver new policy initiatives. Type I and Type II bodies increasingly tend to co-exist alongside each other, but not necessarily in a uniform pattern. However, what is clear for Skelcher is that the increasing move towards network governance is gradually eroding both the integrity and legitimacy of sovereign polities.

Ian Bache and Matthew Flinders agree that the new institutional approaches identified above are also gradually changing the nature of democratic accountability. State power remains important, but the way it is being exercised is becoming increasingly complex. While this new governance may add to the

effectiveness of public policy-making through increased flexibility and responsiveness, it may also end up reducing legitimacy in the form of public accountability – unless, that is, new means can be found to connect citizens more effectively to the shifting locations of power (Bache and Flinders, 2004b: 204–205).

Some of these ideas are echoed by Janet Newman in her book *Remaking Governance*, particularly in terms of their impact on citizens and publics. Newman draws on Michel Foucault's notion of governmentality to trace the creation of new forms of 'governable subject' (Newman, 2005: 12). She argues that through the media and other cultural institutions, the traditional view of politics becomes transformed from one that is based on hierarchical relations between states and peoples into a more horizontal notion of governance as a series of interconnected policy spheres. The effect of this is 'to put people in their place', with locality being used as a key strategy for achieving this. Deliberation is thus seen as restricted mainly to local contexts and to particular agendas. This is very much the terrain on which officials interact with the general public. However 'power imbalances mean that public officials' claims to truth more often than not prevail over the experiences and knowledge that the collaborating publics bring to these interactions' (p.133). Newman concludes that public consultation is focused predominantly at the margins of how services are delivered, and is much less concerned with the consequences of withdrawing those services completely, or of transferring their ownership outside of the public sector.

Running alongside this trend towards administrative and political decentralization, there are also instances of a counter-trend towards the centralization of certain key powers at the level of the state, particularly for example in the areas of fiscal and economic policy. Some scholars have seen this trend as indicating the existence of a neo-liberal 'project' aimed at ensuring that the economy always operates 'at one level above that of the polity', thus enabling big corporations to avoid the most stringent effects of regulation and of social and employment legislation (Harmes, 2006). Brenner (1999: 65) notes that many nation states have actively facilitated 'the neoliberal project of deregulation and liberalization'. This has had the effect of upsetting the delicate balance between liberalism and democracy, upon which the notion of the

modern state has been so successfully constructed. Whatever the truth of these arguments, they do suggest that asymmetric state power is alive and well, and that many decentralized governance networks continue to operate in ‘the shadow of hierarchy’ (Jessop, 2004; Marsh, 2011).

4f. ‘Old localism’: established local governance

The shifting contexts of state power form the background for this study’s interest in the micro levels of place and governance. Certainly, the supremacy of the liberal-democratic state over the past two hundred years raises fundamental questions about the role of sub-national and local governance systems. With this in mind, what does it mean to govern locally within the context of state power? And what are the characteristic opportunities and constraints of governance at the local level?

Within the British context, Wilson and Game (2011: 391–394) draw a key distinction between ‘old’ and ‘new’ localism. For them, old localism is about elected councils and councillors and their democratic accountability. It is also about the balance of powers between central and local government. However, new localism is less concerned with the institutions of ‘government’, and much more with the ‘governance’ challenges posed by ‘wicked’ issues such as climate change, food security, sustainable economic development and public health.

According to Anwar and Sana Shah, governance at the local or micro level quite clearly predates the emergence of nation states. In the ancient period, tribes and clans established local systems of governance in many parts of the world. Such systems included locally based codes of conduct and ways of raising revenue from and delivering services to the various members of the tribe or clan (Shah and Shah, 2006: 26). India, for example, has one of the oldest and most extensive traditions of local self-governance of almost any region in the world⁸. Another part of the world in which there is a long-established tradition of local governance is Western Europe, and most especially within Switzerland and Britain. In Switzerland, it is worth noting that local government’s supremacy in political affairs still continues largely unchallenged to this day. There, local governments enjoy considerable autonomy in fiscal matters, as well as in other

⁸ This is one of the reasons why India is deemed an exemplar worthy of detailed analysis in this study (see Chapters 7 and 8 in Part III below)

high-profile policy areas such as immigration, citizenship, language and international economic relations (Shah and Shah, 2006: 28).

Shah and Shah also note that in most parts of the world local government has continued to develop alongside the modern state. New local government structures are still being established in many developing states across the world, including in some states with highly autocratic regimes (Bohlken, 2016). In recent times, the development of local governance has been actively promoted by international bodies such as the World Bank and the United Nations. The World Bank's Local Governance and Services Improvement Programme, for instance, is currently supporting initiatives to establish local governance in newly emerging states such as South Sudan and the West Bank and Gaza (World Bank, 2016). The widespread development of local governance systems across the world has given rise to a whole new raft of issues concerning the conduct of intergovernmental relations within sovereign states. These issues have become a major analytical theme for public administration and for political studies generally (Ongaro et al., 2011).

Within established nation states, the debate on central-local relationships goes right the way back to the earliest stages of 'old localism'. Essentially, they revolve around the themes of top-down, bottom-up and mutualistic government which were highlighted towards the end of the previous chapter (see especially section 3e). In the UK context, James Chandler (2008) notes that since the time of Jeremy Bentham, the most prevalent justification for local governance advanced within British political theory is that it exists to serve purposes beyond itself. Bentham himself (1973) argued in quasi-legal terms that since the institution serving the happiness of the greatest number is the national parliament, so by right all other bodies in a polity ought to be subordinate to it. On the other hand John Stuart Mill (1975) makes the more pragmatic argument that the institutions of local government provide a necessary element of stability for the national system of parliamentary democracy. Not only this, but local government should also be seen as a useful breeding ground for future national leaders. Chandler describes all of the above arguments as 'expediential' justifications for local governance. They arise from a utilitarian view of governance and are closely bound up with the liberal tradition.

In contrast with this, Chandler draws attention to an alternative, 'ethical' view of local governance. This was defended passionately by Joshua Toulmin Smith, a nineteenth century contemporary of Mill. The ethical view holds that the individual's freedom from arbitrary state control is best secured through the existence of a strong, independent system of local community governance. However over the course of the nineteenth century, mainly as a result of Mill's influence, it was the expedient justification for local governance that was eventually accepted in Britain. This can be traced back to the prevailing orthodoxy at the time – widely supported on the Left of the political spectrum as well as on the Right – that the central state was the only effective guarantor of liberty and social assistance to those who lacked the resources to support themselves.

In a later article, Chandler (2010: 7) underlines the point that the belief that local governance should be subordinate to central government is largely a twentieth century point of view. Against this, an ethical argument could be advanced which justifies territorial government as the agency whose purpose it is to reconcile the interests of those living in a particular area, in a way that does not impinge on the interests of those based outside it. However, in contemporary political systems there are clearly constraints on the extent to which any local jurisdiction can or should be totally autonomous in terms of policy, taxation and democratic principle. This is particularly the case where national or regional governments are pursuing policies of resource redistribution across different parts of a wider territory; or in situations where local jurisdictions may be abusing their powers, and where some form of external intervention in the name of fundamental democratic principle is required.

In more recent times the idea of autonomy at the level of local governance has been closely examined by Lawrence Pratchett (2004). Pratchett looks at the idea of local autonomy from three distinct angles. His Freedom from perspective sees autonomy as freedom from interference by a higher authority. Two themes which are often linked with this perspective are the constitutional/legal position of sub-national government vis-à-vis its national counterpart; and the centralizing tendencies that national governments inevitably fall prey to. An alternative way of looking at local autonomy is to examine it through the Freedom to lens. This perspective places a much more positive emphasis on

what local governments are able to achieve within the freedoms and discretions which they do possess, including the extent to which they are able to influence the policies of central government. A third perspective (the Reflection of Local Identity approach) sees local autonomy mainly as a bottom-up phenomenon through which localities can develop a sense of place and of political and social solidarity within their own resident population. Seen from this viewpoint, local autonomy is not just about the extent of powers held by an elected local government, but also about the wider social relations within a particular geographic community. It is about empowering communities to define their own sense of place through their political and democratic institutions. This third aspect of local autonomy is of particular relevance for contemporary debates within Europe and the UK. These will be addressed in more detail in the Global North case study of localism in the EU/UK/England/ Cornwall in Chapter 9.

The Reflection of Local Identity approach, highlighted by Pratchett, also brings the argument in this section much closer to Wilson and Game's characterization of the 'new' localism (see start of this section). According to these two scholars, the unit of territorial governance that is most closely identified with the new localism is the neighbourhood. Over the past few years, this archetypally 'micro' form of governance has been a distinctive feature in academic and political debates about localism in the UK. For this reason it is explored briefly in the next section.

4g. Neighbourhood governance

Of all the varying levels at which governance operates, the neighbourhood (or P1) level is the one which is perhaps most frequently associated with the notion of place. The 'single', neighbourhood-level community can be regarded as the fundamental building block of place and governance. It is also the locus where many of the real-world effects of public policies reveal themselves in practice. A key question arising from this is: how can the position of neighbourhoods best be conceptualized within the more extensive political regimes of which they form part, and within the world's polycentric order more generally? What role do neighbourhoods play in contributing to social organization, human wellbeing, and democratic participation?

With regard to social organization and human wellbeing, Kearns and Parkinson (2001: 2104) see the ‘micro-level’ of social organization as comprising three sub-scales, each with its own distinctive purpose and function:

- ‘Home area’ (typically 5–10 minutes’ walk from one’s home) offers individuals psychosocial benefits such as identity and belonging
- ‘Locality’ helps to define people’s social status and position
- ‘Urban district/region’ defines the boundaries of most people’s social and economic opportunities.

In terms of the typology set out in section 4b above, the first two of these sub-scales correspond to the P1-type of ‘single-place’ community. As for the urban district/region sub-scale, this corresponds to the P2- and P3-types of ‘aggregated’ and ‘extended’ community that were also identified as part of the typology of place set out earlier in this chapter.

As for political participation, a number of scholars have examined the democratic case for small-scale governance. Traditionally, governance at the neighbourhood level tends to be associated with participation and responsiveness, whereas larger-scale governance is linked with efficiency and equity (Dahl and Tufte, 1973). However, with the turn to the ‘new governance’, Lowndes and Sullivan argue that it may be time to re-evaluate the thinking behind this widely accepted trade-off. According to Lowndes and Sullivan (2008: 57–59), there are four mutually reinforcing rationales to support neighbourhood governance. These can be set out as follows:

- the civic rationale – based on the proposition that neighbourhoods provide more opportunity for citizens to participate effectively in decisions
- the social rationale – based on two propositions: firstly that the neighbourhood is the most appropriate arena for a citizen-focused approach to governance, and secondly that neighbourhood governance offers the best prospect for ‘joining up’ local action to provide a more integrated approach to citizen wellbeing
- the political rationale – based on three main propositions: a) that citizens can access neighbourhood governance more easily and are more knowledgeable about the issues at stake; b) that leaders at the neighbourhood level are more likely to be responsive to citizens’ views and

have more experience of the matters at hand; and c) that citizens are in a better position to hold political leaders to account at this level

- the economic rationale – based on the overall proposition that neighbourhood governance can make more efficient and effective use of resources.

A key contribution to the growing academic interest in the role of P1-type communities has come from Green political thought. According to Andrew Dobson (1990: 101), Green thinking tends to favour small, locally based communities. In many respects it sees them as similar to the traditional city-states of Western Europe, but built on ‘a much higher and more sophisticated technological base’. Such communities should not only be resilient and self-reliant, but crucially they also need to remain connected with other communities. The ideal-type for such a community is now being actively promoted by the Transition Network, a global social movement founded in Totnes, Devon in 2005 with the overall aim of promoting sustainable development within localities. The Transition approach is based on a coherent, broadly based philosophy of community. Its main elements are: citizen initiative and working together within localities; face-to-face interaction and respectful communication between citizens; emphasis on practical skills; maximizing local production of food, goods and services; working with local businesses and representative organizations; sustaining learning and cultural networks within the local area and beyond. However, the core idea driving Transition is the need to adapt to climate change and to respond effectively both to peak oil and to excessive levels of resource use (Hopkins, 2011). More will be said about the Transition Network and its distinctive approach a little later in this chapter.

According to Lowndes and Sullivan (2008: 56), the majority of scholars now accept Doreen Massey’s view (see Section 4a above) that neighbourhoods are socially constructed. Depending on their economic and social characteristics, neighbourhoods may elicit positive or negative valuations from those living within and beyond their boundaries. Lowndes and Sullivan argue that in the context of the ‘new governance’, local and neighbourhood-level institutions have gained significant room for manoeuvre. They are increasingly finding the ability to act as agents in their own right (Cox and Mair, 1991), either in ‘invited spaces’ offered by governments from the top down, or in ‘popular spaces’,

where individual citizens and local organizations come together on their own initiative.

4h. Governing locally in a polycentric world: towards a ‘new’ localism?

It is interesting to trace the emergence of the term ‘localism’ since the turn of the twenty-first century, particularly within the UK where it has become prominent both as a political idea and as a policy approach. According to Wilson and Game (2011: 391), the origins of the term lie in the USA. For example, Morris and Hess (1975) link the idea of localism firmly to neighbourhood governance, whereas Goetz and Clarke (1993) address it much more in the context of globalism. One of the first occasions on which the term ‘localism’ was used in the UK was in a paper entitled *Towards a New Localism: A Discussion Paper* published by the New Local Government Network (NGLN) think tank (Filkin et al., 2000). In a subsequent NGLN publication, Corry and Stoker (2002) define localism as: ‘a strategy for devolving power and resources away from central control and towards front-line managers, local democratic structures and local consumers and communities’, but also ‘within an agreed framework of national minimum standards and policy priorities’. This very much reflects a top-down view of what localism is about.

What has lent critical weight to the case for an enhanced local dimension in politics and governance is the growth of instant electronic communications and their now almost universal use in government, commerce, and civil society. For many individuals, electronic interactions now loom larger in their lives than embodied ones, and many more of the interactions that citizens have with the state are becoming virtual in nature. This can have many benefits, including the possibility of governments reaching out to those living in remote locations or who have limited mobility. Electronic communication also enables people on the move, whether citizens or public sector workers, to remain in almost instant touch with the rest of their affairs. On a broader level, such communication leads to changes in the geographical reach and accountability of government institutions and it enables easier collaborative relations to be established with other relevant organizations (Pollitt, 2012). As for technological change and its relation to place and space, one of its main impacts has been to shrink time and space and to make the constraints which they impose much less relevant (see also reference to Giddens (1984) in section 4a above).

John Benington (2011b) argues that we are living through a period of radical change which is truly 'Copernican' in its impact, and for which a new paradigm of government is urgently needed. This will need to treat government as part of a 'complex adaptive system' in which each part interacts closely with all the others. This in turn raises questions of decentralization and whether government/governance at the local level should continue to be seen as the same thing as national government, but simply on a smaller scale. Benington argues that we are moving into an era in which public services are increasingly being 'co-created' with citizens and for which new approaches to public leadership are required.

In a similar vein, Alan Finlayson and James Martin argue that the real challenge is to break fundamentally with the idea that sovereignty should reside in any one place or be the monopoly of any specific locality or identity (Finlayson and Martin, 2006: 30). As for local governance, it is just one nodal point in a complex network of interrelating elements, each moving at different speeds. Local communities are constantly shifting and interacting with other locales of varying scales. They are never purely 'local' in character and a single template for local government structure is no longer compatible with the nature of contemporary life. This is indicative of a broader distinction that is now emerging between the 'formal persona' of incorporated organizations and the 'assemblages' that are increasingly being constituted through networks, platforms and 'territorial insertions' (Sassen, 2006: 377).

That said, Finlayson and Martin argue that locally focused organizations are still necessary to act as 'nodes' around which specific alliances can be formed and also to address emergent problems and opportunities. This is the challenge for local 'place shaping' in an age of globalization. Places are now constantly shifting and new conceptions of collective action and public responsibility are needed to deal with this new reality.

4i. Trans-localism and the upward-shaping potential of the local

Looking at current developments from a power perspective, Saskia Sassen argues that digital technology has brought about a significant transformation in the position of local communities vis-à-vis elites and established power geometries. Digital technology allows localities the possibility of forming global networks that can bypass central authority (Sassen, 2006: 366). This in effect

makes two main types of ‘multi-scalar interaction’ possible: either local to local, or local to global. Local neighbourhoods need no longer be defined by their territorial boundedness or by closure. Digital technologies allow local knowledge to reach a potentially global audience. This in turn enables knowledge of specific local conditions to influence wider policy debates. Such knowledge no longer has to move through ‘a set of nested scales from the local to the national to the international’, but can directly reach other local actors whether located within the same country or across international borders (Sassen, 2006: 371). With regard to the impact of digital technologies generally, Sassen notes that their most significant feature is their ability to bring about both ‘expanded decentralization’ and ‘simultaneous integration’. To the extent that they allow new types of cross-border interactions between large numbers of non-state actors to develop, they enable the emergence of a global civil society (Sassen, 2006: 376).

Returning to the example of the Transition network (mentioned in section 4g above), a critical point to emphasize about it is its success in creating both a ‘brand’ and a ‘trans-local’ network of similar, citizen-led initiatives in many places across the world. At the time of writing, the Transition website lists some 1260 registered initiatives in over 20 countries and the number of initiatives continues to grow steadily (Transition Network, 2016). One of the most interesting things about the localities listed on the Transition website is that they comprise communities of all types and scales, many of them ‘aggregated’ and ‘extended’ communities of the P2 and P3 types. In fact, these two types probably form the vast majority of the places listed on the Transition website, although there also appear to be a number of ‘single’, P1-type communities as well. All in all, Transition is a prime example of a social movement where the systematic cultivation of horizontal links with other similar communities across the globe, using the power of electronic communications, is seen as a more effective way of gaining influence and producing successful outcomes, than attempting to work ‘vertically’ through hierarchical and ‘unsympathetic’ state systems.

The Transition case is just one example of how individual communities and local territorial governments can form effective federations across territorial space. While this type of trans-local organizing is long-established in the field of

politics, there is a case for arguing that its significance and impact have advanced considerably in recent years. A federation is an arrangement whereby different organizational entities agree to work together to pursue common aims, or to achieve specific objectives in common.

Formal federations of territorial communities or governments may be of several different types and intensities. They may be concentrated within a particular territory, for example associations of town and parish councils within a self-contained geographical area; or they may bring together disparate communities united by a common interest across a wider national or sub-continental space. A good example of the latter are the transnational groupings of local areas and institutions brought together by EU funding programmes such as Grundtvig and Leonardo. For many years these programmes have involved private and voluntary-sector partners as well. In addition there are now increasingly powerful federations of municipal governments in existence. Examples include the EU Covenant of Mayors, which at the time of writing comprised some 7100 local authority signatories (including P1-, P2- and P3-type communities) across the whole of Europe (EU Covenant of Mayors, 2016), and the C40 group of the world's 86 largest and most powerful cities. Both of these latter groupings are similar to the Transition movement in the sense that their main rationale is the need for urgent action across communities to address climate change and to promote sustainable energy production.

The advantages of greater localist influence in world politics are set out strikingly by Benjamin Barber in his recent book entitled *If Mayors Ruled the World* (Barber, 2013). In the book, Barber argues that cities (or large, P2-level communities, to use the typology developed earlier in the chapter) are much more suited to governing collectively in today's interdependent world than 'dysfunctional' nation states. In recent years states have become increasingly bogged down by the very fact of their sovereignty. This makes it hard for many leading states to co-operate with each other and to accept any limits being placed on their scope for independent action. On the other hand, modern cities, according to Barber, are much more multi-cultural, cosmopolitan and networked than most sovereign states. Thus, when they meet together in networks such as the C40 cities, the Climate Alliance, or Mayors against Illegal Guns, city mayors are able to work much more effectively with each other because issues of

sovereignty and independence do not form an automatic wedge between them (Barber, 2013: 165). Barber argues that it is but a short step from their meeting in these existing forums, to city leaders coming together to establish a fully-fledged global parliament of mayors.

What Barber's argument illustrates is the increasing power and influence that local communities and polities can potentially wield in contemporary politics; firstly by being able to network much more effectively with each other than ever before on a trans-local basis; and secondly, by having the political space to form influential trans-local alliances around issues of common concern. What this amounts to is the effective emancipation of local communities from the centuries-old constraints of scale and parochialism. It also signals a potential step-change in their capacity both to participate in, and influence, national and global political agendas.

4j. Taking stock: localism, place and multi-level governance

Summarizing the main points presented above, what this chapter has sought to do is build a theoretical account of 'the local' as a key dimension within social and political organization; and also of localism as an increasingly important political dynamic in its own right.

It has been argued here that perceptions of the local are very much framed by the core dimensions of place, space and scale. The local aspect of social and political organization has become much more salient in recent times as a result of growing awareness of the impacts of globalization (Cvetkovic and Kellner, 1997; Rosenau, 2003), and also of the challenges posed by the need for environmental and resource sustainability (Dobson, 1990; O'Riordan, 2001).

Localism has also been presented as a perspective which places a positive value on the local dimension of social and political organization (Voisey and O'Riordan, 2001). However, it has also been noted that 'the local' is never able to stand entirely on its own. It must always be analysed within the broader context of polycentricity, power geographies and multi-level governance (Piattoni, 2010).

It has been argued that processes of 'localization' are analytically linked to other established trends in global governance such as the decentralization of state functions (Marks et al., 2008); the hollowing out of the welfare state (Loughlin,

2007); and the rescaling of global capitalism (Brenner, 1999). These processes go hand in hand with the increasing assertiveness of local territorial claims that are now emerging in many sovereign states (Keating, 2008; Bohlken, 2016). At the same time, however, it has been argued that in some cases state power has metamorphosed into a more strategic, top-down form of meta-governance (Jessop, 2004; Newman, 2005).

It has been suggested that neighbourhood and local governance can be justified in either 'top-down' or 'bottom-up' terms. Governance at the local level can either be seen as the unique creation of sovereign states and thus upwardly accountable to them (Deutsch, 1972; Bentham, 1973); or it can be seen as the principal means by which community identity is created, thus providing the building blocks for a more broadly based democratic mandate (Pratchett, 2004; Chandler, 2010).

Finally, it has been shown that bottom-up governance based on localities is establishing a distinctive foothold within world affairs through the activities of social movements and federations (Transition Network, 2016; EU Covenant of Mayors, 2016). This chimes in with other major transformations which are taking place within the realm of politics and in society more generally (Giddens, 1984; Sassen, 2006; Benington, 2011b).

Within this overall context, localism can now be defined more specifically as 'a perspective which champions the micro and the sub-national dimensions of social organization and politics'. It should also be seen as a critical factor to be taken account of when governmental and political systems are being designed. However, the main problem to be faced when addressing the task of institutional design is how to make sense of the increasing complexity of the polycentric world order which defines the social and political environment in which present-day actors have to operate. How can the designers of political institutions and political systems effectively articulate the local dimension together with the global (Cvetkovic and Kellner, 1997), whilst at the same time not neglecting many other key principles of institutional design?

One promising way of approaching this task is to examine how, in theoretical and policy terms, a commitment to localism might be aligned more systematically with the notion of public value. Seen from this perspective, a key normative justification for localism would be its ability to act as a kind of

‘intermediate support’ to individuals, groups and neighbourhoods, thus enabling them to survive, prosper and flourish more effectively within the context of multi-level governance and globalization. Such intermediate support could potentially take a number of specific forms: democratic, economic, associational or cultural, and quite possibly all of these at the same time. For example, from a democratic point of view, localities could be accorded certain constitutional rights to participate directly in regional, national, continental and global governance. Or from an economic and associational perspective, incentives could be given to locally based organizations to become more active in economic policy and in delivering public services and welfare entitlements, as has been argued very cogently by Paul Hirst (1994). Or finally, localities could receive even more active official encouragement to create distinctive cultural identities for themselves, as Sassen (2006) and others have suggested is increasingly feasible for them through the medium of digital technology.

However, before considering these design and policy ideas in more detail, it is necessary to take this study’s theoretical exploration of localism one important step further. Thus in Chapter 5 localism will be examined from the point of view of public value. This will open the way to considering how localism might be incorporated more systematically into the design of institutions and political systems in future.

Chapter 5: Localism and Public Value

In Chapter 4 localism was addressed mainly from an analytical standpoint. The aim was to identify the social, political and technological trends that are driving the turn to localism within contemporary politics. By contrast, the theoretical account presented in this chapter will have a much stronger normative base. Here the aim is to explore a number of key ways in which localism can be aligned with notions of good and effective governance. The account set out below seeks to establish localism as a key element in the design of political institutions and systems.

The overarching concept that is used here for framing what good and effective governance entails is public value (PV). However, it is important to note that the argument in this chapter assumes a far broader conception of PV than is generally current in the academic literature (see for example Benington and Moore, 2011a). Here PV will be extended to embrace notions of environmental sustainability, wellbeing, and democratic participation and accountability. Throughout the chapter the focus will be on how public value can be generated, not just within localities, regions and sovereign states, but also across multi-level political systems. With this specific point in mind, the chapter concludes with a brief consideration of two specific ‘whole-system’ public-value domains: territorial cohesion and intergovernmental mutuality.

5a. On public value

Francis Fukuyama argues that throughout human history, values (principally in the form of respect for the rule of law) constitute one of three essential underpinning elements in the establishment of political order (Fukuyama, 2011: 3–25). The other two elements identified by Fukuyama are strong and stable rule, and accountable government. Fukuyama argues that where values have featured most prominently in the civilizations of the past, they have typically been nurtured by religious institutions, for example by the Brahminic caste on the Indian sub-continent, or by the Christian Church in Western Europe. In both cases, these value-based institutions succeeded in carving out and maintaining a distinctive role for themselves in relation to the ruling elite (Fukuyama, 2011: 287). In Western Europe’s case, this led to the establishment of an

institutionalized religious authority which gradually accustomed rulers to accept the idea that they themselves were not the ultimate source of law.

Colin Crouch argues that for many centuries the church's 'value power' in Europe rested upon the fact that it was able to make the critical connection between personal morality on the one hand, and the wider law governing social, economic and political relations on the other. In other words, the church was able to effect a synthesis between the 'private' and the 'public' dimensions of value. Gradually, however, the state began to promote aspects of the public realm in a more systematic manner itself, and in time it came to be recognized by philosophers such as Hegel as the most significant player in this respect. Indeed, the modern welfare state could with some justification be seen as the embodiment of that recognition (see also section 4c above). According to Crouch, a useful way of looking at modern states is to assess the balance that exists within them between political power, private power and value power (Crouch, 2011: 70–73). Usually, the stronger the position of civil society (as demonstrated by its ability to mobilize political, private, professional and charity power), the stronger the influence of value power within a state will be.

As for the concept of public value itself, there was some brief introductory discussion of the term in Chapter 3 (see section 3b above). There it was noted that while PV has very positive connotations in the normative sense, it can also be highly flexible in its application. Its meaning can be considered as almost identical with those of more conventional terms such as 'public good' and 'common good'. But in this thesis it will be used in preference to both of those variants. In British English, the term 'public good' is probably best used in a singular or quantitative sense, as for example in the phrase 'x is generally considered to be a public good'. As for the term 'common good', it is felt to have too much of a campaigning tone and is therefore not considered appropriate for an academic study. In addition there is the term 'public interest', which also comes close in meaning to public value. However, public interest is a term which is probably best reserved for legal or forensic contexts. As for 'public value' itself, what is most useful about it for the purposes of this thesis is the way in which it indicates an outcome or a state of affairs resulting from political and policy action. Thus, a sustained focus by governments on the achievement of public 'goods', should in principle lead to the creation of public 'value'.

As mentioned in the introduction to the chapter, this thesis adopts a very broad interpretation of the term ‘public value’. It seeks to extend the scope of the term to cover all aspects of good and effective governance. It sees PV in all its potential variety as the ultimate goal of governmental strategy and action (Mulgan, 2009: 4). With this in mind, the present chapter briefly addresses three major aspects of PV that are critical for the development of contemporary societies and of political systems across the world. These three aspects cover domains which, though substantially different from one another, are also deeply connected. The first of them, environmental sustainability, is essentially about place and about the physical, economic and social systems which constitute it. The second domain, wellbeing, is about individuals and their health, development and flourishing. The third, democracy, is about society and about political participation and accountability. The aim is to show how localism typically aligns itself with each of these dimensions of PV, and what its potential impact on them in the longer term might be, were it to become more firmly established as a political doctrine.

5b. Environmental sustainability and localism

According to Robert Cox and Daniel Béland (2013: 307), sustainability has become a dominant theme in international policy discourse. Originally used in the field of environmental policy, the term ‘sustainability’ is now routinely deployed in other fields such as finance, markets, employment, energy, and institutional and process design. The notion of sustainability suggests a growing concern for the long-term implications of actions and decisions. It also implies an increasing dissatisfaction with current policy approaches. As an idea, sustainability represents an ‘emerging policy paradigm’; one that looks set to guide an increasing range of policy decisions in the future.

As stated in section 3b above, for reasons of space and academic focus, this thesis addresses sustainability specifically its core environmental sense. Seen in this way, sustainability speaks to a raft of concerns about the management of the world’s ecological systems, including:

- the rate of exploitation of the earth’s finite natural resources, particularly oil and some minerals

- the pollution and degradation of the earth's key ecosystems, including the atmosphere; oceans and waterways; and open spaces such as forests and farmland
- the effect of certain kinds of human activity on the world's climate, biodiversity and ecological balance, for example the impact of rising sea levels, and of changing and more intense weather patterns.

These pathologies have provoked a mounting critique of government policies across the world, and in some cases this critique shows signs of turning into a mass movement (Edwards, 2005: 5). The concerns expressed by the environmental movement and its many sympathizers not only focus attention on our collective treatment of place, but are also essentially global in their perspective. They draw attention to the widespread ecological damage that is being caused by certain concentrated forms of economic and industrial activity. This is being exacerbated by the perceived failure of states to take effective action to deal with it. One of the main impacts of the environmental critique of the state is that it exposes the arbitrariness of many state and official boundaries. Administrative constructs such as these are simply not capable of containing the many ecological threats that humanity now faces (Dryzek and Dunleavy, 2009).

Responses to climate change

Amongst the various environmental sustainability challenges outlined above, the one that is generally considered the most urgent by governments is the world's changing climate. According to John Dryzek and his fellow authors (Dryzek et al., 2011: 3) 'climate change is perhaps the most profound challenge ever to have confronted human, social, political and economic systems'. The most authoritative body monitoring climate change is the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). The IPCC was established in 1988 and is now the main advisor to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. In the fifth and latest of its periodic assessments, published as four separate reports in 2013–14, the IPCC confirms that global warming and the climate and environmental changes resulting from it are proceeding apace across the planet.

In the third report of the recent series, the IPCC reviews the policy measures that have been taken by state governments to date to combat climate change,

as well as those which will need to be taken during the remainder of the twenty-first century if the impacts of climate change are to be successfully mitigated (IPCC, 2014). Regarding current efforts to address climate change, the IPCC notes that in 2012 some 67% of global Greenhouse Gas (GhG) emissions were subject to national legislation or policy, as opposed to 45% of emissions when the IPCC published its fourth assessment report in 2007. However, despite various regional initiatives involving groups of states, and despite climate action in thousands of cities across the world, the impact of all the policy action undertaken so far has been relatively limited. Nevertheless, according to the report, cities in many less developed countries are expected to be the key locus for climate change action during the rest of this century (IPCC, 2014: 29). Finally, the report notes that systemic and cross-cutting mitigation strategies, especially if these are well designed, are likely to be much more cost-effective in terms of reducing emissions than a focus on individual technologies or sectors.

In order to address the strategic goal of significantly reducing GhG emissions, governments at all levels need to take action on a range of policy fronts simultaneously (Bryner and Duffy, 2012). The most pressing of these is to establish the use of 'low-carbon' technologies for generating domestic and commercial electricity and heating. This means phasing out the burning of fuels like coal, oil and, to a lesser extent, natural gas as means of power generation. Globally, some 3 billion people – particularly for example many people living on the Indian sub-continent – are dependent on traditional solid fuels for cooking and heating, producing severe adverse effects for health, ecosystems and development. In these circumstances, providing access to 'clean' energy sources is a critical sustainable development objective.

Another key policy objective is to reduce the level of harmful emissions arising from commercial transport and individual travel. There are a number of complementary approaches that can be used to achieve this objective:

- firstly, by increasing the use of alternatives to fossil fuels, such as biofuel or electrical or hydrogen-cell power;
- secondly, by switching the emphasis from individual modes of powered transport to mass transit;

- thirdly, by mainstreaming the use of electronic communications particularly in business and public services, thus reducing the need for travel to face-to-face meetings and appointments.

A further key objective for addressing climate change is to enhance the potential of the built environment, particularly within city areas. This would enable buildings both to reduce and absorb harmful emissions, as well as to generate some small-scale power in their own right. This could involve the systematic creation of a 'green infrastructure' across urban and semi-urban landscapes generally, and the inclusion of power-generating capacity in all buildings as a matter of normal construction practice (Rifkin, 2011: 115). Additional supporting objectives to go with all of those just outlined could focus on other, less directly related policy areas such as education and training; taxation; performance management; ecosystem assessment; and the sorts of ecological and constitutional rights outlined by Robyn Eckersley (Eckersley, 2004: 107) and Robert Goodin (1996b: 844).

It is clear from the above analysis that the level of policy integration that is required to tackle climate change and environmental sustainability implies a radically new approach to the design of governmental institutions and processes. This would enable those policy areas which are primarily 'place-based' such as agriculture, construction, energy, environment, planning, trade and industry, transport and waste disposal to be optimally aligned with 'people-oriented' sectors such as arts and culture, education and skills, and health and social care; and also with 'meta-governmental' functions such as communications, democratic engagement and law and order. This in turn would require a focus on overall public strategy as well as on individual policy areas (Mulgan, 2009).

Driven on by the relative success of the United Nations climate framework, culminating in the landmark Paris Agreement of December 2015, it is clear that the momentum for public action to tackle climate change has been building significantly in recent years. According to Harriet Bulkeley and Peter Newell (Bulkeley and Newell, 2010: 25–34), climate change governance is no longer just a matter for a restricted set of sovereign states to negotiate between each other. It now involves business and commerce, civil society organizations, local governments and social movements as well. It is very much a multi-level, multi-

actor, multi-arena phenomenon. This became clear to a wider audience for the first time perhaps in December 2009, at the rather chaotic close of the global climate change summit in Copenhagen. Earlier in that year, in an authoritative paper commissioned by the World Bank, the Nobel Prize-winning economist Elinor Ostrom had challenged the belief that large-scale government is necessarily more effective at solving collective action problems such as climate change. Ostrom argued that reliance on a single scale of action (the global) and on a single overarching solution is both naive and far less likely to generate sustainable solutions (Ostrom, 2009: 27).

In her paper Ostrom notes that efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions can produce benefits at a number of different scales, not just at the global level. However, climate change is often framed in such a way that politicians and citizens fail to understand the real benefits that can result from actions taken closer to home. Ostrom acknowledges that there are significant potential problems with individual states and sub-national governments each trying to address climate change in their own way, not the least of which are leakage, inconsistent policies, opportunities for free-riding and inadequate certification. However, despite these very real drawbacks, she argues that it would still be better 'to self-consciously adopt a polycentric approach to the problem of climate change in order to gain the benefits at multiple scales as well as to encourage experimentation and bottom-up learning from a range of approaches adopted at multiple scales'. The important lesson to draw from this is that relying on one particular level of governance to solve collective action problems at the global level is an assumption that needs to be seriously rethought, and that the important role of smaller-scale efforts also needs to be recognized (Ostrom 2009: 35).

For the moment, the assumption must be that polycentric governance approaches involving both city and local governments on the one hand, and civil society and communities on the other, will remain a major factor in driving forward developments within this complex field.

Energy policy

Amongst the various policy domains highlighted above, one of the most critical from the point of view of addressing the impacts of climate change most directly is that of energy. If the need to burn fossil fuels for the purposes of heating,

electricity generation and transport could be permanently reduced; or if the processes required to power these activities could be significantly decarbonized, this would help to reduce what is by some way the most copious source of greenhouse gas emissions in the world currently.

The strategic importance of energy is recognized by Jeremy Rifkin in his book entitled *The Third Industrial Revolution*. In the book, Rifkin argues that the technologies of energy production lie at the heart of the industrial processes upon which the prevailing economic orthodoxy is based. According to Rifkin, the world is entering into the final period of the 'second industrial revolution' (Rifkin, 2011: 13). Just as the first industrial revolution was based on coal, steam power, railways and shipping, the second has been predicated on oil, electrical power and the internal combustion engine. According to Rifkin, the first two industrial cycles were dependent on 'elite energies' that could only be found in certain specific locations. These 'elite energies' required a centralized, command-and-control approach to energy generation, firstly in order to extract fossil fuels from beneath the earth's surface, and then to transform these fuels for consumption by end users. This in turn set the conditions for the rest of the economy, stimulating the establishment of similarly centralized business models across every sector. Vertical economies of scale became the defining feature of the industrial process and large business corporations also became the norm.

Climate change however, as has been shown, brings with it an urgent need to reduce emissions of carbon dioxide and other harmful gases into the earth's atmosphere. This in turn implies a need to expand the use of energy generated from renewable sources such as solar, wind, hydro, tidal, marine, biomass, anaerobic digestion, underground and geothermal. One of the distinctive features of energy derived from these sources is its largely 'distributed' nature. Renewable energies do not need to be generated from the burning of fossil fuels which have had to be extracted with some effort and at some cost from beneath the earth's surface. Rather, most of the above sources of energy can be exploited by using technology to harness a range of natural forces within local settings. Many argue that a more localized approach to energy generation could be just as effective as conventional large-scale energy production, particularly when it is supported by an 'intelligent' distribution infrastructure.

According to Rifkin, we are on the cusp of a convergence of communications and energy regimes. The coming together of internet technology and renewable energies is now ushering in a 'third industrial revolution'. With renewable energies increasingly set to form the basis of the economy, a new organizational dynamic is emerging. As Rifkin argues, 'these dispersed energies will be collected at millions of local sites and then bundled and shared with others over intelligent power networks to achieve optimum energy levels and maintain a high-performing, sustainable economy' (Rifkin, 2011: 115).

Prospects for local energy generation

In certain parts of the world, local-scale renewable energy generation is being developed quite rapidly. The thrust for this is coming from two opposite directions: from the top down, driven by national governments; and from the bottom up, driven by communities, local governments, civil society and social movements. Very often these two thrusts overlap, and on occasion they may even combine to create some synergy with each other.

With regard to top-down government efforts to promote the use of renewables, the policy measure which is having the most widespread impact on developments currently is the recently introduced feed-in tariff. This offers a direct payment to households and to small and medium-sized organizations in return for their generating electricity and/or heat from renewable sources. According to energy analysts, more than 80 countries worldwide had some form of feed-in tariff policy in place in 2014 (Gipe, 2014). Within this overall picture, there were many different types of tariff being offered, depending on the precise policy objective of the jurisdiction concerned. Some countries like the UK offer much larger payments, relatively speaking, to smaller-scale installations than to larger ones. The objective in these cases is to incentivize individuals and local-scale generators. Apart from offering payments for electricity/heat generated, feed-in tariff policies typically include guaranteed access to the central power grid and long-term contracts ranging from 15 to 25 years. Where the terms of the feed-in contract are seen by consumers to be advantageous, there is no doubting their ability to influence individual and collective behaviour at a very local level, as has happened in the UK since the government introduced its own version of the feed-in tariff in April 2010 (DECC, 2014).

Another government-driven policy worth highlighting is the encouragement of a range of renewable energy activities at a community level. This policy approach is being pursued with some success particularly in Denmark, Germany, Spain (Centre for Sustainable Energy, 2005) and increasingly in the UK as well. The UK's community energy strategy published in January 2014 draws an important distinction between 'local' and 'community' energy activity (DECC, 2014: 20). The former is mainly about individual actions in relation to the feed-in tariff. The latter refers specifically to activities that are 'based on formal community ownership models, such as co-operatives, social enterprises, community charities, development trusts and community interest companies'. In other words, there has to be a clearly identified collective element involved. In recent years, the nation which has perhaps advanced the furthest along the path of Community Renewable Energy generation (CRE) is Germany, with some 40% of its renewable energy capacity being provided in this way in 2010 (DECC, 2014: 23). Apart from generating electricity and heat themselves (and thereby taking advantage of nationally regulated feed-in tariff payments), CRE projects may also be involved in advising local households and organizations on how to reduce their energy use and costs. In addition, they may even have a brief for balancing local supply and demand, or for purchasing energy collectively on behalf of a whole local population. Such activities can either help communities to maximize the use of the local energy that they produce, or to achieve overall reductions in costs for local energy consumers.

Government-led approaches to the development of local renewable energy capacity also include schemes aimed at local authorities rather than at individual households or communities. These are often schemes whose key focus is on social support or on infrastructure. For example in 2013, the UK's former Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC) invited local authorities to bid for funds to develop district heat networks in their areas (HM Government, 2013a). As the UK government's website explained at the time: 'heat networks...supply heat from a central source directly to homes and businesses through a network of pipes carrying hot water. This means that individual homes and businesses do not need to generate their own heat on site' (HM Government, 2014). English local authorities are also being supported to develop a local network for the charging of electrical vehicles in their areas

(HM Government, 2013b). Both of these initiatives are examples of where the policy aim of developing local and community energy can only be effectively realized if an adequate local infrastructure is put in place. In each of these instances, local councils are seen by government as the most appropriate bodies to ensure that the requisite infrastructure is provided.

However, in addition to responding to top-down initiatives from central government, local and city authorities are themselves also working proactively to address the climate change agenda. For example, one can point to the impact of the EU Covenant of Mayors and the global C40 Cities initiatives, both of which provide an international platform for local and city governments to come together to work for effective responses to climate change and other sustainability challenges (Barber, 2013: 130–138. See also Chapter 4, section 4h above). As for the position in particular countries, Anthony Giddens notes that, despite the US federal government’s relatively poor record of participation in global climate change action in recent years, many American states and cities – for example California, Florida and Seattle – have themselves taken purposeful measures in areas such as emissions reporting, expansion of public transport, and public education (Giddens, 2009: 127; see also Rabe, 2007). Similarly, in India the state of Gujarat has made proactive use of its powers under country’s federal constitution to become a notable leader in solar energy developments in the sub-continent (The Ecologist, 2014; see also Jörgensen, 2012).⁹ In the UK, local authorities have taken some steps towards individual and collective action on climate change (for example the signing of the Nottingham Declaration in September 2000), but as in the United States and India, the overall picture of sub-national government’s involvement in climate change mitigation in the UK remains somewhat patchy at present (Shaw and Theobald, 2010).

In many developed countries, one of the most notable bottom-up thrusts for dealing with the energy issues posed by climate change is coming from civil society and from social movements such as the Transition Network. Alexis Rowell shows how Transition principles and approaches can be applied across the whole field of local government (Rowell, 2010). On the basis of his own

⁹ Following the General Election in May 2014, Gujarat’s former premier Narendra Modi now heads up India’s national government.

experience as a councillor in the London Borough of Camden, Rowell argues that eco-activists like himself can make a significant impact on council policies in a relatively short space of time. However, many other climate activists prefer to operate outside the formal structures of government in order to pursue direct climate change action and/or promote community energy. A good case study of civil society action of this type is the Wadebridge Renewable Energy Network (WREN) in North Cornwall. WREN's work and achievements have been highlighted in a number of recent studies (e.g. Redhead, 2011; DECC 2013: 26). In many ways, WREN can be seen as operating alongside town and parish councils, in effect as a parallel site of governance for its local area¹⁰.

Having outlined some of the main features of local and community renewable energy approaches at the present time, it is worth pointing out that there is nothing inevitable about further progress towards the distributed energy future predicted by Jeremy Rifkin above. There are still significant factors in play which favour the centralizing thrust of 'big energy'. In some cases these factors reflect the inherent characteristics of certain renewable energy technologies themselves. For example, technologies such as offshore wind and marine and tidal energy are complex to set up and to operate. They need relatively large-scale resourcing and logistics to enable them to be researched, developed and rolled out. That is why they still lag behind onshore wind and solar to a certain extent in terms of their development (Diesendorf, 2011). At the moment it is hard to envisage a future in which local communities could own and run offshore wind or marine and tidal installations for the benefit of their areas; although conceivably, cities, regions and sub-regions might well be capable of doing so in the not-so-distant future.

There are, however, further institutional and political factors inherent in the present situation which continue to work powerfully in favour of conventional, large-scale energy production, and therefore against renewables of any kind at all. The most deep-seated of these is what Catherine Mitchell, writing about the UK energy market specifically, describes as the 'regulatory state paradigm'. Mitchell compares this to a 'band of iron' holding together the existing market-led energy framework (Mitchell, 2008: 2).

¹⁰ For more on WREN, see also Chapter 9, section 9h below

According to Keith Baker and Gerry Stoker, in recent years this way of thinking about energy has led UK governments to reach for nuclear energy as a potential solution to the problems of energy security and climate change (Baker and Stoker, 2013: 598). In current UK government documents, nuclear power is presented alongside renewable technologies as a positive, 'low-carbon' response to the challenges posed by climate change (DECC, 2012: 18). Unlike most renewable energy options, nuclear is perhaps the most highly centralized of all power-generation technologies. However, Baker and Stoker note that many other governments around the world now appear to be moving in the direction of nuclear power, with 61 new nuclear reactors under construction and 501 others at various stages of planning reported in 2011. In addition, Baker and Stoker observe that public support for nuclear continues to remain quite strong in Britain, unlike in some other European countries such as Germany, Italy and Switzerland (Baker and Stoker, 2013: 587–589). A similar pattern of thinking can be detected in the current political debate within the UK and elsewhere concerning fracking for shale gas. Like nuclear energy, fracking is a very sophisticated technology which requires a critical mass of large-scale finance, logistical capacity and centralized regulation to support it.

In the two multi-level case studies set out in Part III below, this thesis uses energy policy as an ancillary lens through which to assess localism policy and practice. The energy-based element of the analysis will be concerned with two issues in particular: the development of renewables on the one hand, and the exploitation of local and community energy sources on the other.

5c. Wellbeing and localism

The term 'wellbeing' is used here to embrace a range of factors connected with the health, education, happiness and flourishing of individuals. Along with environmental sustainability, whose concern is mainly with the physical environment, wellbeing constitutes a fundamental domain of policy and of public value concern. In the current global context, wellbeing is frequently referred to as 'human development', and it is now a major thrust of United Nations' humanitarian programmes and interventions (UNDP, 2015), as well as those of many other international non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

In some parts of the world, levels of wellbeing are relatively well advanced, particularly where they are underpinned by a welfare state system (see also

section 4c above). Welfare state policies are based on the assumption that the state should play a significant role in helping to meet fundamental human needs. Such needs can be understood as being partly individual, and partly societal in nature. According to Doyal and Gough, the two most basic individual needs that apply to human beings are ‘survival/health’ on the one hand, and ‘autonomy/learning’ on the other (Doyal and Gough, 1984: 10). In order to act effectively as agents, human beings need not only to be able to survive physically, but also to have enough sense of their own identity to be able to carry out autonomous, intentional actions. This in turn implies a need for ‘creative consciousness’, i.e. the ability to formulate goals and the strategies required to achieve them. In all cultures, language skills are necessary for individuals to learn how to order their world conceptually, and to deliberate about what to do in it. Essentially, language is a social phenomenon which is taught and used by people interacting with each other. Thus, successful individual action always occurs within a wider social intercourse, and it therefore relies on the healthy, autonomous existence of others.

Doyal and Gough argue that, in addition to having these basic human needs, individuals share a number of basic social needs. These are: material production; reproduction; cultural transmission and political authority. These social needs must also be fulfilled if the two main basic needs of individuals are to be met, and if society as a whole is to function effectively. Material production involves more than just the making of goods. It includes the exchange, distribution and consumption of goods and services as well. As for cultural transmission, this involves the passing on of key social norms and understandings from one generation to the next. However, the process of cultural transmission can only succeed if it is supported by political authority and some system of legal sanctions.

In Doyal and Gough’s account, the fundamental framework of human needs set out above is complemented by a further dynamic element. This is the optimization of human needs through time and history. At the level of the individual, and in the right conditions, this may lead to human flourishing and liberation. At the level of society it can be realised through the establishment of social and political structures that are specifically designed to maximise human flourishing. According to Doyal and Gough, the main precondition for meeting

human needs is the presence of redistributive mechanisms underpinned by the state. This becomes an argument for some form of welfare state, defined as the collective recognition by society of certain human needs, and the organization of mechanisms to meet those needs (Doyal and Gough, 1984: 25–32). Thus state intervention has a key role to play in ensuring that basic human needs are met and that human potential is maximized.

Global dimensions of wellbeing and human development

As mentioned earlier in this section, universal human development is a central and long-standing aim of the United Nations. Since its formation in 1965, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has been promoting and monitoring levels of human development and wellbeing across all of the UN's member states. Each year since 1990 the UNDP has published an influential Human Development Report. The latter provides the most authoritative global statement of the various elements which go to make up human development and deprivation. These are encapsulated in the report's presentation of its Human Development Index (HDI). This is a composite statistical measure of each state's relative level of human development/deprivation. Its principal uses are to rank states' overall levels of development against each other, and to measure their individual and collective progress from one year to the next.

Since 2010 the Human Development Report has presented four complementary indices of development in its statistical tables. These are the basic HDI (comprising four measures covering life expectancy, number of years spent in full-time education, and gross national income per capita); a second version of the HDI specifically adjusted for inequality; a Gender Inequality Index and a Multi-Dimensional Poverty Index (UNDP, 2015: 204). Taking all these measures into account, the global HDI figure for 2015 (the latest year for which figures are available) was 0.711. However, in 2010 the global index figure stood at 0.68, and in 1990 it stood at 0.57. According to the UNDP, there has been a gradual improvement in the overall level of human development as measured by the HDI over the past 50 years (UNDP, 2010). Progress in education has been substantial and widespread. This reflects improvements not just in the overall quantity of schooling provided, but also the growth in women's access to education across the world. Advances in human health over the period have also been significant, but have recently slowed due largely to dramatic reversals

in some Sub-Saharan and former Soviet Union countries. Progress in income per capita has varied widely across different countries. On average, per capita income in rich states has grown much more rapidly in the past 40 years than it has in poorer ones. Paradoxically, however, this suggests that progress in education and health can themselves do much to drive successes in HD, even where economic growth itself is less pronounced (UNDP, 2010).

This last point is confirmed in a more powerful way by Wilkinson and Pickett in their influential book *The Spirit Level*. They measure data from 23 mainly advanced states across a range of wellbeing-related outcomes, including physical health and life expectancy; obesity; mental health and drug use; educational performance; teenage births; exposure to violent crime; imprisonment and punishment; and social mobility. Wilkinson and Pickett argue that across each of the above indicators, the incidence of the problem appears to rise or fall in proportion to the level of income inequality in the state concerned. Furthermore the impact of these problems is consistently greater on the better-off groups living in unequal societies than it is on the same groups living in societies which are more equal. Later in the book, the authors present evidence to show that the same correlation with inequality applies just as strongly to environmental sustainability indicators such as level of CO₂ emissions, ecological footprint per capita, and waste recycling (Wilkinson and Pickett, 2010: 217–235). Across all the indicators featured in the book, the states with the most negative scores are consistently the USA, UK, Portugal, Australia and Italy. Those with the most positive scores are: Japan, Norway, Sweden, Finland, Austria and Belgium.

Co-production and the relational state

With regard to advanced states, Mulgan notes that many of them are beginning to realise that they need to take wellbeing as a strategic objective much more seriously than they have done in the past. This stems from the realisation that wellbeing is not an automatic consequence of economic growth (Mulgan, 2009: 71). Mulgan argues that high levels of wellbeing correlate with a wide range of factors including national wealth, state welfare policies, income equality, social tolerance, political freedom and the rule of law. Together, these factors explain some 70–80% of the differences between countries. He also argues that governments are increasingly moving away from acting as the provider of

welfare and public services *for* people, to acting *with* the public in order to achieve common goals. This shift can be understood as one from a 'delivery' state to a 'relational' one (Mulgan, 2012: 20). The goal of improving relationships with the public may encourage new ways of involving the public in the day-to-day business of government. However, Mulgan accepts that not all parts of the state can, or need to become relational to the same degree. Care for the elderly is an excellent example of where a relational approach can pay real dividends, but there are many other official functions and services that are best delivered in a transactional and fully automated way.

The perceived desire of governments to improve relationships with their citizens is also behind the growing interest in the 'co-production' of public services with citizens and clients. From a public value standpoint, John Alford argues that co-production is absolutely necessary for some services if they are to have any positive effect at all. To the extent that public sector clients derive their own private value from a service, they are in a similar position to any private sector customer. Both private and public sector 'customers' are involved in an exchange with the providing organization. However, because no money changes hands in the provision of a public service, the exchange involved is much more of a social than an economic one (Alford, 2011: 146). Seen in this way, the exchange between a public organization and its clients is one in which the clients 'pay' not with money, but with specific behaviours. This is the essence of co-production. In many cases (e.g. support for the unemployed), the service concerned can only really succeed if there is effective co-production with the client. The same can even be said of a statutory function such as tax assessment. Alford outlines the key factors that will induce public service clients to both co-operate and co-produce. These are sanctions, material rewards, and non-material 'motivators'. The latter include a number of types of motivating behaviour such as: encouraging the client's own sense of competence; increasing the client's self-worth and confidence; encouraging social contact with clients and a sense of belonging; and convincing clients that the service is worthwhile and effectively organized. In conclusion, Alford states that the process of delivering private value to individual public service clients can also have the effect of creating public value for citizens in general.

In contrast to Mulgan's argument concerning the relational state, Marc Stears (2012) sees the state's role as being not so much relational, but as one of promoting standardization. The state can 'standardize' human and social experience in a number of different ways, including through legislation and regulation, and through the way in which it shapes social norms and experiences. If states care for relationships, they should seek to do what they can to create the standardized background conditions within which relationships can flourish. The state can help people to have the physical space, time, organization and power that they need to have in order to build effective relationships, but it is unlikely ever to be the main agent of a relational revolution itself. Mike Bennett (2006: 35) argues that the state's role is to maintain a community of citizens who are free to pursue their own individual projects, but who also understand that they are part of a broader political community in which interests are both shared and contested.

One of the obvious conclusions to be drawn from the above discussion is that, while the role of the national state may be conceived of as essentially one of standardization, that of regional, local and neighbourhood governments is perhaps better seen as that of promoting progressively closer relationships with citizens in connection with the conduct of government and the delivery of public services. This is supported by points that Lowndes and Sullivan make in support of neighbourhood governance (Lowndes and Sullivan, 2008: 57–59; see also section 4g above).

5d. Democracy and localism

These issues raise questions not just for the delivery of public policies, but also for the way in which democratic governance itself is conducted. Alongside environmental sustainability and wellbeing, democracy – particularly in the form of public reasoning (Sen, 2009) and of open and accountable government – constitutes a third major domain of public value as far as contemporary political systems are concerned.

Gary Bridge and his colleagues argue that one of the main impacts of the reconfiguration currently taking place within the local public realm is on our accepted notions of democracy (Bridge et. al., 2013: 306). Recognizable frameworks of public accountability and responsibility for service provision are being replaced by more amorphous, less structured networks in which local

governance bodies can appear as just one player amongst many others. This leads to uncertainties concerning the appropriate scale of political action, both in terms of social mobilization and government decision-making. As political and social issues increasingly cross regional, national and international borders, questions about ‘who is affected?’ become just as important as ‘who is a member?’

Similar concerns are expressed by Erik-Hans Klijn and Chris Skelcher (2007: 588). The question they pose is whether governance networks, by giving ‘structural advantage to certain private interests in the process of making or shaping public policy decisions’, are thereby undermining democratic legitimacy? They examine a number of possible conjectures about current developments in governance. On the one hand, there is the stark possibility that governance networks may simply be incompatible with democracy. Alternatively, networks may be seen as a worthwhile extension of the democratic process. This is because they engage a wider range of actors in political decision-making, thus ‘oiling the wheels’ of representative democracy as it struggles to govern in a complex environment. Alternatively, governance networks may be no more than just a tool within a larger political game in which national government and its elite backers are able to shape networks for their own strategic ends (Crouch, 2004; see also Newman (2005) mentioned in section 4e above). Or finally, the relationship between representative democracy and governance networks may be part of a transition away from state-centric governance, and towards a more fully fledged form of polycentrism characterized by decentred, distributed nodes of authority. This perspective interprets the current tensions that exist between legitimate democratic government and relatively informal governance networks as a sign of fundamental changes taking place within society as a whole. It sees political decision-making as ‘a complicated negotiation about values...in which process cannot be separated from outcome’ (Klijn and Skelcher, 2007: 598). On this account, democracy is being redesigned through actual practice within governance networks.

From a neighbourhood governance perspective, Bailey and Pill address a similar range of questions through the lens of local empowerment (Bailey and Pill, 2013). These two scholars quote the influential US literature on the

importance of ‘mediating structures’ such as churches, voluntary associations and other civil society bodies (Berger and Neuhaus, 1977). These structures can often provide support for empowerment at the local level and so reduce the need for local dependency on the central state. Within this context, Bailey and Pill identify two main ways in which empowerment can be framed. ‘Restricted’ empowerment denotes the top-down sharing of powers offered by a powerful principal such as the central state. On the other hand, an ‘open-ended’ approach sees empowerment as a gradual progression from individual through to collective action (Bailey and Pill, 2013: 292).

A crucial factor determining the approach adopted is the nature of the ‘governance space’ in which the process of empowerment plays out (Gaventa, 2004). The governance space concerned may be a ‘restricted’ or an ‘invited’ one, offered from the top down; or it may be one which is ‘claimed’ or ‘created’ from the bottom up; or it may even be ‘ambiguous’ (Newman and Clarke, 2009). Depending on how such space is constructed, it can open up genuine opportunities for citizens, particularly those who are the most marginalized, ‘to recognize, assert and expand their own identities’ (Fischer, 2009: 250). This links to John Dewey’s assertion in his classic work *The Public and its Problems* of the need for government to ‘call a public into existence that can understand and act in its own best interests’ (Dewey, 1987). The question of how such a public can be created is one of the core questions of public value theory (Moore and Benington, 2011: 272). The challenge in calling such a public together is to do so in a way that it allows the individual members of that public to deliberate as a collective whole, whilst at the same time recognizing the diverse backgrounds and interests of the membership as a whole.

According to Ercan and Hendricks, both deliberative democracy and localism start from the premise that, as residents of their neighbourhoods and users of public services, all citizens possess a unique level of practical knowledge. The broader goal of both approaches is therefore to improve the democratic legitimacy of collective decision-making and to deepen democracy through public engagement and empowerment (Ercan and Hendricks, 2013: 423). However, Ercan and Hendricks note that there are a number of major objections to localism as a basis for enhancing democracy. The authors identify and address four theoretical challenges in particular:

- firstly, greater local powers do not necessarily mean greater democratization
- secondly, localism often reinforces existing power inequalities
- thirdly, one-off participatory forums do not equate to local democracy
- finally, localism narrows the scope, space and impact of participation.

Ercan and Hendricks argue that each of these challenges can be addressed through appropriate institutional design. However, the fact remains that deliberative mechanisms still tend to be poorly integrated into existing democratic processes and institutions (Ercan and Hendricks, 2013: 432). However, it is important that any temptation to view localism as being necessarily in opposition with the state should be rejected. Ercan and Hendricks call for the 'old' institutional norms of advocacy and representation to be reconciled with the 'new' norms of inclusive citizen involvement and open deliberation. They note that the extent to which localism can contribute to democratic renewal is a question that is ripe for empirical research.

Given the widespread disenchantment felt in many parts of the world with the way in which democracy operates (Stoker, 2006), there is every incentive to explore ways of extending and deepening democratic structures and processes. Michael Saward (2003) puts the emphasis on procedural approaches that work from broad democratic principles and that can be tailored to particular contexts anywhere in the world. Graham Smith (2009) is more explicit about the principles that should underlie any innovations in the democratic arena. These include the democratic goods of: inclusiveness, popular control, transparency and considered judgment; and the 'institutional' goods of efficiency and transferability across different cultures and scales of governance. At the most detailed end of the spectrum, Archon Fung (2006) sets out three broad dimensions along which democratic participation may be based. These are participant selection; communication and decision-making; and authority and power. Each of these dimensions has several different modes of realization and they can be put together to form a three-dimensional model, or 'democracy cube' as Fung calls it. This 'cube-shaped' model may be used by academics and policy makers to generate a range of institutional design choices that are capable of addressing the requirements of democratic decision-making in different contexts.

One specific design vision that responds to many of the issues highlighted both in this section and the last one is that which was set out more than 20 years ago by Paul Hirst in his influential book *Associative Democracy*. Hirst argues for the principle of associationalism as the main basis for bringing about the political reform of big government and the state. In essence, associationalism seeks to combine the individual choice of liberalism with the public provision of collectivism (Hirst, 1994: 20). In its modern form, associationalism rests on the guiding principles of:

- primary associations as the cornerstone of democratic governance
- the pluralization and federalization of the state.

In his book, Hirst sets out his detailed ideas for reforming both the economy and the provision of welfare along associationalist lines. With regard to the economy, the aim of associative reform would be to move towards an economy in which small and medium-sized enterprises play a much bigger part than at present; where ownership is more firmly rooted within a locality; where capital is predominantly raised within a specific region, and where collective services and economic regulation are provided by means of public–private partnerships between trade associations and regional government (Hirst, 1994: 128). Decentralization and locally embedded ownership are key elements of his approach. Similarly, an associationalist welfare state would be decentralized and pluralistic. It would be divided into self-governing regions, into distinct and competing voluntary associations and into different, functionally distinct service sectors. The poor and vulnerable would still be able to receive common minimum entitlements, but would be able to choose from a number of different agencies to provide them.

Although associationalism requires a considerable degree of devolution to voluntary associations, Hirst also argues that some effective form of wider public power (i.e. some form of ‘government’), based on representative democratic principles, should continue to remain in place. Amongst other things this would be responsible for legislation, high-level regulation, taxation, and the payment to all citizens of a General Basic Income. The state would also help to ensure that both associations and commercial companies exercised their responsibilities in an open and democratic fashion.

5e. Cohesion and mutuality within political systems

Before this thesis moves on to consider the question of institutional and system design, it is necessary to address one further issue in relation to public value. So far, the argument in this chapter has focused on three major dimensions of public value. Two of them, wellbeing and democracy, have traditionally been seen as the prerogative of sovereign states acting alone, although latterly many international NGOs have supplemented individual state efforts to promote human development across the world. With regard to environmental sustainability and combating climate change, it is now generally accepted that most of the required policy goals can only be addressed on a broader systemic basis. This includes action at both the global and the local levels, and it goes well beyond what sovereign states acting purely on their own initiative can achieve.

With this in mind, before completing this chapter's discussion of public value, it makes sense to enquire whether there are other aspects of PV that are more suited to being pursued within the context of multi-level political systems, rather than through sovereign states acting alone. This final step will complete the argument on public value in preparation for the discussion on institutional and system design which is to be addressed in the next chapter. Accordingly, this section looks in turn at two system-based public-value domains: territorial cohesion (TC) on the one hand, and intergovernmental mutuality (IM) on the other. Apart from being essentially about system articulation (see Cvetkovic and Kellner (1997) in section 4d above), each of these qualities also has a strong element of place associated with it.

Territorial cohesion was introduced briefly in Section 3b. Originating from a spatial planning perspective, it is now a core element of EU policy. TC's main aim is to overcome the structural disadvantages which some parts of the EU suffer in relation to those which are more economically advanced. In some regions, the particular structural disadvantages to be addressed consist typically in overpopulation, industrial decline and environmental degradation; in others they consist in geographical remoteness combined with a lack of transport and communications infrastructure (CEC, 2008: 7). The main advantage of a TC approach is that it cuts across individual policy sectors and encourages an integrated, strategic approach to policy. This in turn encompasses economic

effectiveness, social cohesion, and ecological balance. It puts sustainable development in its broadest sense at the heart of policy making and institutional action.

In 2009 the principle of economic, social and territorial cohesion became officially enshrined in sections 174–178 of the EU's Lisbon Treaty (European Parliament, 2016). Cohesion is now also the driving principle behind the allocation of funds from the EU's seven-year grant funding programme from 2014–2020 (CEC, 2011). From this it can be argued that the EU is a good example of a polity which is working collaboratively to marshal knowledge and to govern in the genuine long-term interests of its citizens and constituent territories. It is a good example of how public value might be created within an extended, multi-level political system. It also illustrates what a strategic approach to government might look like in practice (Mulgan, 2009: 251).

With regard to intergovernmental mutuality, this is not a formal policy position of any government but a normative idea set out in a recent critique of the EU's subsidiarity principle (Landy and Teles, 2001). The specific argument set out by the authors of this critique is that the EU's approach to subsidiarity tends to emphasize the distinction between 'higher' and 'lower' levels of governance, with all the connotations of superiority and inferiority that the use of such language brings with it. Rather than subsidiarity, Landy and Teles argue for the principle of mutuality, i.e. that it should be the obligation of each level of government as it participates in joint decision-making to foster the legitimacy and capacity of the others (Landy and Teles, 2001: 414, emphasis added). For the authors, mutuality is not the same as devolution. In the modern world, they argue, effective local governance can only emerge on the basis of an effective regulatory, social and economic framework provided by higher levels of government.

Landy and Teles review the various sources of legitimacy within a polity including stability, efficiency, responsiveness, shared identity and the encouragement of assertiveness at the local level. They argue for a more conscious focus by governments on the merits of decentralization. The latter can be justified not only on the grounds of legitimacy per se, but also on the basis of 'the beneficial effects of legitimacy' (Landy and Teles, 2001: 418). In terms of the former, decentralization reflects a civic liberalism which

emphasizes attachment to place; anti-homogenization; and an acceptance of the limits of politics. With regard to the latter, a policy of conscious decentralization can:

- lead to better information and feedback about the outcomes of policy initiatives
- enable effective experimentation
- enhance the legitimacy of 'onerous governmental activity' (e.g. policing)
- bring out the tangibility of policy issues
- provide a training ground for higher office.

The authors also rehearse a number of arguments specifically against devolution. In some instances devolution can harm local governments by:

- fostering destructive competition between local areas
- allowing greater opportunities for exclusionary-type policies aimed at 'undesirables'
- placing too great a burden on the administrative capacities of the local area.

The authors conclude by arguing that the EU has a great opportunity to support the development of local democracy (including a flourishing local news media) within its member states. They argue that far from taking away power from national and local governments, such an approach would give member states a stronger platform upon which to defend national and local autonomy from big business interests.

The concepts of territorial cohesion and intergovernmental mutuality outlined above each have different implications for localism. The EU's cohesion policy operates mainly at the meso level of sub-national governance, particularly in relation to the sub-region, the region and the city. In this sense, it certainly corresponds with the secondary sense of the term 'localism' as set out in section 3e above. However, in placing the spotlight on the meso level of governance, TC opens up possibilities for the micro level as well, as this thesis will argue in the Global North case study in Chapter 9 below. As for the mutuality principle, this clearly provides an important theoretical alternative to the top-down/bottom-up binary that tends to dominate localism policy and practice. Even if, realistically speaking, genuine mutuality is almost impossible to achieve in practice, it does provide scholars with a valuable tool for undertaking the task of institutional and system design, as well as for critique.

5f. Taking stock: localism and public value

What this very wide-ranging chapter has sought to do is to analyse how various public value domains impact on governance at the most local level, and conversely what the recent turn to localism means for each of the domains themselves. This is with a view to preparing the ground for a consideration of how localism as a political idea might contribute to the design of political institutions and systems in future.

It has been argued that the concept of public value can usefully be extended to cover all aspects of good and effective governance (Mulgan, 2009). This includes the core public value domains of environmental sustainability, wellbeing and democracy.

The main ecological challenge facing humanity currently is the need to combat damaging climate change (Dryzek et al., 2011). This brings with it an urgent need to co-ordinate policy in a cross-cutting way across the principal domains of place, people and meta-governance (Eckersley, 2004; Bryner and Duffy, 2012). One of the most important elements in climate change mitigation is energy policy and the need to harness the widely distributed nature of renewable power (Rifkin, 2011). Governments, civil society, social movements and individuals are already taking steps to achieve this, but there are also many conflicting top-down, bottom-up dynamics evident within current developments (Mitchell, 2008; Baker and Stoker, 2013).

With regard to human wellbeing, existing levels of human development across the world tend to reflect the success of certain first-world states in developing effective welfare systems to support wellbeing (UNDP, 2010). However, the most advanced levels of human development and wellbeing also depend crucially on the extent to which economic resources are equally distributed within states (Wilkinson and Pickett, 2010). With this in mind, states are looking increasingly at how wellbeing services in particular can be co-produced with citizens (Mulgan, 2009; Alford, 2011) and at how national and local governments can foster a more positive relationship with those they govern (Mulgan, 2012; Stears, 2012).

As for democracy and accountable government, this is a domain in which there is increasing degree of flux and contestation with regard to current

arrangements. Many scholars would agree that there is an important role here to be reclaimed for the local dimension in politics (Ercan and Hendricks, 2013), but relatively few systematic ideas as to how the local, sub-national, national and supranational scales might best be articulated with each other (Cvetkovic and Kellner (1997). Exceptions to this include the compelling visions set out by Hirst (1994) and Barber (2013), and the well thought-out analyses of scholars such as Graham Smith (2009) and Archon Fung (2006). Certainly, this is a dimension of public value concern that urgently calls for good-quality institutional design.

Any attempt at institutional design needs to take account of the increasingly networked character of contemporary politics, society and communications. It needs, therefore, to be based on whole political systems rather than on institutions. It can be argued that some of the most advanced thinking in this regard has been coming in recent years from the European Union with its commitment to the principle of territorial cohesion (CEC, 2008; CEC, 2011). It is but a short step from TC to the even more fundamental idea of intergovernmental mutuality (Landy and Teles, 2001). This is a core principle upon which all efforts at institutional and system design could usefully be based.

Chapter 6: Localism and System Design

This purpose of this chapter is to bring together the two theoretical accounts of localism set out in Chapters 4 and 5 above. The intention is to build a theoretical framework that can be used to assess empirical cases of localism reform across the world. These include the two case studies presented in Part III of this thesis, namely: the multi-level cluster of India/Kerala/Kollam (see Chapter 8 below), and the EU/UK/England/Cornwall (see Chapter 9).

The localism framework presented in this chapter is set out in the form of a broad set of design principles on the one hand, and a more detailed framework of 'institutional design indicators' on the other. The latter will specify a range of public value outcomes that an effective localism should seek to produce within a multi-level governance context.

6a. Institutions, political systems and their design

In his authoritative account of institutional design theory, Robert Goodin (1996a) argues that in all spheres of social and political life, institutions have the same defining characteristic. They are 'stable, valued and recurring patterns of behaviour', which offer individuals predictability and reliability. However institutions can and do change and, as time goes on, new ones begin to emerge. According to Goodin, institutional change may occur in one of three ways: by accident, by evolution, or through a process of conscious design. Sometimes institutional change may come about as a result of two or more of these mechanisms combined. Of particular interest to Goodin, however, is the issue of intentionality. In this connection, it is often the case that institutions emerge through a design process which does not work out as envisaged, thus opening up the possibility of 'unintended' design effects, as well as those that were originally planned. This can occur when the legacy of the past constrains the scope for a completely new institutional departure.

With regard to political institutions, John Dryzek distinguishes the two core elements that compose them. First is the 'institutional hardware' of rules, operating procedures and principles. Second, intertwined with this hardware, is the 'software' of society's competing discourses (Dryzek, 1996). When examining a particular policy or institutional change, one of the key questions to

be addressed is: which discourses are being reinforced as a result of the proposals in question, and which ones are being disadvantaged?

Turning specifically to theories of design, Goodin (1996a) cites Bobrow and Dryzek's definition of design as 'the creation of an actionable form to promote valued outcomes in a particular context' (Bobrow and Dryzek, 1987). Generally speaking, within the broader design literature, the emphasis is on 'goodness of fit' as between the designed object itself and the larger context in which it is set. However, it is important to be aware that theories of optimal design such as these often end up conflating normative with empirical considerations. Thus it is possible to argue that 'institutions that have been around for a while are most likely to be the ones that are more nearly optimally designed to fit their environment' (Goodin, 1996a: 35–36). This is where the broad notions of sustainability and resilience first mentioned in section 3b come into play.

Nevertheless, it also has to be recognized that the reshaping of political institutions can only be accomplished within the context of 'realist constraints', or more specifically within 'the spaces that remain' once such constraints have been taken into account (Dryzek, 1996: 121). According to Dryzek, such spaces are most likely to be found in connection with the following political circumstances: war and its aftermath; revolution; economic depression; in the collapsed peripheries of otherwise stable societies; in contexts where there is significant functional indeterminacy; at the international level, beyond the confines of the nation state; and finally (and most interestingly of all for the purposes of this thesis) within local politics.

It was argued in Chapter 3 (see section 3b) that a key feature of modernist political discourse is the idea that governance institutions and processes can be rationally shaped in order to achieve particular social and political ends. However, as Pierson (2000) and other theorists have pointed out, there are many reasons to doubt whether the design of political institutions can ever be entirely rational either in their intention or their effect. For example there is the tendency towards 'stickiness' which is to be found in many institutional contexts, as well as the phenomenon of 'path dependence' which frequently works to make institutional structures self-reinforcing over time. Despite such constraints, it is hard to overestimate the potential of institutional design for achieving desirable political ends such as greater efficiency, effectiveness and/or

legitimacy in governance, as well as greater social and political cohesion. The establishment of new public institutions, or of reformed political structures and processes, can be seen as a major opportunity to deploy rational, critical and creative thought. More fundamentally, such efforts also draw on ‘mechanisms of hope’ (McCann, 2013), and an expectation on the part of decision-makers and citizens that collective life can be changed for the better as a result of the institutional reform in question.

A key point about the term ‘institutional design’ that flows from the account set out above is that it can be taken to apply to a wide range of political arrangements at differing scalar levels. Thus the term may be used in relation to individual government bodies and administrative processes, as well as to nationwide electoral or constitutional systems. In this study, it is proposed to apply the term even more broadly to include entire systems of multi-level governance. The degree of geographical extension that this study has in mind is specifically the ‘continental’ or, more precisely, the ‘sub-continental’ scale of activity¹¹. Of course there are practical limits to the capacity of any single group of political actors to design a whole system of interlocking institutions and processes for an extensive sub-continental territory. Nevertheless the idea that conscious design at this level might be possible, even if only in theory, has a distinct normative value of its own. It can provide the basis for the critique and judgment of existing arrangements, as well as of potential future ones (Habermas, 1987).

This ‘critical theory’ argument for extending the focus of institutional design much more broadly than many of its most distinguished adherents have attempted to do previously, takes this study almost into the realms of normative political theorizing. However, the position being advanced here must also be understood as one that also seeks to retain a firm footing within the camp of empirical political science. This study, therefore, deliberately sets out to face in two directions at once. This is similar to the approach advocated by Archon Fung with his use of the term ‘pragmatic equilibrium’. For Fung, any normative conception of politics should be expected to generate institutional effects that embody its central values. Where a particular normative conception of politics has institutional consequences that are consistent with its values, then it may be

¹¹ For further detail of the thinking behind this ‘sub-continental’ distinction, see Chapter 7 below

deemed to be in pragmatic equilibrium (Fung, 2007: 444). Thus, in setting out principles and design indicators for a sub-continental, multi-level polity with a significant localist dimension at its core, this study is consciously seeking to balance normative and empirical considerations against one another.

Before moving on to consider the broad principles that should underpin the design of political systems and institutions, one further point needs to be made in relation to the design task being undertaken here. It is both different in kind from, but also arguably much broader in its scope than, 'merely' setting out the optimum arrangements for democratic decision-making. Some of the specific requirements for the latter task were considered briefly in section 5d above (e.g. Hirst, 1994; Saward, 2003; Fung 2006; and Smith, 2009). For example, in his 2009 book on democratic innovations, Graham Smith sets out four 'democratic goods' (inclusiveness, popular control, transparency and considered judgment) and two 'institutional goods' (efficiency and transferability) that should govern the design of democratic systems.

Where this study differs from those of Smith and of many others is that it leans much more towards the institutional side of Smith's analysis than to the democratic one. This positioning stems from the particular balance that this study is seeking to achieve between normative and analytical perspectives. It is also felt to fit in much better with the type of broad-system analysis that the study is seeking to present. For while democratic legitimacy clearly has to be regarded as a fundamental element in the design of political institutions, it can all too easily become focused on the freedoms and rights of individuals in relation to the sovereign state. As this thesis has already argued in section 5a above, democracy and accountable government constitute one important domain of public value interest, but no more than that. As a domain it cannot fully encompass the broader polycentric interplay of individuals, collectivities, institutions and systems. For this reason, it is seen as far too limiting to stand as the defining rationale for this design exercise.

6b. Principles for institutional and system design

The first step in envisioning the type of governance institutions and processes that might be most suitable in a contemporary macro-level political system, is to establish an appropriately broad set of principles. Goodin in his seminal text discussed above, outlines five design principles (Goodin, 1996a: 39–43).

These, he reminds us, are all drawn from ‘theories of the middle range’ (Elster, 1979). In accordance with the overall thrust of his argument, Goodin’s five principles are partly analytical and partly normative in character. Furthermore, it seems clear from the way in which they are presented, that they are intended to apply to both single institutions and to whole polities.

In order, Goodin’s five principles are as follows:

- **Revisability:** i.e. that the new institution/polity should possess enough built-in flexibility to be reformed in the light of experience
- **Robustness:** i.e. the institution/polity is capable of adapting to new circumstances, but is not so fragile that it can easily be overwhelmed by them
- **Sensitivity to motivational complexity:** i.e. the institution/polity is designed to accommodate both human self-interest and society’s more principled, altruistic impulses
- **Publicity:** i.e. the institution/polity is transparent and capable of being convincingly explained and defended
- **Variability:** i.e. the institution/polity incorporates, and positively embraces, a varied range of organizational forms.

When one attempts to apply these five principles to the type of multi-level political system that this study has in mind, it is clear that some of the design principles set out above are better suited to that kind of context than others. The principle that stands out most strikingly in this respect is variability. Of the five principles presented, this is the one which is likely to be most relevant in the context of an extended, sub-continental political system, with varying geographical levels of governance. On the other hand, the principle which may be most difficult to apply across such an extended span, even within a well-defined geographical space, is robustness. The level of social and institutional co-ordination required to achieve a degree of institutional robustness across a sub-continental territory is significant in its complexity. It would require a highly developed platform of institutional systems and processes to maintain it. In the twentieth century, societies and political systems have shown themselves to be increasingly capable of establishing and maintaining a high degree of co-ordination across extended geographical space, more so than has ever been achieved in history before (Giddens, 1984, 1990). However, as the

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment have also pointed out (IPCC, 2013 and 2014; MEA, 2005), the achievements which modern societies have demonstrated in this respect are increasingly being put at risk through climate change and the ecological degradation of the earth's ecosystems.

As for Goodin's remaining three principles, those of revisability and sensitivity to motivational complexity both require a degree of bottom-up influence to be present within the political system if they are to be successfully realized in practice. This is most likely to be the case if local, national and international civil society and local and city governments have a significant influence on the design of institutions (Barber, 2013). The degree to which this can occur within an extended political system is likely to vary widely. Finally, with regard to the remaining principle (publicity), this is also relatively difficult to achieve at the sub-continental level, as it implies a broad consensus on political and other fundamental values across a very wide range of communities and political interests. Some complex political systems such as those in the European Union and in the Indian sub-continent are making slow progress towards establishing a common public discourse and common political values. But within each of these regions, such progress still remains a fragmented and at times highly contested affair.

Goodin's five principles are useful for orienting one's initial thinking around the specific values upon which the design of contemporary political systems should be based. However, for present purposes, it is important to establish a set of principles that is directly relevant to the analyses that were set out earlier in this study. The principles adopted also need to be suitable for the kind of sub-continental political space which this thesis has in mind. They will need to be sufficient in number and scope to account for all the main dimensions of value that are relevant to contemporary systems of multi-level political governance. They should seek to incorporate all the key dimensions of social and political life which have been introduced and discussed in the earlier chapters of this thesis, namely: place; organizational and governance scale; environmental sustainability; human and social wellbeing; democracy and accountable government; cohesion across geographical space/scale; mutuality and bottom-up influence and, last but not least, public value itself.

On the basis of these factors, it is possible to set out seven broad design principles for effective political governance at the continental/sub-continental-level. With localism specifically in mind, the principles set out below have been formulated to reflect the critical importance of both mutuality and bottom-up influence within the political system as a whole. However, the key point to note about them is that they are macro-level principles, and the expectation is that they should be able to command discursive agreement across a whole sub-continental space. In contrast to Goodin's five principles examined above, the tenor of this particular set is overtly normative in character:

- **Rootedness:** the political system recognizes and promotes the unique value of all the individual places located within the territory it occupies
- **Ecological Awareness:** the political system ensures that the highest priority is given to the effective management and development of all natural ecosystems within its area
- **Human development:** the political system ensures that all persons living within its area are able to benefit from the most advanced standards of health, education and wellbeing
- **Citizenship:** the political system ensures that all persons in its area are able to enjoy effective human and citizenship rights, and are able to contribute as responsible individuals to civil society, to business and to political governance at all levels
- **Mutuality and territorial cohesion:** the political system ensures that government institutions at all geographical levels work proactively to enhance the legitimacy and capacity of all others within the system as a whole, for the ultimate benefit of the citizens that these institutions serve, and also for the benefit of the environments and the communities that citizens inhabit
- **Sustainability and resilience:** the political system works purposefully with citizens and social partners, and with the wider international community, to address a range of long-term human, social, environmental, economic and institutional challenges, and also to minimize risk in all sectors and at all levels

- ***Learning and public value:*** institutions and processes within the political system positively encourage political and social learning that promotes public value from the bottom up, as well as from the top down.

How should one expect these institutional design principles to impact on the micro and meso scales of place and organization? Clearly some of them have a much more direct relevance for local communities than others. Those which perhaps stand out most strongly in this respect are rootedness, mutuality/territorial cohesion and bottom-up learning. As for the others, it can be argued that they all have some important implications for the micro/meso levels, but that their relevance is less direct.

With regard to political powers and processes, perhaps the most important principle to highlight here is that which concerns mutuality and territorial cohesion. This raises the question of where sovereignty within a polycentric or multi-level system should ultimately lie. One of the more radical implications of adopting the MLG perspective, which is also inherent within the idea of territorial cohesion, is that MLG treats all levels of governance as having parity of esteem with each other, at least in principle (Piattoni, 2009: 164). However, as Simona Piattoni also acknowledges, even many academics find this aspect of MLG difficult to engage with, let alone the majority of politicians and ordinary citizens. To adopt an MLG perspective is to enter into a way of thinking that can soon undermine the notion that political sovereignty should rest unequivocally with the conventional nation state.

Faced with this prospect, one might wish to argue that sovereignty should lie ultimately at the supranational or global level; or else that it might be devolved principally to the sub-national or city level; or that it could be shared across a number of different levels of governance interdependently. The approach to institutional design outlined in this study, and which is encapsulated in the mutuality/territorial cohesion principle set out above, presupposes that there are mechanisms in place to ensure that political sovereignty is shared across a range of different governance levels. This in turn implies a significant enhancement in the influence of the local dimension in politics.

6c. Design and evaluation framework for an effective localism

What are the features of a positively functioning localism that system designers should be seeking to build into the brief for a multi-level political system? On the basis of what has been presented in Part II so far, it is proposed that five specific features should be highlighted in this context: distinctive local identity; local prosperity and flourishing; effective civil society and governance at the community level; positive horizontal links with other similar communities locally and further afield; and effective upward influence on broader power structures. In addition to these five inherently local features, it is also seen as important to draw on two system-level features that are likely to facilitate an effective approach to localism. These are: the existence at the macro level of a specific constitutional status and role for localities; and effective macro-level arrangements for promoting mutuality and cohesion at the meso and micro levels. Each of these factors provides the basis for one of the seven ‘good localism’ indicators set out below.

At the same time as articulating these positive aspirations for localism, it is important to acknowledge the main pathologies that localism can fall prey to as well. Briefly, these include: isolation and remoteness; poverty and ignorance; parochialism; domination by powerful local families/clans; existence of clientelism and corruption; disparities of wealth and power between different localities. These are features that the designers of effective political systems will in principle want to steer well clear of. However, system designers will also need to remain alert to the possibility that such pathologies could still emerge as unintended consequences of their design efforts.

The seven design features identified in the last-but-one paragraph above point the way towards what an effective localism should look like within a broader multi-level system. These features can now be expanded into a detailed set of descriptors as follows

- ***Distinctive local identity:*** the locality has a well-defined identity which is effectively promoted through landscapes, buildings, histories, images, the arts, and culture
- ***Local prosperity and flourishing:*** people in the locality contribute effectively to a sustainable local and wider economy; in addition, they enjoy good levels of health and education and a reasonable standard of living

- **Civil society and governance:** the locality has a vibrant, diverse social and cultural life. A significant number of its residents contribute meaningfully to local decision-making and governance. Local ecosystems are well managed and the locality as a whole is resilient
- **Links with the wider world:** the locality and its residents enjoy good transport, communication and activity links with other nearby communities and with places further afield. The locality welcomes visitors and people from outside, including those from different races and cultures
- **Upward influence:** the locality and its citizens are regularly able to exercise effective upward influence upon the broader power structures which govern their lives, and to shape their own affairs accordingly
- **Constitutional recognition:** the political arrangements of the jurisdiction in which the locality is situated clearly recognize the role that localities play, and give them explicit powers in the exercise of public and democratic functions
- **Mutuality and cohesion:** the jurisdiction in question has effective arrangements to help localities overcome any structural disadvantages that may affect them, and to encourage them to work together with other social and political partners on issues of common interest and concern.

As suggested briefly in section 1d above, it is envisaged that the above indicator set might be used in one of two main ways. Firstly, it might be used by scholars, commentators and legislators as a kind of design checklist when reforms to institutions and political systems are being considered. Secondly, it might also be used by researchers, public servants and politicians, and even by the wider public, to assess the quality of local outcomes produced by existing policies. This is the way in which it is more likely to be used.

As this thesis has argued, localities are very often the site where policy choices decided further up the chain of command work themselves out in practice, and where success or failure in meeting policy objectives becomes most apparent (Bailey and Pill, 2013). For both the kinds of use envisaged above, the indicator set outlined above also has the advantage of being flexible and capable of being applied at all the three key levels of place (P1, P2 and P3) identified in section 4b above. In order to test its suitability, the above framework will be used to assess the overall outcomes of policy in the two case study areas presented in Part III below.

6d. Applying an outcomes framework at the local level: area assessment in the UK

Before moving on to consider the two case studies, it is relevant to record how the outcomes framework set out here has been developed from a previous model that was used in the UK a few years ago. The Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) was a process developed by the UK's Audit Commission under Gordon Brown's Labour government (2007–2010). CAA emerged from a long line of inspection regimes which successive UK governments had put in place to assess the effectiveness of local public services. Inspired by New Public Management thinking, these regimes have been a prominent feature of the UK's public service landscape since the mid-1980s, especially within England.

What made CAA rather different from the other inspection regimes that it grew out of was its focus, not so much on the effectiveness of single institutions or services, but on the performance of whole areas at P2 and P3 level. The area assessment was particularly concerned with how public services within an area worked both with each other, and also in partnership with business and civil society organizations, to produce public value outcomes for the area as a whole. Unlike the localism indicators outlined in the previous section, the CAA was not based on a detailed set of public value principles. But it did have four 'underpinning themes', which were: sustainability, inequality, vulnerable people; and value for money (Audit Commission, 2009a: 14). As an assessment framework, the CAA was based on three core questions addressed at all partner organizations within the area concerned:

- How well do local priorities express community needs and aspirations?
- How well are the outcomes and improvements that are needed being delivered?
- What are the prospects for future improvement?

The collective performance of the local partners was assessed according to the standards laid down in a national framework of 185 public service indicators. These indicators covered a wide range of public value domains including environmental sustainability, wellbeing and political participation.

One particular feature of CAA which set it apart from all the other inspection regimes which have existed in the UK before or since, is that it did not result in

the area concerned receiving a specific rating at the end of the assessment process. Rather, CAA used a system of red and green flags to indicate either aspects of exceptional performance that could stand as examples of best practice for other areas (these were indicated by green flags), or else service areas where the level of current outcomes and those expected in the future gave rise to major concerns (these were indicated by red flags) (Audit Commission, 2009a: 21). As a system, CAA was only carried out fully in England for one year (2009–10). In that year, the Cornwall area was awarded one green flag for exceptional performance. This was for the local partners' success in improving skills and further education in the county¹². In the same year Cornwall also received two red flags, one for its shortcomings in children's safeguarding and wellbeing, and the other for the poor quality of its housing stock (Audit Commission, 2009b: 3).

After May 2010, the CAA system and the national indicator set on which it was based were quickly swept away by the incoming coalition government. The CAA was seen by the Conservative-led coalition as being too strongly associated with 'big government', and it was soon consigned to history. However, though the CAA was a stiflingly top-down process in some respects, it remains the only recent inspection regime to have focused upon public service outcomes for a whole area. This is without doubt its most strongly defining feature, and for that reason it has been used as a model for the localism indicator set outlined in this chapter. Another key feature of CAA was its innovative use of red and green flags as a way of highlighting key issues for the particular area in question.

On the other hand, one of CAA's main shortcomings was its disingenuous view of the degree of agency that local public sector organizations in England actually have in practice to shape policy outcomes to any significant degree. Allied to this was CAA's apparent myopia over the extent to which national policy and wider global factors also influence the performance of local public services. CAA lacked a multi-level perspective, and this is a shortcoming which the local outcomes framework set out in the previous section has sought to address.

¹² One of the partners involved in contributing to this particular instance of success was (and still remains) the University of Exeter

6e. Taking stock: localism and system design

The design of political institutions and processes is now a fundamental part of modern democratic politics. As such, it also needs to be high on the agenda of an engaged and relevant political science (Stoker, 2013). That said, there are many factors that may undermine rational design intentions, including path dependency (Pierson, 2000), power discourses (Dryzek, 1996) and, most importantly of all, the likelihood of unintended consequences (Goodin, 1996a).

Given contemporary political developments, especially those outlined in Chapter 4 above, it is important to extend the idea of political design to embrace not just specific institutions and polities, but also whole multi-governmental political systems at the sub-continental scale. To some extent, this lifts institutional design out of the arena of analytical political science, almost into the realms of normative political theory. This creates a methodological tension which needs to be successfully negotiated (Fung, 2007).

Given the essentially normative nature of any political design activity, it is important for substantive design proposals to be underpinned by an appropriately broad based set of political principles. These should be supplemented by a framework which specifies the public value outcomes which the political design in question is seeking to achieve. These public value indicators can be particularly effective if they specify what the intended outcomes of policy might look like from the point of view of localities and communities.

A comprehensive framework of indicators for an effective localism, such as the one presented in section 6c above, can be used not only for the purposes of design activity itself, but also much more broadly for the assessment and critique of current governance practice. A key point is to ensure that the focus of such a framework is on the collective outcomes which have been achieved across a whole area (Audit Commission, 2009a), and that it also takes due account of the influence of national and global factors.

As indicated previously, the thesis will now move on to test the localism framework developed in section 6c in two contemporary political settings. These are set out in Part III below as a cross-national study of two prominent multi-level clusters. The aim will be to test whether the framework is capable of

generating worthwhile observations about the empirical material presented. The case studies themselves will be set out in Chapters 7, 8 and 9.

Following the presentation of the two case studies in Part III, the localism framework will be deployed again at the start of Chapter 10 in Part IV. In order to apply the framework, each of its seven indicators will be considered one by one in relation to the two case study areas. In each case, the main comparative observations will be recorded alongside each other. As part of the assessment, it is proposed to employ the CAA's system of green and red flags to highlight features of particular note in each of the case study areas. Once the formal comparison between the case study areas is complete, Chapter 10 will move on to consider a range of other matters, including both the value and the potential of the localism framework itself.

PART III:

Empirical and Comparative Perspectives

Chapter 7: Two Contemporary Case Studies of Localism and Multi-level Governance

7a. Rationale and methodology

In the third part of this thesis, I resume my examination of contemporary developments within localism from an empirical and comparative perspective. In the following three chapters I present a comparative study of localism as it operates within two multi-level political clusters situated in different parts of the world. In the first one, the focus is on the Indian sub-continent, and within it the south-western state of Kerala and its southern district of Kollam. In the second, the focus is on the European Union (EU) and within it the United Kingdom and England. Within England, the focus will be on the sub-region formed by Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly, lying at the country's south-western extremity.

At the outset it is important to be clear what these two contrasting studies are cases 'of'. They are both presented as studies of how localism, in both its core and secondary senses (see Section 3e above), operates within a multi-level polity. The significant methodological novelty here is that both of these are *multi-level* case studies. What each sets out to do is, firstly, to provide some contextual and historical information about the political cluster in question; then, through a combination of description and analysis, to trace the recent pattern of political and policy interaction between the various scalar levels – both from the top down, and from the bottom up. In each case, two specific governance levels will be designated as the primary and secondary points of reference within the cluster. The rationale for these designations will be explained later in this chapter.

The research questions that will be used to guide the analysis of the two case studies are as follows:

- CSRQ1. To what extent do these two multi-level clusters and the sub-national settings highlighted within them meet the standards set out in the

framework of indicators for an effective localism in Section 6c above? What is the pattern of strengths and weaknesses in each case?

- CSRQ2. What are the underlying reasons for the above findings, and what are the prospects for change for each of the clusters?

As mentioned in Chapter 2, the Indian case study can be regarded as an exemplar of localism in action. This is because of Indian society's long and impressive tradition of localism dating back to ancient times (Fukuyama, 2011: 185), not to mention its constitutional commitment to it at present (Lijphart, 1996: 266). For this reason, it is the case study that the thesis considers first in Chapter 8 below. As for the European Union and its member states, localism and related concepts such as subsidiarity and cohesion are very much part of an evolving set of political relationships. The multi-level character of the EU does not yet enjoy the same settled status as that which appears (on the surface at least) to be the case in India. While both cases are intrinsically important in their own right, it is the European one which has 'key variable' status in this thesis. For that reason it is the setting which will be considered second, in Chapter 9 below.

7b. Introduction to, and broad comparison between, the two case study settings: India and the European Union

For a comparison between settings to be seen as effective and valid, it needs to be undertaken with entities which are broadly comparable, but which have significant distinguishing features along a range of dimensions. In this section, as well as the two which follow, some of the main underlying points of comparison between the two case study clusters that have been chosen for examination in this thesis are outlined. In this particular section, the task will be to introduce the Indian sub-continent and the European Union, and to compare and contrast them in accordance with some of their key macro-level features. These broadly reflect the theoretical categories that are of special interest in the thesis, and which were considered earlier in Part II. The specific features which will be covered below include land mass and population; political and legal structure; civil liberties and democratic accountability; social, religious and linguistic diversity; economic and human development indicators; environmental sustainability; and each setting's approach to decentralization and localism. Later in the chapter, the focus will switch to the more local points of reference

within each cluster: i.e. Kerala/Kollam in the case of the Indian sub-continent, and UK/England/Cornwall in the case of the EU. The aim of this initial analysis is to establish that the two multi-level settings chosen for analysis in this thesis are capable of producing valid comparative findings.

With regard to land mass and population, the state of India and the European Union (EU) can both be regarded as 'sub-continental' entities. In the case of India, this designation is strongly influenced by that country's peninsular geography. As a result, India's sub-continental identity is now firmly established in conventional parlance, at least in the UK. By contrast, the idea of the EU being described a sub-continental entity is perhaps less familiar to scholars, but is nonetheless plausible. The EU has a total land area of 4,495,000km² and a population of 506.9m inhabitants (EU, 2015). This equates to 19% of the total land area of Europe (according to the UN's definition of that continent's boundaries, which includes the whole of Russia), and 68% of Europe's total population (UN Statistics Division, 2015). By comparison, India has a total land mass of 3,300,000km² (or just over 10% of the total land mass of Asia). With an estimated 1,210m inhabitants in 2014, India had just over 28% of Asia's total population in that year.

On the basis of the above figures, the EU clearly includes the most densely populated parts of Europe with an average population density of 113 people per km², as opposed to an average of just 13 people per km² across the rest of the continent. As for India, it is well over three times more densely populated than the EU, with an average of 383 citizens per km². This figure also happens to be nearly three times the average population density of the rest of Asia, which recently stood at 135 inhabitants per km² (UN Statistics Division, 2015). Indeed India has one of the highest population densities of any country in the world, comparable with those of Holland and Belgium, which are the two most densely populated nations in the EU. The respective figures for population density are reflected in the current degree of urbanization within the two case study clusters. According to a recent demographic report from the UN, India had 37 urban agglomerations of more than a million inhabitants, and the EU had 25 (UN Statistics Division, 2015).

With regard to political and legal structure, India was established as a federal state in 1947 after the British period of colonial rule came to an end. It has a

formal constitution and a powerful central government and legal system. It also has a single currency and time zone. Below the central government level, it has 29 federal states, some of which are very large in terms of their land area and population, and seven relatively compact 'union territories'. Each of India's sub-national units has a significant range of devolved powers, including in most cases a state legislature and, in some cases, a high court as well. In contrast, the European Union is a steadily growing political and economic union currently comprising 28 sovereign states (see map at the end of this chapter). Its legal basis is set out in a series of major international treaties negotiated at more or less regular intervals since it was founded in 1958. It has a relatively small central administration (the EU Commission) which has increasingly broad, but still quite tightly defined, powers. It also has a directly elected Parliament; however, the powers of that body remain relatively limited even after nearly 40 years of existence. Nineteen of the EU's member states now share a single currency, the Euro, which was introduced in 2002. The EU also has its own Supreme Court and specific body of law. The European Court of Justice was established in 1952 and is the highest authority on all matters concerning EU law.

With regard to freedom, democracy and political rights, India is among 89 world countries officially recognized as 'free' by the independent international watchdog Freedom House (2015). Freedom House has been assessing countries as 'free', 'partly free' or 'not free' since 1972, and India was one of the countries that featured in its original list of 44 free nations¹³. Since then the number of 'free' countries in the world has increased to 89, a total which now includes all 28 of the EU's member states. The two main elements on which Freedom House's assessment of political freedom is based are political rights and civil liberties. Each of these is scored on a seven point scale. Generally speaking, countries scoring between 1–3 on average on the index are counted as 'free', those scoring between 3–5 as 'partly free', and those scoring between 5–7 as 'not free'. Interestingly, in the 2015 index all the EU's current states were awarded average scores of 1 or 2 on the index, whereas India's average score of 2.5 lay just within the upper threshold for 'free' states.

¹³ Since 1972 India has had two brief periods during which it was classified as 'partly free' as opposed to 'free': between 1976–1977 and 1991–1997

By contrast, a rather different picture emerges from the rankings published each year in The Economist's Democracy Index. The latter takes into account the capacity and effectiveness of government in the countries concerned, as well as the extent of their civil liberties and political participation. It ranks states according to whether they are 'full democracies', 'flawed democracies', 'hybrid regimes' or 'authoritarian regimes'. In the index published in 2014, just 24 (or 14%) of the 167 countries listed in the Index were assessed as 'full democracies', including 14 of the EU's 28 member states. A further 51 countries were assessed as 'flawed democracies'. These include India which stood at number 27 on The Economist's overall list. Thus, according to this particular index, the quality of India's democratic arrangements placed it within the top 20% of world states in 2014. That was higher than 12 of the EU's member states, including Italy, Greece and Poland (The Economist Intelligence Unit, 2015).

As multi-level, sub-continental polities, both the state of India and the EU are quite diverse in their linguistic, social and religious make-up. Each of India's 36 states and union territories has its own official language(s), and across the whole of the sub-continent no fewer than 24 separate languages are formally recognized, including the two 'official' languages of Hindi and English. India also has two officially designated categories of disadvantaged groups: The Scheduled Castes, of which 1241 specific categories were recorded in the country's 2011 census, and whose population in that year totalled more than 201m; and the Scheduled Tribes, of which there were 705 officially recorded in 2011, and whose total population across the whole of India in that year was just over 104m. Added together, these two groups made up just over 25% of the total population of India at the time of the census (Ministry of Tribal Affairs, 2013). In addition to these major social groupings, there are nine main religious traditions in India. The majority Hindu group comprised more than 80% of the population in 2011, but there were also significant Muslim, Christian, Sikh and Buddhist minorities (Office of the Registrar General and Census Commissioner, 2011). Although the Indian state and government structure are both formally secular in nature, conflict between religious communities has been a major factor in Indian politics throughout the whole of its time as an independent

nation. More generally, religious devotion and its various manifestations are a fundamental part of Indian life and culture.

The EU has a similar linguistic diversity to India, with 24 languages officially recognized across the Union. These are systematically supported by educational programmes such as the new Erasmus+ which runs from 2014–2020 (European Commission, 2015). With regard to religion, both the EU central apparatus and many of its member states are overwhelmingly secular in the way they operate. Long-standing religious traditions such as Roman Catholicism and Protestantism still have political significance in some member states. However, in some of the EU's leading states the main political impact of religion is now felt most strongly with respect to Islam. This highlights the growing phenomenon of economic and political migration into EU countries from other parts of the world, including of course from the Indian sub-continent itself. In 2006, for example, there were reportedly some 2.5m people of Indian origin living in the EU, most of them based in the UK, Italy, Portugal and the Netherlands¹⁴. The Indian community is part of a much larger immigrant population living within the EU. Official population figures for 2010 showed that at that time 31.4m (or 6.3%) of the EU's residents were born in countries outside the Union (Vasileva, 2011). That figure continues to rise rapidly at the present time, and the pressures from outside migration into the EU are growing sharply (The Guardian, 2015).

With regard to aspects of economic, social and environmental wellbeing, India had a nominal gross domestic product (GDP) of \$1,808.4 per capita according to recent data published by the International Monetary Fund (IMF). In 2015, it ranked 141st out of 188 countries in the world on this measure. This compared to a range of \$13,500 to \$96,300 per capita for the 19 Eurozone countries and \$43,940 per capita specifically for the UK (IMF, 2015). However, according to the same set of figures, India's total GDP stood at \$2,308bn in 2015, making it the seventh largest economy in the world after those of USA, China, Germany, Japan and France and the UK.

As for human development, India was ranked 130th out of 188 nations by the UN in 2014. This places it well down into the third of the four broad categories

¹⁴ The Indian community in the EU forms part of a wider diaspora of more than 30m persons of Indian origin living overseas currently (Ministry of External Affairs, 2016)

of human and social development designated by the UN, i.e. nations that are considered to have 'medium' levels of development. By contrast, in the same report nearly all of the EU's 28 nations were placed in the highest-ranking group of nations, i.e. those which are considered to have 'very high' levels of human development. The lowest ranking EU nations were Romania at 52nd and Bulgaria at 59th (UNDP, 2015). India's performance across a range of human development indicators is strongly criticized in a recent book by Jean Drèze and Amartya Sen. According to these authors, in areas such as child and female health, India ranks alongside many of the poorest countries in Southern Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa. In addition, the educational attainment of children and young people in many of India's schools is also a cause for major concern. Overall, India is a country of stark inequalities, where around three in every four people still struggle with poverty and with very low levels of human and social development (Drèze and Sen, 2014).

With regard to environmental sustainability, the most authoritative international survey is the environmental performance index (EPI), published biennially by Yale University's Centre for Environmental Law and Policy (YCELP). The EPI assesses how well countries are performing on a range of environmental standards across two broadly-based priority areas: protection of human health from environmental harm, and protection of ecosystems. Within these two major areas, the EPI measures states' performance on 20 individual indicators relating to aspects such as air quality, water and sanitation, climate and energy, biodiversity and health impacts. According to a recent EPI report, India ranks 155th out of the 178 states whose data were included in the survey. By contrast, all but one of the EU's 28 member states were positioned within the top 50 countries, and the EU's lowest ranked country, Romania, appeared at number 86 on the list (YCELP, 2014: 10). A more nuanced picture emerges from the UN Human Development Report of 2011, which surveyed countries' comparative performance across a very wide range of environmental sustainability indicators, including the EPI just mentioned. While India scores relatively poorly in relation to the EU and to the rest of the world on aspects such as urban pollution and deforestation, its performance in other areas such as the ecological footprint of its population and its level of per capita greenhouse gas emissions, lies very much at the positive end of the

international spectrum. It also scores higher than all but two EU nations (Sweden and Latvia) for the proportion of its total energy requirement generated from renewables. According to the UN's 2011 report, India's figure for renewables in 2007 stood at an impressive 28.1% of the total energy generated nationally in that year (UNDP, 2011: 146–148).

With regard to decentralization and localism, India enacted a set of significant constitutional reforms in the early 1990s. These have effectively transformed it from a two-level, into a three-level federal polity. As a result, India now has a relatively uniform tier of democratically elected local authorities in its cities, towns and rural areas. India's third tier of government is responsible for ensuring that a broad and legally defined range of social, environmental and infrastructure functions is now delivered locally for communities. This massive decentralization of powers can be seen as building upon India's long tradition of local self-organization. However in practice, a great deal has depended on how effectively both India's Administrative Service (IAS), and elected governments at the state and federal levels, have been able to implement and support the reforms. More than twenty years on from the passing of the original reform legislation, it is fair to say that India's approach to decentralization and localism has enjoyed a rather mixed record to date. Maybe that is because the reforms were conceived and implemented in too much of a top-down fashion (Jayal, 2007). That said, in several Indian states, particularly for example in Kerala, local self-governance reforms do appear to have been carried out effectively and to be working well. Indeed, Kerala's approach to local self-governance is now frequently held up as a model for other parts of the developing world to follow (Isaac and Heller, 2003). That is one of the main reasons why it has been selected for analysis in this comparative study.

In contrast to India, the European Union has had to pursue a much more ideational path towards decentralization and localism over the course of the past thirty years. It has managed to achieve this by promoting two ideas – subsidiarity and cohesion – consistently over that period. Both of these ideas first came to prominence in 1986 as key principles within the Single European Act. This led to widespread recognition within the EU of the importance of sub-national regions as the main focus for economic development and regeneration. Following the signing of the Maastricht Treaty, a new advisory Committee of the

Regions was created in 1994. This provided a first opportunity for Europe's regions and local authorities to participate directly in EU governance at the supranational level. Since 2004 countries wishing to join the EU have been required to establish regional structures below the state level as a condition for entry (Morphet, 2013). More recently the principles of subsidiarity and cohesion have been enshrined even more firmly into the 2009 Lisbon Treaty. As a result there is now a much stronger expectation that regional and local views will be taken into account by the governments of EU member states. This heralds the importance of a new 'territorial agenda' across Europe, in which the specific needs of particular places will have a much stronger role in shaping the overall policy of the EU (CEC, 2011: 4). The intention is that much greater priority should now be given in the EU to policy making from the bottom-up. But as in India, the implementation of federal principles and aspirations depends a great deal on the extent to which individual member states are able to address that task effectively.

7c. The sub-national tier: comparing Kerala and England

Within each of the two multi-level case studies chosen for analysis in this thesis, one particular governance level serves as the primary point of reference (see section 7b above). In the case of the Indian sub-continent, the main point of reference is the south-western state of Kerala. For the EU, it is the sub-national territory of England. The rationale for focusing on these two sub-national polities in particular is that each of them is seen as occupying a pivotal position in relation to the rest of the cluster. Each has shaped the course of decentralization and localism within its own territory and beyond in significant ways. In the case of Kerala, the state government's impact on the development of localism in its area is widely seen as positive, as a succession of academic studies published over the past few years appears to indicate (Isaac, 2000; Heller, Harilal and Chaudhuri, 2007; Fischer, 2009: 256–271). As for England, it has been the laboratory for some highly novel approaches to localism in recent years, a state of affairs which looks set to continue into the future (Pearce and Ayres, 2012; Buser, 2013; Leach and Davis, 2015). Indeed, the developing governance of England is of particular interest in this study. With this in mind, it makes sense in this sub-section to present some of the key points of comparison between Kerala and England, along similar lines to those which

were outlined for India and the EU above. However, at this sub-national scale, the comparison between the two settings concerned is potentially even richer and more complex than it was for the sub-continental level. This is because it is able to draw on a wider range of scalar and geographical perspectives.

Kerala

Starting with Kerala and its land mass and population, the state has a total spatial area of 38,863km²; and its population at the time of the 2011 census was 33.4m inhabitants. From an Indian perspective, Kerala is a small to medium-sized state. In terms of population, it was the 13th largest of India's 36 states and territories in 2011, with 2.8% of the national total. As for land area, Kerala is the 22nd largest of India's states and territories, covering just 1.2% of the national land mass. However, one aspect in which Kerala outplays most other Indian states is in the concentration of its population. At 859 inhabitants per km², it is the third most densely populated of India's 29 states. That said, Kerala has only one urban agglomeration of more than a million inhabitants, the port city of Kochi whose population in 2013 was 1.36m (UN Statistics Division, 2015). Even more significant is Kerala's low rate of population growth in comparison with the rest of India. At the time of the last census, Kerala was the slowest growing state in India. Between 2001 and 2011, Kerala's population grew by only 4.9%, as opposed to an all-India average of 17.6% (Census of India, 2011a)¹⁵.

The geography of Kerala is quite distinctive. The state occupies a long strip of land extending some 580km along the south-western shoreline of the sub-continent (see maps at the end of this chapter and at the end of Chapter 8). Along the whole of its eastern border, it is bounded by the Western Ghat *massif*. This feature is significant as it checks the progress of the prevailing monsoon winds that sweep across the sub-continent every year. This means that Kerala experiences very high annual rainfall, especially during monsoon periods. Allied with the state's tropical climate, Kerala's high rainfall makes it an extremely fertile place. For many hundreds of years it has attracted merchants and colonial powers for the richness of its tea, coffee, spices, fruit, rice and rubber production. Because of its peculiar geography and its pattern of cultivation, the state has a number of distinct landscape types: tropical forests, tea plantations

¹⁵ Kerala was in fact the only Indian state whose decadal rate of population growth remained in single digits between 2001–2011

and wildlife reserves within its mountain belt, and many square kilometres of wetlands and inland waterways running along a broad stretch of its coastal plain. In recent years, these natural features have been promoted as part of Kerala's thriving international tourist industry.

With regard to its social, religious and linguistic make-up, Kerala presents quite a different picture from much of the rest of India. The modern state of Kerala was formed in 1956 during the period following India's independence. The state is based on the former territories of Malabar, Cochin and Travancore. Indeed the royal rulers of the two latter territories were only persuaded to relinquish power after new Republic of India had been formed (Menon, 2007). Kerala's boundaries were drawn up in such a way as to include as many as possible of the Malayalam-speaking peoples of south-western India. Linguistically, therefore, it is a highly cohesive state with nearly 97% of its population recorded as speaking Malayalam as their first language in the 2011 census. English is also widely used across the state as the main language of government and commerce. Socially speaking, a much lower proportion of Kerala's population is made up of Scheduled Castes and Tribes than is the case across India generally. In the 2011 census, the total population percentage of these two groups combined in Kerala was 10.6%, as opposed to more than 25% for India overall (Census of India, 2011b). As for religious affiliation, there is a much more equal balance between the main religious communities in Kerala than there is in many other parts of India. In the 2011 census, Hindus accounted for 54% of Kerala's total population, Muslims 27% and Christians 19%. Interestingly, the Hindu portion of Kerala's population was 2% lower in 2011 than it was at the time of the 2001 census, and the proportion of Muslims was up by a similar margin. A comparable change was also recorded in several other Indian states in 2011 (Open Magazine, 2014). This finding seems to be in line with a gradual long-term trend of rising Muslim population, which is becoming increasingly evident both in India and across the world generally (Pew Research Centre, 2017).

With regard to government and politics, Kerala has its own democratically elected legislature and government based in the state capital Trivandrum¹⁶ in the far south of the state (see map of Kerala at the end of Chapter 8). The

¹⁶ For convenience, the anglicized version of the city's name will be used in this thesis rather than the Indian version Thiruvananthapuram

government is headed by a Chief Minister and a Council of Ministers, both of whom are elected by popular mandate every five years. The most recent state elections in Kerala took place in May 2016. Political life in Kerala is fiercely competitive and dominated by two main political blocks: the centre-left UDF, led by the Indian Congress party; and the far left-leaning LDF, led by the Marxist version of the Communist Party of India¹⁷. These two rival blocks have alternated power in Kerala one term at a time going all the way back to 1982. Currently it is the LDF which holds power in Kerala. Following the 2016 elections, it has a majority of more than 40 seats in Kerala's 141-seat, unicameral assembly. Kerala's Chief Minister and Government are accountable not only to their electors, but also to the Governor of Kerala, who is appointed for a five-year term by the President of India. Under India's constitution, the Governor acts as Kerala's nominal head of state. Kerala also has its own High Court which is headed by a Chief Justice and based in Ernakulam in central Kerala. The Chief Justice and all the other High Court Judges attached to the court are, like the state Governor, appointed by the President of India.

In economic terms, Kerala has been one of the better-performing Indian states in the past ten years. In 2012/13, Kerala's total GDP was the 11th largest among India's 36 states and union territories. Along with much of the rest of the Indian economy, Kerala's GDP has grown annually by a rate of 12%–16% since 2004. In terms of nominal GDP per capita, Kerala's figure was also the 11th largest of India's states and territories in 2012/13, and some 19% above the national average for that year (Press Information Bureau of India, 2014). One particular feature of Kerala's economy in the past 20–30 years is the very large numbers of workers who have been leaving the state to work abroad. A recent report prepared for Kerala's State Planning Board estimates that the total number of Keralites working overseas in 2014 was around 2.36m, an increase of 3.6% over the figure reported three years earlier (The Indian Express, 2014). The vast majority of Keralan migrants are working in the Gulf States and in the Middle East, from where they send remittances back to Kerala on a regular basis. Many of these migrant workers are young professionals with good educational qualifications. They have relocated to the Middle East to find better paid work than that which is available to them at home. According to recent

¹⁷ Kerala is one of two main Communist Party (Marxist) strongholds in India. The other is the state of West Bengal where the Communist-led Left Front held power uninterruptedly from 1977–2011

figures published by the Indian government, Kerala had the worst jobless figures for the whole of India in 2010, with more than double the national rate for people out of work in both urban and rural areas (Government of India, 2013).

One of the key aspects of Kerala's short history as a state is its outstanding record on a range of human development indicators over the course of the past 20–30 years. This is a policy achievement which, along with the state's approach to localism, has drawn significant attention from international agencies and academic researchers since the 1990s. Kerala's principal achievement is to have broken the grip of some of the deep-seated inequalities that have traditionally weighed heavily upon Indian society. Kerala has reached Western levels of human development¹⁸ in a number of key areas by implementing its own distinct policy solutions and by using relatively modest levels of resource. Jean Drèze and Amartya Sen present detailed evidence from India's 2011 census to show that Kerala continues to lead the way amongst Indian states on a wide range of human development indicators such as: the proportion of its people living in 'multi-dimensional' poverty; male and female life expectancy; under-fives mortality; child and female health; male and female literacy; number of years spent in secondary schooling; proportion of women in employment; and even the level of newspaper readership (Drèze and Sen, 2014: 289–335).

As a result of the major changes in India's constitution in 1993, much of the responsibility for delivering basic services now lies directly with the newly re-established tier of city, town and village councils. The eleventh schedule to the 73rd Amendment Act specifically lists 29 service responsibilities for the new local councils to carry out across a wide range of areas including: agriculture and all forms of water management; forestry and fisheries; local industry, roads and housing; energy and power distribution; poverty alleviation; family and social welfare; health and sanitation; school, technical and adult education; and libraries and culture (Ministry of Justice, 2015). In Kerala these wide-ranging responsibilities are delivered by an extensive, multi-level pattern of elected local government bodies of which there are 1200 in the state currently. Services in Kerala's urban areas are delivered by 93 unitary councils. In the six largest

¹⁸ Kerala's Human Development Index score was calculated at 0.790 in 2011 (Government of India, 2011: 257). This was not only the highest amongst India's 29 states, but also high enough to place Kerala on a par with those nations deemed to have 'very high' levels of development in that year (UNDP, 2011: 127)

cities of Kannur, Kochi, Kozhikode, Kollam, Thrissur, and Trivandrum, these unitaries are called ‘municipal corporations’; and in 87 other designated urban areas of Kerala they go by the title of ‘municipalities’. In Kerala’s rural areas, public services are delivered by means of a three-tier governmental structure consisting in total of 14 districts, 152 blocks and 978 village councils or *Grama Panchayats* (George, 2014)¹⁹.

England

Moving on to England, its land area – at 130,395km² – is more than three times that of Kerala; and with just over 53m inhabitants recorded in the UK’s census of 2011, its population is also some 63% larger than Kerala’s. Furthermore, England makes up 84% of the population of the UK and some 10.6% that of the EU (Office for National Statistics (ONS), 2014a). If England and Kerala were sovereign states, their populations would be the 25th and 40th largest in the world respectively on recent figures. With regard to population density, England – with 407 people per km² – is much more densely populated than most parts of Europe and of the world generally; but it still has less than half the population density of Kerala. In spite of that, England has four urban conurbations with more than a million inhabitants (Greater London, Greater Manchester, West Midlands and West Yorkshire) while Kerala just has one. In terms of population growth, England with an increase of 7.9% recorded between 2001 and 2011, comfortably outstrips Kerala, the rest of the UK, and almost all the other countries in the EU (ONS, 2012a; Eurostat, 2013).

In terms of the make-up of England’s population, just under 80% of its inhabitants were recorded as being of ‘White British’ origin in the census of 2011. This is a reduction of more than 5% from the figure recorded in 2001. The next most populous racial category recorded in England in 2011 was ‘Asian’, at 7.8% of the total. This was an increase on the previous figure of 5.1% recorded in 2001. Within the Asian category, the largest group was formed by people of Indian origin. Their 1.4m inhabitants made up 2.8% of the total population of England in 2011 (ONS, 2011a). As for languages spoken in England, the vast majority of people spoke English as their main language in 2011. The next most populous language community was that of Polish speakers, at just over 1%.

¹⁹ Since these figures were published the number of local councils in the state has fallen to 941. This is as a result of the most recent local government reorganization (The New Indian Express, 2015: 4)

Several Indian and Asian languages (including Punjabi, Urdu, Bengali, Gujarati and Tamil) also featured amongst England's top 20 languages in 2011 (ONS NOMIS, 2015) ²⁰. As for religion, the highest recorded religious groupings in England in 2011 were first Christian, with 59% of the population (down from more than 71% in 2001); then 'no religion' with just under 25% of the population (up by more than 10% from the previous census); followed by Muslim at 5% and Hindu at 1.5% (ONS, 2011b). Both the latter groupings, though relatively small, had risen significantly in proportional terms since 2001.

In terms of its political governance, England is almost unique for such a large territory in that it does not have its own dedicated government or legislature. Constitutionally it forms part of the United Kingdom, and it is also by far the largest and most dominant territory within the UK. Historically, England's identity as a national polity goes back more than a thousand years, to the initial unification of Saxon kingdoms achieved by Kings Athelstan and Eadred in the tenth century AD. In the century which followed, England's unification was completed by Edward the Confessor and then by the Norman kings. In the thirteenth century, the neighbouring territory of Wales was subdued, and Acts of Union were signed with Scotland and Ireland in 1707 and 1800 respectively. This is when the United Kingdom formally came into being. By this time, England and its union territories were already building up a formidable overseas empire, including the Indian sub-continent.

In more recent times, most of Ireland took the decision to break away from the UK in 1921 and to form a separate republic; however, Northern Ireland remained within the UK. In the period which followed, most of Britain's overseas empire, including India, was granted its independence and Britain became one of the early members of the EU in 1973. During the course of this long and often turbulent history, England's political identity has become almost totally synonymous with that of the union; and this has remained the case until relatively recently. However, a clear sign of the changing balance of relationships within the union was the creation of devolved legislatures, firstly in Northern Ireland in 1998, and then in Scotland and Wales (both in 1999). These devolution initiatives have placed England in an increasingly anomalous position with regard to the rest of UK, particularly in the light of the Scottish

²⁰ It is also interesting to note that there were some 34,700 speakers of Malayalam as a first language recorded in England's census of 2011

independence referendum which took place in September 2014 (Jeffery, 2015). Politically and constitutionally, it is now becoming quite urgent for England to find a settled, long-term role within the UK as a whole.

In economic terms, it is difficult to disaggregate England's performance from that of the rest of the UK, as relatively few of the main international data sources show separate figures for England. However, according to recent national statistics (ONS, 2013a), England's Gross Value Added²¹ accounted for nearly 86% of the UK's economic output in 2011. In that year England had a higher unit level of labour productivity than the UK average, and also a higher level of disposable income per head. The figures for Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland on these two measures lay mostly well below the UK average. On the other hand, two English regions (London and South-East England) stood out as having particularly high values on these two measures in comparison to the rest of the UK. This picture seems to be corroborated by current EU figures. These show that in 2013 Inner London had the highest GDP per capita of all the EU's 276 Level-2 sub-regions, at a staggering 325% of the EU average (Eurostat, 2015a). The Eurostat press release from which these figures are taken also shows that the UK/England has the widest internal discrepancy in regional values out of all the 28 EU's member states²². This confirms the fact that there are significant inequalities within the different regions and sub-regions of England as far as economic prosperity is concerned.

With regard to human development, it is once again difficult to disaggregate England's position from that of the rest of the UK, particularly when researching international data sources. In global terms, the UK is generally considered to have 'very high' levels of human development and it is currently ranked at 14th overall in a recent UN human development report (UNDP, 2015: 208), with a human development index (HDI) score of 0.907. One of the four main components that go to make up the UN's HDI calculation is 'life expectancy at birth'. For this particular dimension it is possible to get a more detailed UK picture from data published by the Office for National Statistics. Recent ONS figures show that both 'life expectancy' and 'healthy life expectancy' are significantly higher for men and women in England than they are in other parts

²¹ Gross Value Added (GVA) is a measure that is used specifically for reporting the economic output of regions and other entities that are 'smaller than a whole economy'

²² The lowest GDP per capita in England is to be found currently in the Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly sub-region, at 70% of the EU average in 2013 (Eurostat, 2015a)

of the UK, in some cases by as much as five years on average (ONS, 2012b: 6). Moreover, whereas life expectancy in England and Wales has been gradually rising in recent years, in Scotland and Northern Ireland it has actually been falling back. In comparison with the EU 28, the UK (and also, by implication, England) scores quite well on the 'healthy life expectancy' indicator, with the UK recently ranked above the EU average at 7th for men and equal 9th for women (ONS, 2014b).

With regard to decentralization and localism, England currently has 353 principal local councils. These are of five main types – county, unitary, and district councils, as well as London and metropolitan boroughs. Each type of council has its own slightly different combinations of powers and responsibilities, and some councils have overlapping jurisdiction for the same geographical area (Wilson and Game, 2011). Each local council has its own elected body of councillors and is accountable directly to the UK government through the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG). The number of principal councils in England has gradually fallen over the past 40 years as a result of amalgamations and rationalizations (Leach, 2009) to the point where the UK now has the largest and most democratically remote local authorities in the whole of Western Europe (Bogdanor, 2009a). In addition, the powers and finances of local authorities in England have been severely curtailed by central government in recent years, particularly as a result of the public 'austerity' policies that have been pursued in the UK since 2010 (Lowndes and Pratchett, 2012).

In addition to the 353 principal councils, there are some 10,200 minor councils in England known variously as town, parish or community councils (TPCs). These are to be found mainly in rural areas and they cover about 37% of England's population (HM Government, 2012a). More significantly, all TPC powers in England are discretionary. In this sense, TPCs cannot be compared with their counterparts in India or in other European countries such as France and Germany, where in constitutional terms they form the basic tier of local governance within the state. However, as Coulson (1998: 248) acknowledges, what TPCs lack in constitutional powers and in service and financial responsibilities, they at least partly make up for by being a space in which local democracy is able to flourish. This is because TPCs in England are elected

through democratic suffrage. Interestingly, recent British governments have taken some small but significant steps to give more powers and influence to this 'micro-tier' of governance in recent years (DCLG, 2006a; Buser, 2013).

7d. The local tier: comparing Kollam and Cornwall

The two local settings highlighted as secondary points of reference for this comparative study have each been selected for specific reasons. Kollam district in southern Kerala represents many of the features that are most typical of the state of which it forms part. By contrast, the sub-region formed by Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly in the far south-west of England, is generally felt to be quite distinct from the wider territory in which it is located. Each of these two local settings is introduced briefly in turn below.

Kollam

Kollam District (see map at the end of Chapter 8) is a territory of 2,491km² in size. In terms of its area, is the seventh largest of Kerala's 14 districts. Geographically speaking, it is the perfect microcosm for Kerala as a whole, as it contains all of the state's most distinctive landscapes: coastal strip and extensive inland waterways in the west; fertile, rolling plains in the centre; and high-altitude tropical forest and mountainous regions to the east. It is roughly rectangular in shape, measuring some 40km north to south and around 70km on average from west to east. The district bears the same name as its one major population centre, the ancient port city of Kollam (formerly known as Quilón). With a population of 349,000 in 2011 (Census of India, 2011a), Kollam is the fourth largest city in Kerala, and is also the core of a major urban agglomeration that is home to almost a million inhabitants. Apart from its main city and urban area, Kollam district also has a number of other, smaller population centres, including the four municipalities of Karunagapally, Kottarakkara, Punalur and Paravur. The district's history as an administrative unit goes back to the early nineteenth century when it was established as one of Travancore's two main revenue divisions. It continued to have a leading role in the administration of the wider territory of which it was part, right up to and beyond the period in which the new state of Kerala was formed in 1956. By this time Kollam had also been designated as a district in its own right (District of Kollam, 2016).

With regard to population, Kollam had 2.64m inhabitants in 2011 according to the census. Of this number, just over 45% lived in the district's urban areas and the remainder were rural dwellers. This profile is roughly in line with the average for Kerala as a whole in 2011. However, it is very much higher than the 18% that were living in Kollam's urban areas at the time of the previous census in 2001 (Government of Kerala, 2013: 2). Most of the discrepancy between the 2001 and 2011 figures can be explained by a recent technical change in the way in which urban areas in India are classified. This has had the effect of increasing the number of towns in Kerala from 159 to 520 over the period in question (Government of Kerala, 2015). Population density in Kollam, at 1056 inhabitants per km², is well above the state average, but is by no means the highest in Kerala. More significant is the very low rate of decadal population growth in the district recorded in 2011. At 1.7%, not only is it well below the average for the state, but is also one of the lowest anywhere in India (see section 7b above).

Land use statistics for the district in 2011 show that almost 51% of the land area in Kollam was being used for agriculture in that year, with a further 33% covered by forest and some 10% dedicated to non-agricultural use (Government of Kerala, 2013: 10). Around 70% of the district's population is currently recorded as working in the agricultural sector, and 95% of all agricultural production is carried out in individual smallholdings (District of Kollam, 2016). The five main crops cultivated in Kollam are coconut, rice, tapioca, rubber and pepper. However, between 2005 and 2010, there was a significant decline in the production of nearly all crops, and this appears to be indicative of a fundamental change taking place within the wider economy of the area. Kollam also has a number of larger enterprises, especially within the agribusiness and mineral extraction sectors. A significant number of these are state-owned, either by the Government of Kerala (e.g The Kerala State Cashew Development Corporation Ltd or Kerala Minerals and Metals Ltd), or else by national government (Kerala Rare Earths Ltd). Another major element in Kollam's economy now is tourism, with growing numbers of visitors coming to Kollam each year both from other parts of India, and from Europe and Australasia.

In terms of its politics and local government, Kollam – in common with most parts of India, and also with the rest of Kerala – has two systems of local

governance running alongside each other. The first is a fairly traditional, top-down administrative system organized around the collection of taxes and the registration of property and persons. This system was established during the British Raj and was adopted in its entirety by the new state of India in 1947. The second is the new decentralized system of local democratic participation and self-governance introduced as part of the major constitutional changes that took place in India the early 1990s. These two systems have many overlaps and they share some common institutions. At the apex of them both is the District. Under the first of the two local government systems, the District Collector (or Chief Official) oversees a system of revenue divisions (or taluks) and revenue villages. In Kollam, there are 6 taluks and 104 revenue villages in total.

As for the second of the local government systems, this is based on a network of self-governing villages (or *grama panchayats*) and their political representatives who are elected through democratic suffrage. These village councils are expected to prepare annual development plans which are then fed up to a higher tier of indirectly elected block panchayats. In Kollam there are 69 *grama panchayats* and 11 block panchayats, with each block covering as many as eight self-governing villages (District of Kollam, 2016). The block panchayats then in turn feed their consolidated plans up to the indirectly elected District panchayat. This rather cumbersome system does not apply in the case of Kollam's four municipal councils and one corporation. The latter are unitary bodies and so they are able to feed their annual plans and proposals directly in at the district and state levels. As it happens, both the state of Kerala and Kollam's district panchayat were national award winners in their respective categories in India's Rajiv Gandhi²³ rural development awards in 2015. The citation for Kollam's award referred to the major changes that the district council had brought about in the agricultural, health and education sectors, and also its successful implementation of schemes for the protection of the environment and the conservation of water resources (The Hindu, 2015a).

Finally, with regard to state-level politics, Kollam has a total of 11 seats in Kerala's 141-seat assembly. Since May 2016, all of these have been held by the Communist-led LDF, which effectively makes Kollam the most left-leaning district in the whole of Kerala currently.

²³ Rajiv Gandhi was the prime minister who was mainly responsible for introducing the constitutional changes that underpin the new system of local self-governance in India. He was assassinated in 1994.

Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly

As for Cornwall and its offshore Isles of Scilly, these two territories between them now form an EU-designated sub-region (see maps at the end of Chapter 9). They have a combined land area of 3580km², which is more than 30% larger than the area covered by Kollam. Because of their peninsular and island geography, Cornwall and Scilly are very much defined by their relationship with the sea. Indeed their combined coastline, at over 700km in length, accounts for more than 10% of England's seaboard (British Cartographic Society, 2015). From a geological point of view, Cornwall especially is characterized by the central spine of granite which runs through the length of its interior. At several points the granite rock is exposed to the surface, most notably on Cornwall's rugged moorlands and, even more dramatically, at the county's south-western extremity. Cornwall's landscape is also decisively shaped by the impact of the prevailing Atlantic weather pattern on its rugged topology. The result is a spectacular and varied coastline that runs around the whole of Cornwall's coastline.

With regard to its population and demography, the combined population of the Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly sub-region was recorded as 535,000 in 2011 (Cornwall Council, 2013a). This is less than 20% of the population of Kollam. The sub-region's population density in 2011, at an estimated 149 inhabitants per km², was also low in relation to its Indian counterpart, as well as to the rest of England. According to the most recent census figures, 83% of Cornwall's population and 100% of Scilly's were classified as 'rural' in 2011, in accordance with the ONS's definition of that term (ONS, 2013b). This was in contrast with a rural population of just under 18% across England as a whole at the time of the census. Because of its rural nature and also because of its peripherality in relation to the English mainland, the Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly sub-region possesses no large agglomerations of its own. It does, however, have six urban centres consisting of 20 thousand inhabitants or more²⁴. These are quite well scattered across Cornwall's relatively large land area. Despite a long-established trend for outward migration amongst its young people, Cornwall's overall population has continued to grow steadily over the course of the past 50 years, in line with that of England as a whole. Most of this growth is due to

²⁴ In order of population size, these urban centres are: Camborne/Redruth, St Austell, Falmouth, Truro, Penzance and Newquay (see second map at the end of Chapter 9)

inward migration from other parts of England. Between 2001 and 2011, Cornwall's population grew by nearly 7%, up from just over half a million in 2001.

As a territory, Cornwall in particular has a very distinctive identity and culture. These features are powerful enough to have an impact on Cornwall politically²⁵. Much of Cornwall's distinct identity derives from its history of bitter resistance – sometimes effective, sometimes not – against successive waves of invasion from the eastern side of the English mainland over the course of nearly two millennia. Throughout this period, the native *Kernewek* language of Cornwall's early Celtic inhabitants continued to be spoken in various pockets around the sub-region. Cornwall's native tongue only finally died out in the eighteenth century when the use of English became more firmly established. This coincided with a period in which Cornwall's economy began to boom, particularly on the back of its copper and tin mining industries. This was also a period when Cornwall briefly played a leading part in England's industrial revolution, especially in the fields of science and engineering. However, after Cornwall's mining industry collapsed in the late nineteenth century, the area once again experienced a long period of economic decline, from which it is still to some extent continuing to emerge. That said, since the early part of the twentieth century Cornwall has held an increasingly strong attraction for artists, cultural tourists and holidaymakers, and these have now become some of the principal elements on which its modern-day economy is based.

In terms of the sub-region's detailed economic profile, the key sectors currently are business services (including property), retail distribution, hotels and catering, and public administration and defence. There is also a growing food and drink sector linked to the sub-region's agricultural production. Traditional industries such as mining and fishing are now very small and still in decline (Cornwall Council, 2014a). Overall, the Cornwall/Scilly sub-region's economy has been growing steadily over the course of past decade, but it still remains one of the smallest and weakest, not only within the UK, but also across the EU as a whole (Cornwall Council, 2013b). In 2013, for example, workplace-based GVA in Cornwall/Isles of Scilly was the lowest amongst the UK's 35 Level-2 sub-regions (ONS, 2014c, table 2.1). A similar picture is apparent at the EU

²⁵ For example, more than 73,000 individuals (i.e. nearly 14% of Cornwall's population) stated their nationality as either exclusively, or partly 'Cornish' in the 2011 census

level. GDP figures for all the European Union's Level-2 sub-regions in 2012 showed Cornwall/Isles of Scilly at position 233 out of 276 (Eurostat, 2015b). A consequence of this low economic base is that household income in the sub-region is not only the lowest in England, but also the second lowest in any of the UK's 35 NUTS sub-regions (ONS, 2014b).

With regard to its politics and local government, Cornwall is one of 38 traditional English counties which still continue to be governed as territories in their own right. 28 of these county areas have a two-tier pattern of governance, with the upper-tier county council responsible for functions such as school-age education, social care, highways and waste disposal; and a lower tier of district councils covering functions such as housing, planning, leisure and waste collection. However, Cornwall is one of 10 English 'unitary' counties that have taken over responsibility for all local services in their areas in recent years²⁶.

Cornwall became a unitary county in April 2009 as part of a larger reorganization of English councils which took place in that year. At that point, Cornwall's six former district councils and its previous county council were merged to form a single, large 'unitary' authority. The reorganization proposal that Cornwall submitted to government stressed its ambition to create a local government body that would be both strategic and local at the same time. With localism in mind, the submission contained proposals to enhance the role of the Cornwall's 'micro-tier' of 213 town and parish councils, as well as to create a new pattern of 16 local 'community networks' that could cover the whole of the county's large land area (Cornwall County Council, 2007: 21 and 40-41). It was a thoughtful piece of institutional design that has since been followed through quite faithfully into practice.

One of the main reasons why Cornwall's bid for unitary status was approved by the UK's government in 2007 was because of the recognition by ministers of Cornwall's distinct heritage and culture. In 2005, for example, the *Kernewek* language was included in the European Charter for the Protection of Regional Minority Languages, thus joining other Celtic languages such as Welsh, Gaelic and Breton. More recently, the UK's coalition government supported the inclusion of Cornish people under European Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (Cornwall Council, 2014b: 22). Another factor

²⁶ The Isles of Scilly Council, which is 'sovereign' and formally separate from Cornwall, is also a unitary council

that may have influenced the UK government in its decision-making about Cornwall is the fact that since 2000 the Cornwall/Isles of Scilly sub-region has been the only English territory to receive a dedicated stream of grant funding from the European Union. The sub-region is now well into its third seven-year programme of EU financial support, covering the period 2014–2020, bringing with it a total of 610m euros in grant funding over the seven-year period (Cornwall Council, 2015a).

7e. Conclusions: a basis for comparison?

The aim of this chapter has been to set out key aspects of the two multi-level case-studies proposed for comparative analysis in this thesis. This is with a view to presenting them in some of their inherent complexity and detail; but it has also been to establish a valid basis upon which comparisons between them can be made. With these thoughts in mind, what conclusions can be drawn from the evidence and the arguments that have been presented so far?

In the first place, it is appropriate to consider the state of India and the EU as ‘sub-continental’, political entities. Each of them contains a significant proportion of the world’s population concentrated into what is a relatively compact land mass: in the case of India, it is 17% of the world’s population concentrated into 2.2% of the earth’s total land area. In the case of the EU, it is 7% of global population contained within 3% of the earth’s land mass (Eurostat, 2013). Both India and the EU are major political entities, but of quite different types. India is a relatively mature federal state of nearly 70 years’ standing. The EU is an evolving political union of nearly 60 years’ standing, consisting mostly of small and medium-sized sovereign states. Some of the EU’s member states have been formed very recently; others have existed in their present form for several centuries. Both India and the EU are quite well developed politically, in the sense of their having executive capacity, respect for the rule of law, and a measure of political accountability (Fukuyama, 2011: 16). However, whereas the EU is relatively well advanced economically, India still lags significantly behind other nations in respect of its economic performance and in terms of its levels of human and social development.

Both India and the EU have been pursuing distinctive paths towards decentralization and localism in recent years. In India this has been achieved by using a developmental state approach (Swilling, 2011: 99–106), with a strong

top-down emphasis on institutional and democratic reform, as well as on basic human development. Within the EU on the other hand, with so many different starting points amongst its 28 member states, it has been necessary to make allowances for divergent starting points and political perspectives. This has meant that the issue of decentralization and localism has had to be pursued in a consensual fashion and through a process of gradual agreement over key principles such as subsidiarity and cohesion. It has also meant that change has had to be organic – for example through encouraging the formation of trans-local networks across different member states – rather than through full-on institutional reform. However, in the case of both India and the EU, the success of any change process has always depended on the willingness and capacity of the intervening levels of government in each state to implement federal principles. That is one of the key elements for analysis in the chapters which follow, as well as a major focus for this study.

In this respect, Kerala is a seminal case in point. Not only was it one of the first Indian states to take up India's democratic decentralization agenda in the mid-1990s, but it has also invested considerable effort and resources into making decentralization work effectively (Heller, Harilal and Chaudhuri, 2007: 627). The detail of how this task was addressed in Kerala will be examined in greater depth in the next chapter. By contrast, England has undergone several different attempts at advancing localism over the past 20 years, but none so far has done very much to lessen the top-down influence of what scholars describe as the 'British Political Tradition' (Blunkett and Richards, 2011). However, what is particularly interesting about the current situation in England, from both an empirical and a theoretical point of view, is the level of ferment which now exists around the idea of 'devolution', and the degree of experimentation that is now taking place with different approaches. This could eventually lead to some novel institutional outcomes.

At the local level, Kollam District in Kerala is at the forefront of implementing the democratic/developmental agenda of decentralization in India, and its achievements in this area have recently been recognized by the federal government in India (see previous section). It is an 'exemplary' case of how Kerala's approach to decentralization is unfolding currently. As for the Cornwall/Scilly sub-region, it has received significant financial and political

support from the European Union and the UK government in recent years in an effort to address its long-standing economic weaknesses. This has enabled Cornwall in particular to establish a fresh set of institutions and a renewed sense of confidence in its economic potential, particularly within sectors such as marine industries, renewable energy and cultural capital. The factors involved in this ongoing transformation will be explored at greater length in Chapter 9 below.

[These images have been removed by the author of this thesis for copyright reasons.]

Figure 1: Map of Europe with EU countries highlighted

Figure 2: Outline map of India with the state of Kerala highlighted

Chapter 8: Localism in the Global South: India, Kerala and Kollam

8a. Introduction and overall approach

In this chapter I present the first of two localism case studies. The multi-level 'cluster' of India, Kerala and Kollam constitutes the first element in an empirical account of how localism is playing out within two of the world's major sub-continental clusters. As suggested in Chapter 2 above (see section 2c), this Indian cluster can be regarded as an 'exemplar' of localism in practice. There are two main reasons for this view. Firstly, India has a unique tradition of social and family relations, as well as a distinctive religious heritage. Over the past 3,000 years these factors have played a crucial role in restraining the growth of a powerful central state on the sub-continent. This is in marked contrast to the way in which events have unfolded in other parts of Asia, particularly in the cases of the Chinese and Ottoman empires (Fukuyama, 2011: 185). Secondly, India's modern state and some of its recent democratic decentralization initiatives are an excellent example of contemporary institutional design on a systemic, sub-continental scale. Both of these factors are clearly exemplified in India's sub-national state of Kerala.

The chapter begins with a two-stage account of politics and state formation on the Indian sub-continent. The first stage takes the form of a short macro-historical overview of India's transition from a tribal society to incipient statehood. This period culminates in India's gradual subjection by a number of overseas powers, and most particularly under the period of British rule (1757–1947). The second stage is a brief outline of the period leading up to India's independence during the first half of the twentieth century. Over this period a fierce debate raged within the Indian National Congress movement as to what kind of sovereign state India should aspire to be. The role of localism and of India's '700,000 villages' was very much at the forefront of that debate, especially as village governance lay at the heart of the vision for India's statehood advanced by one-time Congress leader and influential political thinker Mohandas K Gandhi (1869–1948)²⁷ (Gandhi, 1947).

²⁷ Otherwise better known as 'Mahatma' Gandhi

Following this historical introduction, the chapter then explores the modern state of India. In this context, two sets of intergovernmental relationships are examined. Each of them illustrates one of the two main aspects of localism – core and secondary – that were identified earlier in this thesis (see Chapter 3, section 3e above). The first line of analysis focuses on the federal relationship between the union government of India and its 36 states and union territories, as this has unfolded over the 70-year period since independence. This relationship is indicative of the ‘secondary’ sense of localism highlighted earlier in the thesis. The second set of relationships explored is that which has developed over the course of past 30 years between the new wave of ‘reformed’ municipalities and villages, and their respective states. In this instance, the account focuses on how the decentralization reforms have been put into place in different parts of India, and most notably within the state of Kerala. The academic consensus is that Kerala has addressed the reforms with a considerable degree of conviction and effectiveness. With this second line of analysis, the focus shifts markedly towards the ‘core’ sense of localism highlighted in the earlier part of the thesis.

8b. Society and state: India’s distinctive ‘localist’ tradition

In his influential book *The Origins of Political Order*, Francis Fukuyama argues that from a historical point of view India followed a very different path from its close comparator state China. Like China, India experienced the formation of large sub-continental empires, notably the Mauryan Empire from c.320 BC to 185 BC, and later the Guptas from c.AD 320 to c.AD 500 and the Mughal Empire from 16th to the 19th centuries. However, society and religion have always held much greater sway over people’s lives on the Indian sub-continent than the state. This balance of power has been shaped by the deep stratifications that developed very early on within Indian society, in the shape of the *varnas* (castes) and the *jatis* (traditional occupational categories) (Fukuyama, 2011: 152). Kinship patterns have also been strong throughout India’s history and, along with the *varnas* and the *jatis*, they persist in path-dependent fashion to this day (Fukuyama, 2011: 155–157; Boo, 2013).

A further distinctive feature of India’s social and political landscape has been the ongoing importance of religion. Unlike in China, Indian religion evolved a sophisticated system of thinking which sought to explain all aspects of the

physical world in transcendent terms. Access to this knowledge system was appropriated and jealously guarded by the Brahmin class. Over time, the Brahmins became firmly established at the top of the sub-continent's social hierarchy. Thus in the Indian tradition, the law did not emanate from a political authority as it did in China. Rather, it came from a source that was seen as both independent of, and in many ways superior to, the state (Fukuyama, 2011: 161). Fukuyama describes this development as the 'Indian detour' and dates its origin to around 600 BC. In effect this entailed the Indian warrior and merchant classes subordinating themselves to the Brahmins, and allowing them to retain both land and resources for themselves. On this basis the Brahmins came to exercise control over many of the most personal aspects of people's daily lives.

Fukuyama notes that the Brahmin hierarchy in India was not organized into a specific institutional form with a central source of authority like, say, the Roman Catholic Church in Europe. Rather it resembled a vast social network. Fukuyama argues that the Brahmins were able to retain their influence both by curbing political power and military organization on the sub-continent, and also by 'providing an impetus for the organization of tightly knit corporate entities, based on the *jatis*, that extended from the top to the bottom of society',. These units were self-governing and did not require the state to organize them. This state of affairs has persisted right up to the present time, according to Fukuyama, with caste and village organizations still in many ways the backbone of Indian society today. In the past, this phenomenon has been noted with some admiration both by Karl Marx and even by the British colonial powers themselves (Fukuyama, 2011: 169). It has now also become a significant element in the constitution of the modern Indian state.

By establishing something approaching a rule of law, the Brahmins exercised considerable control over political power in India. This legacy from India's ancient past has helped the sub-continent to resist later efforts, both indigenous and foreign, to unify the territory into a single nation politically and to reshape society within it (Fukuyama, 2011: 175). The main exception to this was Britain's period of rule in India. According to some analysts (e.g. Khilnani, 1998), the idea of India as a political entity did not really exist before the British Raj. However, by the same token, the impact of British rule on India's social systems has been much less profound than on its politics. Fukuyama suggests

that in some senses India's long-standing 'tyranny of cousins' has given it a unique capacity to resist the much more dangerous 'tyranny' of the state (Fukuyama, 2011: 188).

8c. Localism and the formation of the modern state of India

In the period leading up to Indian independence in 1947, the main opposition to British rule came from the Indian National Congress. This broadly based political movement was formed in 1885. Congress was led by a group of very able and progressive politicians, several of whom went on to lead the newly independent state during its early stages. Perhaps the best known member of this 'golden generation' is Mahatma Gandhi, who led the Congress movement from 1920–1934. Gandhi was a charismatic leader who was able to connect exceptionally well with the Indian masses. More significantly, he was able to mobilize them effectively too. However, his ideas were often at odds with those of his fellow Congress leaders. He was a prolific writer and thinker and elements of his political thought are set down in a vast output of letters, interviews, articles and pamphlets. Many of these were published during his lifetime. Since his death they have been collected, systematically edited and re-published in a number of different editions.

Gandhi's writings are characterised by a holistic and inclusive approach to politics and, most strikingly perhaps, by his systematic adherence to the principle of non-violence (Brown, 2008: ix–xxxi). Gandhi maintained this stance even in the face of several notorious episodes of British military repression during the final years of colonial rule. At one point, as leader of Congress, he argued controversially that India should become a semi-independent dominion of Britain. However, in 1929 he was forced to accept defeat on this point in the face of strong opposition from the rest of the Congress movement (Rudolph and Rudolph, 2008: 27).

For his main inspiration, Gandhi looked to rural India where people interacted in small-scale communities and economies, and where he believed the spiritual dimension of life had not yet been corrupted by Western materialism. He argued that the forthcoming prospect of independence from Britain offered Indians the opportunity to construct a new polity within which individuals might at last begin to treat each other as equals, and recast their social and political arrangements accordingly (Brown, 2008, xvii). He made his fullest exposition of this vision in a

pamphlet of 1941 entitled *Constructive Programme: Its Meaning and Place*. In this publication Gandhi covered a very wide range of progressive topics including community cohesion, the removal of untouchability, equal treatment of women, encouragement of village industries, revival of indigenous languages, reform of education, and village health and sanitation. Gandhi's ideal society rests on two fundamental premises: firstly, the autonomy of every village unit, no matter how small or humble it may be; secondly, the fact that each unit is interdependent as well as autonomous. Gandhi explains that interdependence has to be understood in two senses: on the one hand, it should be taken to refer to the internal interdependence that exists between a village's own residents; on the other, it should be seen as referring to the external interdependence that each village shares with other similar units across a wider territory (Gandhi, 1941 [2008]: 165). Gandhi's vision is clearly a precursor of several major strands of modern social and political thought, including Green political theory as well as localism in its 'core' sense. This may explain why Gandhi's writings still resonate so powerfully in many parts of the world today.

However, on the issue of the supremacy of village-based governance, Gandhi found himself at odds with many of his contemporaries within India's independence movement. Those Congress members who championed the claims of the lowest castes in Indian society were convinced that genuine social progress could only come about through the creation of a strong federal state built on the foundations laid down by the British colonial powers. For example, the distinguished statesman Dr Bhimrao R Ambedkar (1891–1956) famously took India's village organization to task in a debate in the Indian Constituent Assembly in 1948:

'I hold that these village republics have been the ruination of India. ...What is the village but a stink of localism²⁸ and a den of narrow-mindedness and communalism?'

(quoted in Malaviya, 1956; emphasis added).

Similarly, Jawaharlal Nehru who took over from Gandhi as the leader of Congress and who went on to become India's first post-independence prime minister (1947–1964), was also known to be sceptical of the transformational

²⁸ This may be one of the earliest instances of the use of the term 'localism' to be found anywhere in the literature. Clearly, for Ambedkar, localism carries with it the most highly pejorative of connotations!

possibilities of Indian village society (Mitra, 2001: 105). That said, it is interesting to note that many of Gandhi's ideas and principles concerning the merits of village-based localism did eventually find their way into the constitution of the Indian republic. However, it took several decades and an escalating crisis of governance within the new Indian state for the country's political elite eventually to turn to them.

8d. State and democracy in India

Modern India is seen by many as a 'giant' in democratic terms. Thakur (1995) notes that the fledgling Indian state got off to a stable start under the leadership of Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and the other members of his 'independence generation'. Following that, India lived through a period of relative political instability from the early 1970s until the late 1990s. This period saw the gradual dismantling of the Nehru dynasty and the rise of something resembling genuine two-party politics in the country.

For Kohli (2001: 6) India's success as a democratic polity stands out amongst that of most other developing nations. However, Arend Lijphart emphasizes the 'puzzle' of Indian democracy and he poses the question of how this multi-ethnic, multi-lingual nation has managed to hold together for so long against such massive political odds. These include its very size and diversity; its widespread poverty and illiteracy; and its unusually high levels of political violence (Lijphart, 1996: 258). Various scholars, including Lijphart himself, draw attention to a range of institutional and cultural factors which help to explain the durability of the Indian state. For example, Sarkar (2001) highlights the importance of three elements in particular: India's political institutions; its federal structure; and the secular character of its national and state politics. Each of these is dealt with briefly in the paragraphs below, along with a number of other key features of the contemporary political landscape in India.

India is notable for having a strong framework of state institutions in the broadest sense. These include its constitution; its bi-cameral Parliament; its proliferation of national boards and commissions; its centralized bureaucracy and five-yearly planning framework; its courts and legal system; and its armed forces. But India is also a federal country, and each of its 29 states has an elected parliament with devolved political powers of its own. These powers are

firmly enshrined in India's constitution²⁹. That said, the consensus amongst scholars is that the balance of power between the union government and the states is firmly tilted in favour of the former (Fukuyama, 2013: 363). This is an important issue for localism and multi-level governance, and it will be explored in more detail in the next section.

A key point concerning India's arrangements is the manner in which its secular institutions of state are generally able to 'stand outside' of day-to-day politics. This is a relatively unusual state of affairs, and it is impressive even by the standards of many advanced democracies. The Indian state's 'moderating' role is embodied in the functions of the union presidency and its proactive stewardship of India's constitution; in its court system and armed forces; and most especially in the governance of its federal states and territories. India's founding fathers clearly intended that the secular state, with its guarantees of civil and political rights towards certain key minorities, should act to contain the potentially disruptive effects of the nation's religious and social cleavages (Lijphart, 1996: 262). With this in mind, Lijphart notes that India has been willing to grant a considerable amount of autonomy to cultural and linguistic groups, and to tolerate separate educational arrangements and personal laws for religious and racial minorities.

With regard to democratic politics, Jean Drèze and Amartya Sen note that India has a highly pluralistic political culture and a healthy rate of turnout for elections, particularly amongst lower caste voters (Drèze and Sen, 2014: 251). Another notable feature of the Indian system is the fearless independence of its judiciary, particularly the Supreme Court of India. However, there are also endemic delays within India's court system, and its judgments can often take years to emerge. India's constitution guarantees citizens a range of fundamental citizenship rights, but also a number of social and economic entitlements too, such as the right to work, to education and to public assistance. In practice, however, India's political system has failed to deliver these economic and social benefits to a very large number of its citizens.

²⁹ Devolved powers do not apply to most of India's seven union territories which are ruled by the union government directly. The only two exceptions are the 'partial states' of Delhi and Puducherry, which each have their own elected assembly and political executive

The failure is in large part due to the widespread existence of corruption in India. According to Drèze and Sen, corruption flourishes in a context where officials are allowed wide discretion over key administrative decisions, for example over the granting of licences, with relatively little political oversight or any effective system of checks and balances (Drèze and Sen, 2014: 95–96). It is also reinforced by a number of institutional and cultural factors such as lack of transparency, non-existent systems of appeal or redress, and a widespread tolerance for the fact that ‘this is the way things are done in India’. In terms of measures to address the problem, the Right to Information Act of 2005 has proved to be a significant step towards establishing greater transparency and access to information. However, with regard to people’s ability to take action against corruption in the courts, India’s Prevention of Corruption Act seems to have had very little tangible effect since it entered the statute book in 1988. This is partly because no official employee can be prosecuted without the government’s permission; such permission is rarely, if ever, granted. Despite this, Drèze and Sen note there are some signs that the political climate in relation to corruption may be starting to change. People are becoming more insistent on demanding their rights and on making use of the legislation that has been passed in recent years (Balch, 2013: 298). Significantly, decentralization of power is beginning to have an impact as well, as more and more local politicians find themselves in the position of being able to speak up on behalf of their communities (Drèze and Sen, 2014: 101). This is gradually putting them in a stronger position to challenge India’s centralized bureaucracy.

Drèze and Sen also point out that there is a highly vocal political opposition in India and a lively press and media. However while the public debate generates a good deal of ‘heat and noise’, it yields far less in terms of effective action on the part of government or civil society (Drèze and Sen, 2014: 257; Fukuyama, 2013: 363). For Drèze and Sen, this illustrates an important point about the quality of public reasoning in India. The press has a powerful and varied presence, with some 86,000 titles in all and with a combined daily and weekly circulation of around 370 million. This is significantly more than any other country in the world. Indeed, by international standards the extent of freedom of expression in India is impressive. However, according to these authors there has been a systemic failure on the part of the Indian press and media to draw

attention to the country's deep-seated social problems and inequalities. For example there is very little coverage of the country's rural issues. What seems to be happening is that a section of India's more privileged classes have in effect created a social bubble of their own. Meanwhile, 'less influential but more committed groups of people who stand in solidarity with the underprivileged and the oppressed tend to be comprehensively ignored or side lined' by the media (Drèze and Sen, 2014: 269; see also Balch, 2013: 296). Despite this, Drèze and Sen claim to see some grounds for optimism in the most recent legislation aimed at helping the poorest Indians to improve their lot, and also in the recent public policy successes of states like Kerala and Tamil Nadu.

As stated at the beginning of this chapter, India has now matured into a multi-party democracy with two large political alliances opposing each other across the conventional progressive/conservative divide. The Congress Party and its allies in the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) represent the centre-left in Indian politics; and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and its allies in the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) represent the nationalist right. Currently it is the NDA which holds power nationally, having won the 2014 general election with a large majority. A growing feature of the current political scene in India is the tentative emergence of a 'Third Front' of smaller political parties, including the Communist Party of India. These have won representation in Parliament, but do not wish to be aligned with either of the two main political blocks.

Another factor that has become more prominent in Indian politics and civil society in recent years is the growing influence of the *Sangh Parivar*, a family of Hindu-leaning organizations which includes the *Vishva Hindu Parishad* (or World Hindu Council) and even the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) itself. According to Emma Mawdsley, the core ideology of this group of organizations is *Hindutva* or 'Hindu-ness' (Mawdsley, 2006: 381). It has clear nationalist and conservative overtones and some of its adherents have been known to voice strong criticism of Muslims, Christians, secularists, feminists, leftists and even foreigners. Over the course of the past few years the *Sangh Parivar* has succeeded in shifting the terms of public debate in India over a number of issues, especially for example in relation to the environment. Mawdsley describes how environmental matters are typically framed through *Hindutva* and Hinduism. There is a substantial body of writing both in India and globally on

how European colonialism has had a vastly detrimental impact on various environments and resources. Such writings provide fuel for Hindu nationalism by assuming the existence of a previous environmental and social harmony in India, which was destroyed by 'foreign cultural domination' (Mawdsley, 2006: 385).

Mawdsley also traces the way in which these Hindutva sentiments have coloured the attitudes of India's influential middle classes. The latter may number as many as 300 million individuals currently (Mawdsley, 2004: 84). The middle classes are important because of their strong representation within the media, politics, the scientific establishment, NGOs, the bureaucracy, environmental institutions and the legal system. Some of them are brash and wealthy, and they started to emerge in India's expanding cities during the 1990s. Their shifting attitudes are an important barometer of what constitutes the aspirational centre ground in Indian politics. According to Mawdsley, there is a distinct tendency on the part of India's middle classes to emphasize individual and household cleanliness, while turning their backs on the rampant degradation taking place in India's environment (Drèze and Sen, 2002: 224). Often, the issue will be explained away by shifting the blame for the deterioration onto the poor (Mawdsley, 2004: 92).

8e. Centre/sub-national relations in India

India's governance has been described in the literature as a 'heavily centralized, quasi-federal system' (Jorgensen, 2012: 13). In this context, it is significant that Article 1 of the country's constitution refers to India as a 'union of states' rather than as a 'federal state'. For some at least, this emphasizes the fact that the union is not grounded on the explicit assent of the states themselves; and also that the states have no power to secede from the union should they wish to do so (National Institute of Open Schooling, 2015). The Indian president appoints the governor of each state, and he/she may take over direct control of the state's affairs at any time on the recommendation of the governor. Over the years, this is a power that Indian Presidents have repeatedly seen fit to make use of.

The controversial 'President's Rule' provisions set out in Article 356 of the Indian constitution have in fact been deployed on nearly 130 occasions since the federal constitution came into effect in 1949. Generally speaking,

President's Rule has been imposed for quite short periods lasting for up to a year at a time in most cases. However, in a few instances (most notably during the inter-communal rioting in the Punjab in the 1980s and the early 1990s) it has remained in force for some three or four years. In Kerala, President's Rule has been used five times altogether, most recently in 1979–80. Jayotirindra Dasgupta defends both the existence of this measure and its frequent use in the Indian context. He argues that it should be seen as a safety valve primarily to prevent ethnic and religious tensions from spilling over and tearing the nation apart (Dasgupta, 2001). He also points out that in 1994 India's Supreme Court laid down strict guidelines on how Article 356 should be used. These guidelines have been largely adhered to by union governments since then. At the time of writing, President's Rule has so far been imposed 25 times since the millennium. However, since May 2014, under the present government, it has been used on five separate occasions within the states of Arunachal Pradesh, Jammu/Kashmir (twice) and Uttarakhand (twice).

On a related point, both Arend Lijphart (1996) and Louise Tillin (2015) emphasize the extraordinary flexibility the Indian government has shown in relation to the redrawing of state boundaries so as to accommodate pressing political demands. Tillin suggests that India has been rather more ready to resort to this measure than most other federal democracies. Indeed India is a classic example of what federalist scholars have called a 'holding together' federal state. In contrast to 'coming together' federal polities – for example the United States or Australia – 'holding together' ones tend to have weaker, more informal systems of internal governance. These allow greater scope for political entrepreneurs to influence the shape of the system as a whole (Tillin, 2015: 633).

In 1956 the India States Reorganisation Act enabled the first major redrawing of state boundaries to take place along linguistic lines in Southern India, including the creation of the new state of Kerala in that year. Language (rather than religion or ethnicity) continued to be the basis for most of the subsequent changes in state boundaries until 1966. Since 2000, a second wave of new states has begun to appear in India's main Hindi-speaking belt in northern India, for example Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Uttarakhand and, most recently, Telangana in 2014. Also notable is the creation of a number of small new states

and territories within the border areas of north-eastern India (e.g. Nagaland, Meghalaya, Mizoram and Arunachal Pradesh). The creation of this latter group of states has been dubbed as ‘cosmetic federalism’ by some. This is because it has been seen as masking the Indian government’s real desire to consolidate its control over this sensitive region, particularly since it lies on the borders with Bangladesh, China and Myanmar (Tillin, 2015: 636). This seems to be a good illustration of the ‘holding together’ nature of India’s federal arrangements.

On a constitutional level, the 29 state legislatures are also entitled to elect representatives to the *Rajya Sabha*, or Council of States, which is the upper house of the Indian Parliament.³⁰ The *Rajya Sabha* has a maximum membership of 250, and each state (or partial state) is represented in strict accordance with its share of India’s total population. Thus as new states are created, the representation of one or more existing states is reduced accordingly (Tillin, 2015). Currently, Kerala has nine indirectly elected representatives in India’s lower chamber. The *Rajya Sabha* has certain powers of scrutiny and amendment over draft government legislation, but these are fairly tightly circumscribed. It also has limited powers to propose both new legislation and the creation of new all-India services.

In addition to their own elected governments and legislatures, the states have formal powers in 66 specific policy areas (including 18 different aspects of taxation and revenue collection), for which they alone are responsible. They also share power ‘concurrently’ with the union government in a further 47 policy areas. Both of these categories of powers are formally set out in Schedule 7 of India’s constitution. The same schedule also names 100 policy areas for which the union government itself is responsible. Many of these federal responsibilities are connected with transport and communications, as well as with the ‘conventional’ areas of defence, foreign affairs, currency and nuclear energy.

In practice, all three of the above categories of powers consistently cross over and combine with each other. Indeed, the precise mix of responsibilities between state and union varies in accordance with the characteristics of the policy area in question. In the field of environmental sustainability, for example, many of the most relevant powers for tackling its effects lie with state

³⁰ This power also applies to the two ‘partial states’ of Delhi and Puducherry, but not to the other five union territories

governments. These include the states' responsibilities for agriculture, water, land improvement and public health. As for energy, it is one of the 47 policy competences that are shared between the union government and the states (Jorgensen, 2012: 14). This means that the states have a reasonable amount of scope to drive forward developments in the climate change field. However, the picture is complicated by the union government's tight control over financial and economic policy (Jorgensen, 2012: 16). Since 2008, India's National Action Plan on climate change has provided an overarching framework for both national and state policy. Amongst other things, the National Plan requires states to draw up their own action plans, which in turn require final approval from a National Steering Committee. By September 2011, 16 out of 28 state plans had submitted their strategies (Jorgensen, 2012: 18). These state-level plans have tended to focus on the promotion of energy efficiency and the generation of green energy.

The powers of India's 29 states have also been given a significant boost since the enactment of the constitutional reforms on local self-government in the early 1990s. States have the main responsibility for organizing and fostering the development of municipal and village government in their areas (Vakilbabu Law House, 2015). By its very nature, this is a function that the union government would simply not have the capacity to carry out for itself. This gives India's states considerable freedom to shape local government systems in accordance with their own political priorities and values. On the whole, they have been allowed to get on with this task with relatively little interference from the federal government, and even with a certain measure of support.

8f. Towards decentralization and localism in India

As noted in section 8c above, Gandhi's über-localist vision of an India based on the supremacy of village governance was firmly rejected by the founding fathers of the Indian Republic. Their only concession to Gandhi was the inclusion of a discretionary provision in the constitution (Article 40) encouraging India's new sub-national states to organize *gram panchayats* (i.e. village councils), and 'endow them with such powers and authority as may be necessary to enable them to function as units of self-government'. However, this article was not made binding on the states at that time.

It should be noted that at the time of independence many village panchayats, some of them of long standing, were already in existence in various parts of India. These 'customary' panchayats (Pur, 2007) were traditional local governance bodies whose existence as a form of government could be traced back more than 4,000 years. Over time, their influence had waxed and waned in accordance with political and economic developments on the sub-continent. During the period of British rule, for example, the influence of the village panchayats declined steeply, as larger-scale administrative units such as the block, the district and the municipality began to be favoured by the colonial authorities. Under the British, an administrative structure based on top-down supervision and control gradually emerged across India. This was embodied in the role of the District Collector, or chief official. However, during the final period of British rule, the colonial powers began to take active steps to restore the powers of the village panchayats, most especially as part of the Montague-Chelmsford Reforms of 1919 (Rudolph and Rudolph, 2010: 561). These established 'local self-government' as a specific devolved responsibility for India's then provinces.

During the new Indian government's initial period in power, the issue of self-government at village level was relegated on to the political back burner. However, it soon became apparent that progress with India's development programmes was running at a disappointingly slow rate. The newly established sub-national states only had limited capacity to drive forward the union government's ambitious agenda for national renewal. This led to the establishment of a major commission of enquiry under the chairmanship of Bhalwantrai Mehta (1900–1965). Mehta had been a prominent member of the Indian independence movement and later became Chief Minister of the state of Gujarat. His commission published its report in November 1957. Amongst Mehta's principal recommendations were that an enhanced *Panchayati Raj* system should be established right across India, and that this should be based on three tiers of local governance in rural areas. In addition, Mehta recommended that there should be a genuine transfer of power and resources from the states to these proposed new local bodies, and that the panchayats should also have more control over the work of India's centralized administrative service. Because of the radical decentralizing nature of these

proposals, it took quite a long time for them to be accepted by the Indian establishment. In fact, there was fierce resistance to them in many quarters initially.

The Bhalwantrai Mehta recommendations languished for some twenty years before India's first-ever non-Congress-led government established a second Committee of Enquiry (the Ashok Mehta Committee) on local self-government in 1977. Later, under a re-elected Congress government, two further committees of enquiry followed in quick succession – in 1985 and in 1986 respectively. Generally speaking, these later enquiries favoured a *Panchayati Raj* system based on two tiers of government in rural areas, rather than three; with the block being preferred to the village as the most local tier of governance. Meanwhile, at the state level in India, the Bhalwantrai Mehta recommendations and those of the later enquiries were already being addressed and acted upon. Thus, during the 1970s several states, including Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Karnataka and West Bengal, took advantage of their constitutional powers under Article 40 (see start of this section) to legislate for the establishment of their own, mostly three-tier *Panchayati Raj* systems.

By the late 1980s considerable cross-party support had built up for a wide-ranging reform of local government structures in India. The establishment of a new *Panchayati Raj* system was now being widely acknowledged as a high political priority. Not only was it regarded as the key to kick-starting economic and social development in rural areas, but also as a means of restoring stability to an Indian republic which had been passing through a period of relative crisis since the mid-1970s. Ironically, the quintessentially 'bottom-up' issue of local self-governance now became transformed into an urgent 'top-down' priority for India's national elite (Jayal, 2007: 6). Thus the 73rd and 74th Amendment Acts were passed by the newly re-elected Congress government in 1992. Both Acts came into force in April 1993.

The main features of these two ground-breaking Acts were as follows:

- The creation of *gram sabhas* (or village assemblies) in every village or urban ward in India as a way of anchoring democracy in local communities
- The establishment of a uniform three-tier structure of village, block and district councils in rural areas

- A requirement that all council seats should be filled by direct or indirect election from within the area covered by the council
- A requirement that at least a third of all elected councillors and council chairpersons should be women
- A requirement that Scheduled Castes and Tribes should have representation on each council in accordance with their share of the area's population
- The establishment of a local election commission and a local finance commission in each sub-national state to oversee both elections to, and the finances of, *Panchayati Raj* Institutions (PRIs)
- The creation of a District Planning Committee in each *Panchayati Raj* cluster to promote bottom-up planning
- The establishment of an indicative list of 29 functional areas from which PRIs would be empowered to draw up their local plans.

Apart from these key requirements, states were given considerable latitude as to how, and at what speed, to put their systems of local self-governance into place. Subrata Mitra notes that that the decentralization reforms have in fact been implemented in a variety of ways across India. In addition there has been continuous experimentation and transfer of knowledge between different geographical areas and administrative levels (Mitra, 2001: 104). Today, nearly 25 years after the date on which the reforms first came into force, some 240,000 village councils have been established across India in accordance with the reformed *Panchayati Raj* model. These newly constituted councils now cover almost 100% of the country's rural population. It may be no exaggeration to say that this is one of the largest exercises in the decentralization of power ever to have taken place in human history.

Generally speaking, local self-governance in India has been effective in 'quickenning the pace of democracy and adding a deeper layer of legitimacy to the state' (Mitra, 2001: 105). This is all the more remarkable in view of the fact that local politics in India is often very parochial in its outlook, whereas the state is based primarily on 'modern', secular, democratic values. Mitra suggests that the success of local government depends critically on the quality of political leadership at the local level. This in turn depends on two further factors: local

leaders' awareness of modern democratic values, and the level of social and political mobility within the community concerned.

On the basis of these two factors, Mitra constructs a four-fold typology of local leadership types:

- Type 1 (feudal leadership) exists where there is low democratic awareness amongst local elites reinforced by high 'social closure'.
- Type 2 (fragmented anomie) characterizes places where there is low democratic awareness amongst local elites, and yet a relatively high degree of awareness and social mobility amongst the local population.
- Type 3 (paternalistic or managerial leadership) exists where there is relatively high democratic awareness amongst local elites, coupled with high social closure and low mobility.
- Type 4 (democratic leadership) is found in areas where high levels of democratic awareness amongst local elites exist, alongside open social systems and high levels of mobility amongst the population (Mitra, 2001: 107).

Mitra argues that at national level, the policy of India's political leaders has been to move all local self-governance institutions in the direction of Type 4 leadership, but this has not always worked out in the way intended in every state.

Mitra argues that the level of trust in local government is crucially dependent on the quality of leadership shown by local elites. He illustrates this by reference to three particular Indian states where the *Panchayati Raj* system was already well established before 1993. Bihar, where the *Panchayati Raj* system has often been a site of open conflict between local elites and ordinary citizens is, Mitra argues, an example of Type 2 local governance. Maharashtra, where the system had quickly been taken over by local elites as a way of maintaining their previous hold over the local and regional levers of power, is an example of Type 3. And West Bengal, where the Communist-led state government has embraced the new localist system and used it as an informal channel for recruiting new party members and for boosting party support more generally, is an example of Type 4.

Mitra argues that 'institutionalized political participation at the local level is the crucial link between democracy and development' (Mitra, 2001: 123). According to him, there are important lessons in this for all post-colonial societies.

8g. Kerala's sub-nationalism and the Kerala model

Turning specifically to state of Kerala, Prerna Singh traces the process by which its distinctive identity came to be forged: first during the latter period of British colonial rule, and then subsequently as a modern sub-national state of the Indian Republic. Singh's intention is to highlight the beneficial effects of an effective political community, such as that which has been established in Kerala over the course of the past 200 years (Singh, 2010: 290). Singh's argument is linked to the notion of a 'Kerala model', i.e. a society characterized by advanced social policy outcomes achieved against a backdrop of ethnic diversity and in the face of considerable material poverty. Singh develops his argument through a historical analysis of social development in Kerala in the two policy fields of education and health. He identifies three historical periods corresponding firstly to the absence, then the emergence, and finally the flourishing of 'sub-nationalism' in Kerala.

The first period covers the semi-independent princely states of Travancore and Cochin up to the 1890s. During this time the socio-economic and political life of the region was structured around the identities of caste and religion. Indeed the caste system in the territory which today is called Kerala was considered by many to be the most backward and oppressive in the whole of India. The social reformer Swami Vivekananda referred to Kerala at the time as 'a madhouse of caste' (Singh, 2010: 283). During this period, there was little support for collective welfare and virtually no demand for the provision of social services. Protestant missionaries who worked in Travancore during the early to mid-nineteenth century provided all castes with their first experience of Western-style education. They also drew the attention of the British colonial authorities to the problems being experienced by many ordinary people in the region. This led the British authorities to issue the princely rulers with a threat of annexation in response to the reported neglect of local people's needs. This in turn forced the governments of Travancore and Cochin to take some limited steps to improve the social conditions of the people between 1860 and 1890 (Singh, 2010: 284). However, until the end of the nineteenth century, lower castes continued to be

denied access to government schools and were not allowed full access to healthcare facilities.

The second period identified by Singh focuses on Travancore and Cochin from the 1890s up to the point at which the modern state of Kerala was formed in 1956. During this period, the emergence of Malayali sub-nationalism became a trigger for social development. In the words of one noted historian of Kerala, 'a society which had remained fundamentally unchanged for 700 years came unhinged' (Jeffrey, 1976). Missionaries actively espoused lower caste causes and openly supported their protests. Moreover, an upwardly-mobile local elite which had previously taken advantage of the opportunities for Western-style education, now sought its own political advancement. The first stirrings of sub-nationalism became apparent in the 'Malayali Memorial', a petition demanding greater native representation in public services. This was submitted to the Travancore government in 1891. By the early decades of the twentieth century, these early sub-national stirrings had grown into a powerful demand for a united Malayali homeland. This was exemplified in the activities of the *Aikya Kerala* movement which came to prominence during the 1920s. On the back of their campaigning, a consensus emerged amongst both lower and upper castes on the need for educational and health facilities to be extended to all Malayalis, irrespective of religion, class or caste. This in turn led to the introduction of a range of education and healthcare policies in Travancore and Cochin from 1900 onwards (Singh, 2010: 285). By the 1940s, these two southern princely states had established themselves as frontrunners in the field of social development in India. However, it is important to emphasize that, despite this area's pre-eminence in social policy achievement at the time, actual levels of social development in 'Kerala' in 1947 were still relatively low. With the establishment of democratic institutions in Kerala in the 1950s, there emerged a pattern of tightly contested elections involving, on the one hand the Communist Party (who were vociferous supporters of all forms of Malayali sub-nationalism), and on the other the Congress Party.

The third historical period identified by Prerna Singh runs from the 1950s up to the present day. Over this period, the rhetoric of the Communist Party in Kerala has been infused with strongly 'sub-nationalist/welfarist' overtones (Singh, 2010: 287). Indeed social welfare emerged as a key point of contention

between the two main political parties in Kerala, as each of them in government sought to outdo the other in extending the reach of the social welfare net. Successive state governments in Kerala – both Communist and Congress – have focused much attention on providing a system of primary education and basic healthcare which caters for the needs of the poorest Malayalis. This has been in marked contrast to the situation in most other Indian states. So strong has the political consensus over this issue been that no major public service or redistributive programme in Kerala has ever been reversed, despite the state's precarious financial position, and even with a recent decline in financial support from the Indian government. The combination of top-down state policies and bottom-up social activism has led to remarkable social gains in Kerala during the post-independence years, and these have been consistent across all castes and social classes. For example, a member of the Scheduled Tribes in Kerala is nowadays 20% more likely to be literate than in any other state in India. Kerala's history of a powerful and inclusive sub-nationalism has now become sufficiently established for it to be regularly showcased in international fora by India's government.

According to Jean Drèze and Amartya Sen, Kerala's success in reducing poverty over the past 50 years has been remarkable in international terms, despite the relatively slow growth of its domestic economy. Significantly, the authors point out that the bulk of what is now modern Kerala (the two princely states of Travancore and Cochin) remained outside the British Raj and were therefore 'not subjected to the lack of interest of Whitehall officialdom in Indian elementary education' (Drèze and Sen, 2002: 99). However, even the former British province of Malabar, which in terms of educational and social development was very much behind other parts of Kerala at the time of independence, had managed to 'catch up' with the rest of the state by the 1980s. Kerala has benefited from strong social movements which have championed education, along with a general level of emancipation of the lower castes. It has also profited from a long-standing tradition of openness towards the rest of the world through its extensive trading activity and its established pattern of inward settlement. Finally, it has benefited from the matrilineal tradition of property inheritance of its Nair community, which constitutes about 20% of its population. However, while Kerala was already quite advanced

compared with the rest of British India at the time of independence, many of the achievements for which it is so widely admired today are the results of its own post-independence public policies (Drèze and Sen, 2002: 102)

8h. Democratic decentralization in Kerala and the ‘new’ Kerala model

Despite Kerala’s improvements in human and social development, the state has remained relatively poor both in Indian and global terms. It has also remained quite under-developed economically. Because of its economic stagnation, Kerala has found it increasingly difficult to find the resources needed to finance its costly welfare system. This is the main drawback to what René Verón has described as the ‘old’ Kerala model (Verón, 2001: 606). During the 1990s there was a growing consensus in Kerala over the need to strengthen the productive base of its economy so as to reduce unemployment and consolidate the outstanding social gains of the recent past. This, together with an accompanying focus on democratic decentralization, became the basis for the development of a ‘new’ Kerala model in the 1990s.

The constitutional basis for the state’s new social policy approach was set out in the Kerala Panchayati Raj and Municipality Act of 1994. This was formulated in the light of India’s 73rd and 74th Amendment Acts of the previous year (see section 8f above). Kerala’s act provided for the establishment of a pattern of citizen meetings (or *gram sabhas*) at village and ward level, which all citizens had the right to attend. The intention was to set up a new form of direct democracy, with Kerala’s *gram sabhas* also being accorded important new powers over the selection of beneficiaries for public funding, and the right to advise on local plan prioritization and to carry out social audits. In addition, the 1994 Act created a range of independent ‘oversight bodies’ to support the development of the reformed local government sector. These included a State Election Commission; a State Finance Commission; an Ombudsman and a Tribunal for Local Governments; and a State Development Commission. The latter body is chaired by the State’s First Minister and includes all the members of the Cabinet, as well as the Leader of the Opposition, the Head of the State’s Administrative Service, the Chairs of Kerala’s 14 District Panchayats and many other representatives from the local government sector.

The 1994 Acts were later amended in 2005 to strengthen the constitutional position of the *Panchayati Raj* sector in relation to the state. As a result, while

the state government may issue general guidelines to elected local governments, it cannot routinely interfere in their legitimate business nor overturn their decisions except in certain very grave circumstances. These would include a council's failure to set a budget, or a situation in which councillors decided to resign en masse. Even then, the state is only empowered to intervene in accordance with due process. Significantly, the effect of all these measures has been to give the local government sector in Kerala much more robust safeguards in relation to the sub-national state, than Kerala itself enjoys in relation to India's central government.

A further substantive development occurred in August 1996, when Kerala's newly elected LDF government voted to allocate 35–40% of its annual budget to development plans to be drawn up and prioritized by local governments and communities themselves. The approach used was very similar to that for the 'old' Kerala model – i.e. a programme of social and economic development taken forward through concerted public action, led by a responsible state and backed up with effective popular participation. Kerala's new approach was specifically aimed at increasing agricultural productivity, addressing environmental problems, improving the quality of social infrastructure and tackling gender injustice and deprivation amongst tribal populations and fishing communities (Verón, 2001: 607).

In order to implement decentralization, Kerala opted for a 'big bang' approach. Thus, functions, powers and resources were transferred to local governments in one fell swoop (Singh Kang, 2002: 3). In this way, stakeholders at all levels were obliged to co-operate with each other in order to make the new system work. The hope was that this would unleash a 'new dialogue and consensus' and replace the 'conflict and collision' approach that had previously been a characteristic of politics at the state level. Already in the 1980s, a previous LDF government had experimented with local initiatives in co-operative farming, environmental projects and local planning assemblies. In effect the new People's Planning Campaign initiated in 1996 was a 'scaling up' of these earlier pilot initiatives to the level of the state (Franke, 2007).

The 'People's Campaign' in Kerala was deliberately designed to bring about a deepening of democracy. The political goal was to use planning as an instrument of mobilization (Heller et al., 2007: 629). The planning process was

devised so as to proceed in four main stages: firstly, general meetings of citizens (i.e. *gram sabhas*) at village and urban ward-level in order to place issues and problems on the public agenda; secondly, development seminars at a village and urban ward level involving community representatives, aimed at exploring solutions to the problems identified by the *gram sabhas*; thirdly, task forces at block or municipality level to firm up on specific proposals and plans; and finally the formulation of a District-level budget to implement the eventual, agreed plan. In its early stages, the campaign had a strong participatory character. Its centrepiece was a massive public training programme involving civil society organizations and over 100,000 individuals. One of the most high-profile participants in the Campaign was the People's Science Movement which worked with women's groups specifically to increase women's participation in the planning process (Heller et al., 2007: 630). Final decisions on the proposals were made by elected politicians. In the first year of the programme around 150,000 projects were proposed by local communities, of which some 68,000 were eventually implemented (Franke, 2007).

Each local plan was required to address twelve specific policy areas, including some with a distinct environmental character such as energy and drinking water (Thomas Isaac and Heller, 2003: 92). As noted, the development proposals from the different local plans were submitted for discussion at more broadly based 'development seminars'. In Kerala these sessions were designed so as to have equal numbers of women and men as participants. In terms of the allocation of funding, local governments were required to spend not less than 10% of the available budget each year on projects aimed specifically at improving the position of women, and a 'proportionate amount' of the budget on projects aimed at citizens from Scheduled Castes and Tribes within their communities.

In order to help carry out the task of plan evaluation, the State Planning Board recruited some 4,000 retired technical experts and professionals to assist with evaluation work on a voluntary basis. This group of volunteers was known as the Voluntary Technical Corps (or VTC). The VTC helped to provide membership for the Block-level Expert Committees which advised the District-level Planning Committees in their appraisal of each of the plans. These Expert Committees were a key organizational innovation. At a stroke they removed much of the

traditional bureaucracy from the project approval process. Indeed, without this infusion of civil society expertise ‘line departments would have paralyzed local planning through inertia and outright resistance’ (Thomas Isaac and Heller, 2003: 95). Through this initiative, an effective set of financial and contract procedures, aimed at discouraging corruption, was also devised.

According to Sunny George, *Grama Panchayats* in Kerala tend to have larger populations and geographical areas than in most other Indian states. The average village council area is just under 38km² and covers an average population of 26,200. However, these average figures mask a considerable range of variations at the margins. As for Kerala’s 152 Block Panchayats, their average population is around 170,000. Unlike village councils, Blocks and Districts have no powers to impose taxes. However, they can collect fees, raise loans and, in the case of Districts, also issue revenue bonds and raise monies for financing developmental works (George, 2014: 8–9).

One particular case study village council, Pazhayannur in Palakkad District, has a population of some 43,000 residents spread over a land area of 59km². Of its 22 elected councillors in 2014, 10 were women. Its local disposable budget had increased from 1.6m rupees in 1990–91 to 100.6m in 2011–12. Of the latter figure, some 23% was raised locally through fees and taxes. Since local self-government took effect in Kerala, this particular council has assumed responsibility for more than 50 public institutions and bodies including pre-schools, schools and health establishments (George, 2014: 22). In 2014 it had ten working groups covering such aspects as infrastructure, economic development/poverty alleviation, agriculture, water supply/sanitation, a range of social policy areas, as well as good governance. In recent years, it has ensured significant improvements in housing, with at least 100–150 additional new properties having been provided each year since 2002–03.

Today the people’s planning approach in Kerala has matured into a well-established system of bottom-up self-governance. In recent years it has been extended to incorporate the state-sponsored *Kudumbashree* programme. *Kudumbashree* is a Malayalam word meaning ‘family prosperity’ (George, 2014: 16), and the programme named after it is a poverty alleviation initiative that is specifically intended to empower women’s agency. It is organized and delivered at three very local levels: micro-level neighbourhood groups; ward-level

development societies; and community development societies at the *Gram Panchayat* and municipality level. It is run predominantly by women and one of its major functions is to act as an informal lending bank for the poor. By 2011, it had resulted in the formation of some 17,500 ward-level development societies and a staggering 203,000 officially registered neighbourhood groups across Kerala (Kerala Women, 2012). What this amounts to in effect is a major civil society-led extension of local self-governance within Kerala.

8i. Critical perspectives on local self-government reform in India and Kerala

How effective have India's local self-government reforms been over the past 25 years, and what have they achieved locally and nationally during this period? A range of different perspectives is set out below, starting with some relating to India as a whole, followed by others relating more specifically to Kerala.

India

At the most critical end of the spectrum, George Mathew argues that modern governments tend to be urban-centric, pro-elite, and supportive of the free market and militarization. Generally speaking, their policies are oriented towards the middle classes, the rich and the powerful, and they often ignore the rural poor and the urban underclass. Commenting on the *Panchayati Raj* system across India as a whole, Mathew notes that it continues to be dominated by the interests of elites, corporations and the bureaucratic machine. With this in mind, the idea of the 'new' local self-governance system opening up power to the people is little more than a pipe dream. According to Mathew, the only exceptions to this gloomy assessment are to be found in the two southern states of Karnataka and Kerala (Mathew, 2014: 4). Mathew's assessment of Kerala is supported by Niraja Gopal who notes that Indian states have powers to withdraw, add to, or amend the range of responsibilities and resources devolved to panchayats. In most Indian states, the overall level of public expenditure controlled by *Panchayati Raj* institutions is less than 10% of the total spending on public services. However, in Karnataka and Kerala it is much higher, and currently stands at between 30% and 40% of overall government spending (Jayal, 2007: 10).

A particular complication that arises around local spending powers in India is that *Panchayati*-led projects frequently have to compete with other cross-cutting schemes financed by national parliamentarians from their own substantial development funds. There is also a proliferation of ‘parallel bodies’ – local, national and in some cases international too – with specific remits and funds of their own. The activities of these bodies regularly cut across the work of the local panchayats. These factors tend to undermine the democratic and development goals envisaged as the part of the local government reforms (Jayal, 2007: 13). Moreover, the necessary arrangements for incorporating *gram panchayat* plans into wider district-level plans have not been put in place by all states. There are no administrative procedures set out in the national legislation for co-ordinating the relationships between the three most local levels of government, nor with the All-India Administrative Service. In practice, the latter still tends to dominate decision-making processes in many rural panchayats (Jayal, 2007: 24).

One of the areas in which most problems have been encountered is in the co-ordination between the reformed pattern of local councils and key utilities such as water companies. On this basis K P Krishnan sets out a cogent critique of localism in the provision of water resources. Taking the specific case of Belgaum district in Karnataka, Krishnan presents a picture of long pipe runs, lack of available data regarding water consumption, and confusing and overlapping responsibilities between the municipalities on the one hand, and the state water supply and drainage board on the other. The latter is primarily responsible for building assets, while the main task of the former is to run the supply system once the infrastructure is built. In Krishnan’s view, water supply is one area of public infrastructure where both the inherent technical complexity of the sector and the advantages of economies of scale clearly point to the need for a more regionally based specialist agency to run the service (Krishnan, 2007: 316).

Kerala

As for local self-government specifically in Kerala, the main areas of critique in the literature revolve around service provision, accountability, democracy and environmental sustainability. Reporting in 2002, State Governor Sukhdev Singh Kang noted that local governments in Kerala had ‘performed creditably’ since

their establishment in 1996 in terms of their overall responsiveness and their efficiency in providing for people's basic needs. However, by 2002 they had achieved only limited success in improving agricultural productivity. Local government success in the fields of health and education had also been mixed, with some aspects (e.g. health outreach services and remedial support for school pupils) improving, while others were still continuing to cause concern (Singh Kang, 2002: 8–10). Local self-government in Kerala was beginning to move from 'campaign mode' into 'systems mode'. With this in mind, local area plans needed in future to become more strategic in their focus and to address local economic development priorities, including those relating to tourism. A move away from an annual planning cycle and the incorporation of local plans into India's five-yearly planning framework from 2002 onwards was expected to go some way towards addressing this issue.

Singh Kang's largely top-down political assessment is supported by a more broadly based academic evaluation carried out by Patrick Heller and his colleagues. The vast majority of respondents to Heller et al.'s survey felt that there had been at least some improvement in all 13 of the main service areas highlighted in the survey, especially in respect of road building, provision of housing for the poor and the development of childcare services. This was the view of both elites and ordinary citizens alike, as well as of adherents to the two main political blocks in Kerala. The weakest aspect of local government's performance was felt by most to be in the areas of individual earnings and employment. Relatively few respondents considered that these had improved significantly as result of decentralization. But even so, a majority of them accepted that there had been at least some improvement. There was also a good deal of support from respondents of all types for the view that the first phase of the campaign had been effective in redistributing public resources in favour of the poor and disadvantaged (Heller, Harilal and Chaudhuri, 2007: 634).

In terms of accountability, one of the most notable features of the way the *Panchayati Raj* system has developed in Kerala is the comprehensive architecture of accountability mechanisms that has been built into it. At times these mechanisms can be so challenging as to almost stifle effective political action (Venugopal and Yilmaz, 2009: 328). At the village council level, they take

the form of redressal processes for indigenous communities, women's watchdog committees and social audit committees. Venugopal and Yilmaz also note that Kerala has gone much further than most other Indian states in ensuring that *gram sabha* (or village assembly) meetings take place on a regular basis. However this aspect of the decentralization reforms has not always gone smoothly in the state. For example, some analysts have suggested that *gram sabhas* are losing the participation of middle-class, affluent groups, as well as the more educated sections of the community (Venugopal and Yilmaz, 2009: 321). Nevertheless, Kerala's village assemblies and ward committees have been largely successful in combating the previously widespread practice of political patronage. The state of Kerala has also created two legal entities – a local government ombudsman and an appellate tribunal – to oversee accountability within the local government sector. However, neither of these bodies is considered to have been particularly effective to date. To some extent this may be because of the lack of consistent political support that they have received. For example, the Congress-led UDF government which returned to power in Kerala in 2001 reduced the size of the ombudsman's staff. This was one of a series of measures that it took at the time to scale back on the major decentralization reforms introduced by its LDF/Communist predecessor (Venugopal and Yilmaz, 2009: 319).

With regard to the overall funding system for local governments, Venugopal and Yilmaz note that Kerala has a transparent, formula-based system of intergovernmental financial transfers. This allows each local government body to know well in advance what level of funding it is likely to receive. In addition, Kerala has transferred more of its fiscal resources to the local level than any other state in India. The state transfer to local governments in Kerala is made up of both 'plan' and 'non-plan' elements. Of these, the plan element is by far the larger at 57–63% of total panchayat revenue. Some 70% of plan funding goes to the village level, and the rest in equal shares to blocks and districts. That said, most panchayats are still not managing to prepare annual accounts of their revenues and expenditures. Their difficulties in this respect are compounded by the existence of a confusing, state-level accounting system which had still to be fully computerized (Venugopal and Yilmaz, 2009: 327). In the absence of proper accounting systems, it is difficult for Panchayat members

and officers, as well as for the general public, to be certain of what the financial position of a council is at any particular point in time.

With regard to democracy, the evaluation carried out by Patrick Heller and his colleagues (see above) found that just over 10% of Kerala's electorate actually attended at least one meeting in person during the first two years of the People's Planning Campaign. Representation of women stood at 40% of the participants in the second year, and Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes were even over-represented in relation to their proportion within the population as a whole (Heller et al., 2007: 636). Civil Society organizations were also well represented in the planning process, particularly in the development-seminar and the task-force phases. In addition, nearly two-thirds of the respondents interviewed agreed that the local needs expressed in the initial public meetings were 'always' reflected in the Panchayats' final plans. The authors note that the evaluation responses suggest the Campaign proposals were not subject either to elite capture or to bureaucratic interference. With regard to corruption, 74% of respondents felt that this had decreased as a result of the Campaign (Heller et al., 2007: 638). They also felt that the projects included in plans were more appropriate than they had been under the previous top-down funding system. According to the authors, these findings demonstrate that representative and participatory democracy do actually co-exist and complement each other in Kerala. On the other hand, while participation in the decision-making process and the quality of decision-making itself were both seen as good, respondents felt that the implementation of decisions was slow and inefficient, and often resulted in public monies remaining unspent at the end of the year.

In contrast to this rather encouraging set of findings, a much less benign picture of village council accountability emerges from V Vijayalakshmi's research on democratic decentralization in selected districts of Karnataka and Kerala. The Kerala element of Vijayalakshmi's research was carried out in the district of Kollam. One of the key findings from this research is the considerable penetration of partisan politics into the elections for village council representatives. In particular, Left party representatives on local councils said that they felt a much stronger sense of loyalty towards their political party than to the electors who had voted for them (Vijayalakshmi, 2007: 401). According to the author, this is linked to a culture of tightly controlled LDF-party oversight of

the local government system in the district. This takes the form of weekly party meetings to monitor the performance of their elected Panchayat representatives. According to Vijayalakshmi, this often shades into a system of party control over inexperienced or pliant councillors, many of whom are also women (Vijayalakshmi, 2007: 405). More generally Vijayalakshmi finds that, although many of the elected representatives on the newly created councils belong to disadvantaged groups, they do not have the skills and the social connections to exercise real political power. They are often dependent either on the patronage of elites or on the professional expertise of the bureaucratic service.

Finally with regard to environmental sustainability, René Verón has suggested that environmental protection and sustainable development have not had the same resonance in Kerala as issues of social development, justice and equity. Grassroots action for the environment has usually taken the form of a conflict between different local groups over how resources are allocated, rather than a united, community-based campaign against environmental degradation in their area, or to secure the proper stewardship of a local commons (Verón, 2001: 609). As for the 'People's Planning Campaign', analysis of the 68,000 projects implemented in 1997–1998 suggests they varied considerably in respect of their environmental credentials, and that the bulk of the available funds over the following years were allocated to road building, housing and support for business. According to Verón, decentralized planning has produced only a few genuine environmental projects, although some individual sectoral schemes have contained environmental elements. Verón notes that state co-ordination of the planning process has generally been weak. Departments were not tasked with identifying aspects that might be overlooked as part of the community planning process, nor with coming to any view about whether any of the policy areas neglected as a result of the planning process might benefit from some prioritization in their own right (Verón, 2001: 614). Despite that, in recent years the state of Kerala has supported local panchayats in their legal battles with multinational companies such as Coca Cola whose bottling plants have created major environmental impacts in their localities (BBC News, 2011).

8j. Taking stock: localism on the Indian sub-continent

This chapter has argued that localism is a deeply ingrained element in India's society and politics (Fukuyama, 2013: 169). In modern times, bottom-up localism has found eloquent expression in the writings of India's most high-profile modern thinker, Mahatma Gandhi. For Gandhi, localism is closely associated with a range of progressive political themes, including the design and creation of a modern, post-colonial state (Gandhi, 1941 [2008]: 165).

Although initially sidelined by India's post-colonial elite, Gandhi's localist vision gradually gained political traction during the period 1955–1990. In 1993 it formed the basis of the major constitutional amendments that were passed into Indian law in that year. These effectively transformed the Indian state from a two- into a three-level federal polity (Mitra, 2001). Although this localism reform was essentially top down in nature, it was also relatively mutualistic in its intent. It provided for genuine powers and responsibilities to be devolved to local governments in urban and rural areas. It also allowed India's sub-national states considerable discretion over the manner and timing of its implementation. With this point in mind, one of the main criticisms of India's 1993 decentralization reforms is that they have not been implemented in anything like a consistent manner across India as a whole (Jayal, 2007). In most states, the reforms still allow too much scope for domination by local political elites and by India's centralized bureaucracy (Mathew, 2014: 4). A clear exception to this pattern, however, may be found in the south-western state of Kerala.

Kerala's recent history is marked by unique combination of welfare-based sub-nationalism and left-leaning politics (Singh, 2010: 287). In contrast to much of the rest of India, these factors have helped Kerala to achieve relatively high levels of human development and political participation (Drèze and Sen, 2014: 289–335). In addition, recent governments in Kerala, particularly those of the communist left, have thoroughly embraced the national decentralization reforms introduced in 1993. Accordingly, over the past twenty years, local self-governance reforms have been comprehensively implemented across the state. Local governments in Kerala now enjoy considerable constitutional protection, as well as consistently rising financial support and democratic freedoms (Venugopal and Yilmaz, 2009). The spirit of Kerala's local self-government reforms is strongly mutualistic in character, but also clearly supportive of

bottom-up planning and development. Their localist and democratic credentials are widely acknowledged within both Kerala itself (Heller et al., 2007: 634) and on the international stage (Fischer, 2009; 245–271).

Despite the positive picture presented above, there are a number of criticisms that can be levelled at the implementation of Kerala's local governance reforms. Some of the accountability measures that have been built into them can be so challenging at times as to almost stifle effective decision-making (Venugopal and Yilmaz, 2009: 328). As a result there is evidence that some middle-class citizens may be turning away from the new participatory structures established by the reforms (Venugopal and Yilmaz, 2009: 321). Similarly, in some parts of Kerala, there is evidence of excessive party-political domination over local decision-making procedures, particularly on the part of the communist left (Vijayalakshmi, 2007: 401). However, while many criticisms can be levelled at the way in which the new *Panchayati Raj* system has been implemented in India, Kerala's experience of significant fiscal decentralization to the local level does seem to have yielded some worthwhile outcomes. These bear positive comparison with other 'deepening democracy' reforms that have been introduced elsewhere in the developing world (Thomas Isaac and Heller, 2003). Generally speaking, they appear to be a fairly good example of what Subrata Mitra identifies in section 8f above as Type 4 or 'democratic' local leadership (Mitra, 2001: 107).

According to Patrick Heller et al., Kerala's ambitious People's Planning Campaign has created structures of participatory governance where none at all existed previously. As a result, more people from a wider spectrum of society are now involved in decision-making about local development (Heller et al., 2007: 642). Decentralization in Kerala has focused principally on citizen participation and on social accountability mechanisms, and these have been enshrined in the institutional and legal framework of the state. Local governments in Kerala have also been well supported in resource terms, having received regular budget increases from the state over a twenty-year period (George, 2014). Where the *Panchayati Raj* sector in Kerala is still quite weak, however, is in relation to the systems and administrative support that it receives from the state government. Moreover, a key structural weakness is the sector's apparent lack of ability to work with outside bodies in co-ordinating the delivery

of a range of strategic, place-based services such as transport, public utilities and environmental protection (Verón, 2001; Krishnan, 2007).

These reflections conclude this thesis's account of decentralization and localism on the Indian sub-continent. However, the thesis will return to this case study again at the beginning of Chapter 10, where a point-by-point assessment of the case study cluster will be presented using the localism outcomes framework set out in Chapter 6 above. In the meantime, however, before a final assessment of the Indian case study can be undertaken, it is necessary to present this thesis's second multi-level case study of localism in the EU, UK, England and Cornwall.

[This image has been removed by the author of this thesis for copyright reasons.]

Figure 3: Outline map of Kerala showing its 14 districts, including Kollam

Chapter 9: Localism in the Global North – EU, UK, England, Cornwall

9a. Introduction and overall approach – regime evolution

In this chapter I present the second of my localism case studies. The multi-level cluster of the EU, UK, England and Cornwall is the second element in this comparative enquiry into how localism policy and practice are evolving in two of the world's major sub-continentals. As stated in section 7a above, the European/UK case should be seen as having 'key variable' status within this study. That is for two main reasons: firstly, because this is a 'home' case study – that is to say it is located in the part of the world where the research itself is being carried out; and secondly, because territorial governance in this particular part of the world is in a state of considerable flux at present. One of the aims of this thesis is to explore how the governance dilemmas confronting this particular case study area could play out in the future.

As in the previous chapter, a 'regime-evolution' approach will be used here to present the case study material (Hathaway, 2016: 122–123). This will take the EU level of governance as its starting point, and will then proceed to work systematically through the spatial hierarchy, focusing in turn upon the UK, England, and then finally upon Cornwall and its localities. The chapter begins with an analysis of some of the key characteristics of spatial governance within the EU. This opening section picks up on some of the ideas introduced in the early part of the thesis, including federalism, subsidiarity and cohesion. In section 7b above, it was argued that the dual notions of subsidiarity and cohesion provide the broad policy context within which multi-level governance and localism have been developing in many parts of the EU in recent years. This can be seen for example in the specific policy area of energy and climate change, which is highlighted briefly at the end of section 7b. However, the quality of political governance at EU level is being significantly undermined at present by the EU's perceived lack of democratic legitimacy. This in turn is leading to a growing scepticism in parts of the sub-continent about the benefits of EU membership. Nowhere is the Eurosceptic turn more apparent than in the United Kingdom, where in June 2016 citizens voted narrowly in a referendum for the UK to leave the European Union.

The UK's relationship with the EU is the focus of the second substantive section of this chapter. In essence, the UK's relationship with the EU has always been a semi-detached one, going back through the whole of its 44 years as a member of the European club (Morphet, 2013). Nevertheless, over this same period UK government has also been significantly influenced by the EU (Bulmer and Burch, 2009). Furthermore, many of its most peripheral regions, including Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly, as well as some specific sectors of its economy, have benefited significantly from EU investment during this period.

Having briefly assessed the UK's relationship with the EU, the chapter then moves on to examine the evolving position of England within the UK. In this connection it is clear that there is currently a growing sense of unease about the future of sub-national governance in England (Fenwick, 2015). This has been brought to a head by the fall out from the Scottish independence referendum in September 2014 (Hazell and Sandford, 2015). However, it is also an issue which has been slowly gathering momentum for more than 40 years, indeed almost for as long as the UK has been a member of the EU. Over this period, English local government has repeatedly been at the heart of attempts to introduce institutional reform at the sub-national level (John, 2014). With this in mind, the chapter assesses the main trends that have characterized efforts at sub-national governance reform in England since the 1970s. The reform process continues currently in the shape of the current Conservative government's somewhat high-handed and capricious 'devolution agenda' (Burton, 2016).

The final part of the chapter examines how local governance reform has been implemented in recent years in the peripheral sub-region of Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly. This particular sub-region provides a telling example in that it has been receiving large sums of EU financial support since 2000. Local governance in Cornwall was also substantially reformed in 2009. Since this watershed event, there has been a sustained emphasis on localism and multi-level governance in the county. As part of Cornwall's reformed governance arrangements, there has been a consistent commitment to overall sustainability, carbon-reduction and the development of green energy. This has been as much a strategic effort, as one targeted at the local community level. More recently,

Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly have been granted a devolution deal of their own by the Conservative government (Cornwall Council et al., 2015). This is the first such deal to be offered to a non-metropolitan area in England.

With such a significant range of factors in play, Cornwall/Isles of Scilly is an exemplar of the type of non-metropolitan localism reform that might take place in the Global North if such a policy were ever to be adopted more widely. The localism reforms in Cornwall may not yet have garnered the same degree of academic interest as those which have been taking place in Kerala since 1996, but they do contain a narrative which is worth disseminating and drawing some lessons from.

9b. The EU: subsidiarity, cohesion and multi-level governance

The EU in its current form is much less a federal state than it is a ‘federation of states’. In practice, federalism is often understood as the process through which a number of sovereign polities come together to form a single state. However, a more sensitive reading suggests something rather different. Federalism also implies a ‘consenting union’ in which the autonomy of each of constituent polity is maintained, despite all that they have in common (Nicolaidis, 2001: 440). However, Nicolaidis suggests that as a grouping of states the EU goes further than any other federation in history has done before. It offers the world a cosmopolitan vision of what governance beyond the state might look like. In this post-federal order, legitimacy resides not so much in the territorial locus of sovereignty, but rather in the effectiveness and responsiveness of governance processes across a broader spatial canvas. Indeed, in recent years, where the EU has been most innovative is in the way in which it has sought to exploit the flexibilities offered by multi-level and networked governance. This approach stems from the EU’s deep attachment to the idea of subsidiarity and its promotion of economic development at the regional level (Elias, 2008).

The principle of subsidiarity was enshrined in the Single European Act of 1986. In essence, subsidiarity is about the level at which government powers are most appropriately located, with the proviso that such powers should be exercised at the lowest possible level that is compatible with effective government. However, what is particularly at stake with the EU’s commitment to subsidiarity is the challenge which some believe that this poses to the notion of the sovereign state, particularly where it is considered that significant elements of political

authority could, or even should, be exercised at the sub-national rather than at the national level. In the case of the EU, the Single European Act quickly led to an emphasis on the region as the main driver of economic development. From the early 1980s onwards, the European Commission had already begun work on creating an administrative classification and database of the constituent territories making up the EU at varying levels of population (Eurostat, 2016). This was the ‘nomenclature of territorial units for statistics’ (or NUTS) system, and it became the basis for the allocation of the EU regional payments after the Single European Act came into force.

Anwen Elias notes how the changes brought about by EU structural funding and the early constitutional changes in favour of subsidiarity (for example the formation of the EU Committee of the Regions in 1994), gave regional actors new opportunities to access public funding and to participate directly in the policy making processes of the EU. ‘Regional actors’ in this case included: regional and local authorities; sectoral regional associations; and regionalist and minority nationalist parties. Many of these players sensed an opportunity for Europe to transform itself into a polity that ‘gave legal and institutional recognition to the cultural and linguistic specificities of historic nations and regions’ (Elias, 2008: 484). However, by the millennium much of the ‘hype’ that had been associated with the idea of a ‘Europe of the Regions’ had begun to subside. By then it was becoming clear that only the very best resourced and connected of European regions were in a position to exercise any real influence on EU decision-making. Meanwhile national governments had proven themselves to be highly adept ‘gatekeepers’ of the EU’s regional funding programmes.

In more recent years, however, with the expansion of the Union into Eastern Europe, there has been a renewed emphasis on the importance of the local and regional levels of governance within the EU. This has arisen in connection with the Union’s ‘territorial agenda’ which came to prominence in the mid-2000s in the run-up to the signing of the Lisbon Treaty in June 2009. It is set out in some detail in the European Commission’s Green Paper on territorial cohesion of 2008. This document offers a far more coherent and comprehensive spatial development strategy for the EU’s diverse geography than any of the Commission’s previous proposals. It identifies the following elements for an

effective territorial policy: overcoming variations in population density; addressing the effects of geographical distance and remoteness; and combating social and political divisions (CEC, 2008: 5–8). There are a number of significant aspects to note in connection with this new direction in European regional policy. Firstly, it is overtly place-based and holistic in its emphasis, rather than being focused around separate policy areas. Secondly, the driving idea behind it is ‘cohesion’, i.e. ensuring that all parts of the Union enjoy comparable levels of prosperity and wellbeing, and that the needs of the more disadvantaged communities are given priority for public funding support. Finally, there is a commitment to ensuring that all levels of government, as well as business and private actors, are effectively involved in decision-making, using a multi-level governance approach (CEC, 2011: 9).

Jane Holder and Antonia Layard note that cohesion is now the main rationale for allocating the EU’s regional development funds. The authors note that this ‘convergence’ funding now accounts for over 80% of the EU’s cohesion budget, and that more than 100 regions in 18 member states were receiving allocations from this budget in 2011 (Holder and Layard, 2011: 366). The beneficiaries included Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly amongst other regions in the UK. Holder and Layard also argue that the territorial cohesion agenda is leading to some interesting experiments in territorial governance across Europe, including the new European Groupings on Territorial Cooperation (EGTCs). A key feature of these recent collaborations is that they involve the efforts of public and private sector partners at all levels, and each with broadly equal status, as part of an integrated approach to place-making. Quite a number of the newly established EGTCs are cross-border in nature (e.g. Lille/Tournai in France/Belgium; or Galicia/Norte in Spain/Portugal). With more than 30 such groupings already in existence (or proposed) in 2011, this initiative is felt to have the potential to ‘substantially re-pattern the EU itself’ (Holder and Layard, 2011: 373). The DG–Regio, which spearheads the EU spatial project, makes no distinction between places which straddle national borders and places that are within a member state: they are all seen as being ‘within the territory of the EU’. Furthermore, the creation of new spatial scales through cohesion policy provides new opportunities for Europe-wide institutions and sub-national players to work alongside each other to influence EU policy making.

This new flexibility in territorial and sub-national identities within the EU is explored by Thomas Conzelmann in a paper which seeks to establish what is distinctive about the term 'multi-level governance', as opposed to just 'governance'. For Conzelmann, territory is the most significant element within MLG, and for this reason he favours Philippe Schmitter's definition of MLG as:

'an arrangement for making binding decisions that engages a multiplicity of politically independent but otherwise interdependent actors – private and public – at different levels of territorial aggregation in more or less continuous negotiation/deliberation/implementation, but does not assign exclusive policy competence to any of these levels or assert a stable hierarchy of political authority.' (Schmitter, 2003; 72)

This in turn implies that there is scope for the idea of the 'region' itself to become a much more flexible construct within the EU in future years. It need no longer be tied to any particular constitutional or administrative structure. Conceived of in this way, MLG would refer to the shifting relationship between geographical space on the one hand, and the institutionalization of decision-making and implementation capacity on the other; but with geographical space always the deciding factor (Conzelmann, 2008: 8).

One of the main concerns about such refinements in MLG theorizing is that they risk becoming too technocratic in their focus and thus somewhat divorced from reality. It would be easy to accuse them of ignoring the challenges of the EU's struggle with identity politics or its lack of democratic legitimacy. In any case, some would say MLG theorizing of the above type has already been superseded by more fundamental concerns such as the impact of financial austerity; the pressures of mass migration from Asia and Africa; and the growth of far right parties and movements across the continent (Schmidt, 2013; White, 2015). Indeed it could be argued that with the prospect of British withdrawal from EU membership now being formally negotiated, the very identity of the EU itself is being challenged.

Whatever the EU's current travails and wherever they may lead eventually, as a political grouping of sovereign nations the EU can still lay claim to some significant policy successes. These are helping to shape governance processes at many levels within its territory. In recent years, one of the EU's most notable achievements has been in the area of energy and climate change mitigation.

Here the EU has developed a series of comprehensive change programmes and strategies (Jordan and Rayner, 2011). These include an innovative emissions trading scheme which operates amongst member states, introduced in 2005 (van Asselt, 2011); and, most recently, a comprehensive climate and energy framework looking ahead to the year 2030 (CEC, 2016). Under this framework, the 28 nations of the EU plan to reduce greenhouse gas emissions collectively by 40% on 1990 levels; to have at least a 27% share for renewable energy collectively; and to have at least a 27% improvement in energy efficiency.³¹ Andrew Jordan and his colleagues note that the EU's achievements in this field rest on a series of paradoxes: for example its wish to lead, even though it is a leaderless system; or its preference for ambitious policy goals, even though it has limited policy tools at its disposal. From this they conclude that a great deal of effective governing is possible even without the existence of a central locus of executive power. They also note that in some circumstances the tension between the simultaneous desire for unity and diversity can turn out to be much more enabling than limiting (Jordan et al., 2011: 263).

9c. The UK and the EU: a semi-detached relationship?

Although the UK has been a member state since 1973, its relationship with the EU shows evidence of some significant pathologies. These have been analysed in detail by Janice Morphet in her book *How Europe Shapes British Public Policy* (Morphet, 2013). In general, Morphet notes that Britain's relationship with the EU appears to be 'frozen in time', and that it often resembles 'passive aggression' rather than engagement. Also, the UK tends to display an à la carte, free-rider approach to the EU. What lies at the heart of the relationship is essentially a lack of transparency and openness. This means that EU issues are either kept 'under the radar', or else 'off the agenda' completely. The UK government often acts as though the EU were 'handing down' law and policy to Britain, and as if there had been no British involvement at all in their development. This opaque approach to the adoption of EU legislation has also in some cases led to the practice of 'gold-plating'. This involves such legislation sometimes being used as a pretext for the inclusion of additional UK requirements, thus turning it into a carrier for broader UK policy (Morphet, 2013:

³¹ This is not to mention the pivotal leadership role that the EU has played in relation to the two major global climate change agreements of the past 20 years, at Kyoto in 1997 and at Paris in 2015.

200). The distance between the UK's central policy communities and the locus of implementation also means that frequently no preparation for policy delivery is made, so that additional costs have to be incurred at short notice. This then leads to a blame culture in which the EU is frequently demonised by politicians and the press.

Morphet also makes the point that UK policymaking is essentially episodic in character. It tends to be based on key events such as a change of government, a cabinet reshuffle or a budget speech in parliament. This does not sit easily with the 'flow' model of ongoing negotiation and discussion, which is more characteristic of the EU approach to making policy. EU legislative processes can often take as long as ten years to complete, from the initiation of discussions on a possible treaty change to the actual moment of formal agreement. This may cover two or more electoral cycles in Britain. UK policymaking on the other hand may more accurately be described as 'responsive', 'flexible', or 'short-termist', rather than strategic. For example, unlike some other EU countries and the EU itself, Britain does not have a clear, overarching national strategy or set of objectives (Morphet, 2013: 210). This is partly a consequence of the unique style and way of working of the British civil service. Over the years, the latter has clung on jealously to its policy advisory role. At the same time it has allowed a significant gap to develop between policy advice and implementation. As a result it has gradually divested itself of most of its responsibilities for delivery, either through devolution or through the establishment of agencies and arms-length bodies. The civil service seeks to maintain its policy leadership role by means of what it calls 'system stewardship' (Morphet, 2013: 62). This implies a sense of containment and control from above or, as others have termed it, a form of meta-governance (Jessop, 2004). However Morphet also notes that Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland are much more positive in their engagement with Europe than England is. In England the EU is seen more as a source of funds than of governance.

With regard to its grant funding arrangements, the EU currently has five main structural funds, with a total combined budget of 351.8bn Euros for the period 2014–2020. Of this sum, the UK is scheduled to receive an agreed allocation of 11.6bn (or 3.3%) over the period to 2020. However, the EU only meets part of the costs of its grant-funded projects. The rest has to be found from the host

nation's own resources, either public or private. In every case, the share of national funding that has to be found depends on the wealth of the region concerned, with the poorest regions having to make the smallest contribution. During the current funding period, the UK is eligible to receive allocations from four of the EU's five grant-funding streams, including the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the European Social Fund (ESF). All the UK's 40 NUTS-2 regions are eligible for funding from the ERDF and the ESF, and both of these grant streams are allocated according to three different levels of funding. The highest level of funding is reserved for 'less developed' regions, where GDP per capita is less than 75% of the EU average. The only two regions in the UK that qualify for this higher level of funding are Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly, and West Wales and the Valleys. The second highest level of funding is intended for 'transition' regions, where GDP per capita is between 75% and 90% of the EU average. There are currently eleven such regions in the UK, including Northern Ireland and the Islands of Scotland. The third highest of the three levels of funding is that which exists for 'developed regions', where GDP per capita is over 90% of the EU average (HM Government, 2016: 61–62). All of the UK's other 27 NUTS-2 regions are eligible to receive grant at this 'basic' rate.

Despite her reservations about the way in which the UK government engages with the EU, Janice Morphet's main thesis is that the EU has significantly shaped UK public policy in a range of areas. This thesis is supported by a number of other scholars. For example, Andrew Jordan traces the 'europeanization' of UK national government and policy through a case study of the former Department of the Environment (DoE) and its successors (Jordan, 2003: 272–277). He notes how the Department evolved from a position of 'deep philosophical conflict' with the EU's approach to pollution control in the 1970s, to one of demanding and winning additional resources to deal with environmental threats such as acid rain and marine pollution in the late 1980s, during Nicholas Ridley's tenure as Secretary of State. However, Jordan claims that the Europeanization process in the DoE went much further than merely changes in structure and policies. Eventually, change also took root at a deeper cultural level as well, as the department also began to realise 'that the EU could

also be a force for good; that is, a means to improve domestic environmental protection' (Jordan, 2003: 279).

Jordan's specific findings in relation to the DoE and its successors are confirmed by a recent study covering the whole of UK central government (Bulmer and Burch, 2009). According to these scholars, an 'inner core' of UK central governments, particularly those responsible for agriculture, environment, trade and finance, has had to adapt quickly and fundamentally to the demands EU policy making. But a much larger group of 'outer core' departments, including the devolved administrations of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, have also had to develop effective operating arrangements in the context of Britain's EU membership (Bulmer and Burch, 2009: 126). In this respect, Bulmer and Burch conclude that most parts of UK government have been able to organize themselves effectively to deal with the additional dimension of EU policy making. However, the UK government has been much less effective in showing the strategic capacity to plan ahead; in its reputation for positive and effective engagement within the EU; and in the effectiveness of its intergovernmental bargaining at EU level (Bulmer and Burch, 2009: 223).

With this background in mind, it is instructive to see how some UK government ministers referred to Britain's membership of the EU during the 2016 referendum campaign. For example, the former Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change, Amber Rudd MP, made a number of significant points in a speech to energy industry workers in Kent in March 2016 (Rudd, 2016). She argued that from the point of view of Britain's energy future, there were significant reasons why people should vote to remain as part of the EU. She reminded her audience that energy lay at the heart of the Union, as the former European Coal and Steel Community was founded in 1958 on the basis of maximizing energy resources for the six original countries involved. The EU is also important for Britain because of the rapidly growing European energy market. This helps to guarantee the UK's energy security at a time when North Sea oil reserves are declining, and when Russia has increasingly been using its gas pipeline as a means of holding Western European nations to ransom. Thirdly, the development of an integrated European energy grid will help to reduce UK energy prices and keep them lower in future. Fourthly, the European Single Market represents a significant source of external investment in the UK

economy. In this connection, the Secretary of State specifically mentioned Siemens and the Danish energy company Dong, both of which have been investing heavily in Britain's offshore wind industry in recent years. Finally, being part of the EU has helped to increase the UK's international standing, particularly in relation to its joint leadership of the global climate change agenda.

9d. The UK and the evolving position of England

Traditionally, government in the UK has been closely identified with the 'Westminster model'. The key features of this model, according to Andrew Gamble, are a unitary state; parliamentary sovereignty; strong cabinet government; accountability through free and fair elections; majority party control of the executive; elaborate parliamentary conventions and institutionalized opposition (Gamble, 1990; Marsh, 2011: 37). This is also the basis of what David Richards and others have described as the 'British Political Tradition' (BPT). Unlike more participatory political cultures, the BPT represents a limited conception of representative democracy, built on the top-down view that power should rest with central government and that 'government knows best'. This view is used to justify elite rule and the concentration of power at the heart of the system (Blunkett and Richards, 2011).

As a reaction to this orthodoxy, Rod Rhodes in the 1980s developed the notion of the 'differentiated polity' to capture the way in which governance in the UK seemed to be evolving at the time. This alternative, 'postmodern' conception of government emphasizes pluralism; networked governance; contested political traditions; intergovernmental relations; power dependence; and a hollowed-out state (Rhodes, 1988 and 1997: 180–200; Marsh, 2011: 38). In contrast to the Westminster model, the differentiated polity suggests that the executive is deeply segmented, and that there are significant differences between ministers and departments within it. On this view, what characterizes British government most strongly are contestation and relationships of bargaining and exchange, rather than unity of purpose. According to David Marsh, the differentiated polity has over time become the 'new orthodoxy' in academic theorizing about the British state (Marsh, 2011: 46).

To support this view, Ian Bache and Matthew Flinders argue that the New Labour government's ground-breaking devolution measures in respect of

Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and Greater London have provided a clear institutional underpinning for the notion of the differentiated polity in the UK. Yet at the same time, these reforms have prompted the British state into developing new strategies, both formal and informal, in order to maintain its central steering capacity (Bache and Flinders, 2004a: 100). One obvious formal strategy has been the drawing up of the Memorandum of Understanding between the UK government and the three devolved administrations in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. This has paved the way for the establishment of a new machinery of intergovernmental relations, with its own distinctive procedures and its associated schedule of bilateral and multilateral meetings.

Vernon Bogdanor argues that the devolutionary changes enacted by the previous Labour government, along with other legislative changes including the creation of the UK's new Supreme Court; the substantial reduction in the number of hereditary peers sitting in the House of Lords; and the passing of the Human Rights Act, have resulted in the creation of a 'new British Constitution'. This has superseded the 'classic' view of the British state which was based on the principle of parliamentary sovereignty, and which was so confidently defended in the works of nineteenth-century constitutional theorists such as Walter Bagehot and A V Dicey (Bogdanor, 2009a: 285). However, in Bogdanor's view, Labour's reforms have done little to overcome the widespread disenchantment that currently exists with politics in the UK. In fact all they have managed to achieve is a redistribution of power 'downwards' and 'sideways' to other elites – many of them unelected – be they local, professional, and in some cases even based within the European Union (Bogdanor, 2009b). Parliamentary sovereignty in the UK has been partially dismantled, but by no means entirely. Successive UK governments continue to steer clear of reforms that might be grounded on genuine popular sovereignty, rather than on the more limited parliamentary version established by England's Glorious Revolution of 1688–89 (Fukuyama, 2011: 417–420).

With regard to devolved ministerial and government powers in the UK, the current picture across the three administrations is quite varied and is always in flux. Of the three administrations, Northern Ireland's Assembly had the widest range of devolved powers in 2014, with eight fully devolved policy areas (education, health, local government, culture, transport, law/justice,

environment/farming and work/pensions) and three partially devolved ones (business/skills, home office, energy) (Institute for Government, 2014: 14). As for Scotland, it had six fully devolved policy areas (education, health, local government, culture, transport and law/justice) in 2014, and four partially devolved ones (environment, business/skills, home office, and energy). Finally, in the same year Wales had four fully devolved policy areas (education, health, local government, culture) and four partially devolved ones (environment/farming, transport, business/skills, energy). To complete the picture, the UK government continued to reserve five policy areas (Cabinet Office/UK Parliament, treasury, foreign affairs, defence and international development) entirely for itself in 2014. It also shared seven partially reserved ones with the three devolved administrations. Of these seven areas, energy/climate change seemed to be the one which showed the greatest degree of centralization, according to the analysis set out by the Institute for Government. Most interesting of all however, is the fact that, apart from those powers which have been held traditionally by local government, England as a territory had no substantially devolved powers of its own. Even its regional structure, tentatively established over a period of nearly 20 years, was swept away by the Coalition government after it came to power in 2010 (Fenwick, 2015: 8).

At the political level, Michael Keating argues that much of the recent debate about intergovernmental relations in Britain has pitted so-called 'welfare unionists' against 'welfare nationalists'. The latter see Scotland or Wales as units of social solidarity in their own right, with new forms of social citizenship being articulated primarily at these levels. This in turn seems to have sparked something of a 'race to the top' in welfare terms, with a marked tendency for welfare entitlements in the devolved administrations to become more generous rather than vice versa. It is this growing asymmetry in the UK devolution settlement that is making intergovernmental relations in the UK increasingly problematic. Keating sees no possibility of core English interests yielding to policy pressures from the 'Celtic fringe', particularly as far as public spending is concerned. The most likely outcome is that England will concede more fiscal autonomy to the devolved administrations and then leave them to fund their own higher level of public services entirely for themselves (Keating, 2012: 227).

With this in mind, it is perhaps not surprising that support has been growing on the political Right for the idea of ‘English votes for English laws’, and an Act to put this measure into effect has recently passed into UK law (UK Parliament, 2017).

Writing in 2012 before the Scottish independence referendum took place, Keating notes that it was still normal for England to be seen as synonymous with the UK as a whole. This is because England is the *de facto* centre of the British state (Keating, 2012: 224–225). Indeed, it is English electors who determine the composition of the Westminster parliament, even when the vast majority of Scottish and Northern Irish seats return MPs from locally based parties (Bogdanor, 2016). The so-called ‘British’ Political Tradition, which draws much of its strength from England’s pre-eminence within the Union, thus remains the dominant political ideology in the UK, even if it is now increasingly contested. However, the Scottish Independence referendum in September 2014 has marked a significant turning point in the UK’s affairs. It has raised the whole profile of the UK’s constitutional settlement, as well as the specific position of England within the union. Neither of these issues can be ignored for very much longer.

With regard to the first of them (i.e. the UK’s overall constitutional settlement), there has been no government-led initiative of any kind so far to address UK-wide constitutional relations. This is despite a significant number of voices, including that of the House of Commons Political and Constitutional Reform Select Committee, calling for a new UK constitutional settlement in the run-up to the 2015 general election (UK Parliament, 2015). What government action there has been on this front has been entirely limited to dealing with the political promises made to Scotland during the referendum campaign. On that issue, however, the UK government’s response was very swift indeed. Immediately after the referendum, the Coalition government set up a special commission under Lord Smith of Kelvin. Lord Smith’s task was to make proposals for devolving even more powers to Scotland, in addition to those which it had already been granted under the Scotland Act 2012. The latter had given Scotland greater taxation powers, including the introduction of a new Scottish rate of income tax (Bell, 2015: 212). The Smith proposals were published in December 2014 and were enacted into law as part of a further Scotland Act in

2016. The new act extends the Scottish government's powers of taxation even further, as well as its ability to set many of the rates for welfare benefits within its jurisdiction, particularly in the areas of social welfare and employment. In addition, the UK Parliament has recently approved legislation to extend the powers of the Welsh Assembly. As a result of the Wales Act 2014, the Welsh Assembly Government has been formally renamed the 'Welsh Government', and its taxation powers have been extended to include business rates, property and landfill taxes, as well as the possibility of setting its own marginal rates of income tax in the future (Legislation.gov.uk: 2016).

With regard to the second of the two issues highlighted above, (i.e. the position of England), the increasingly anomalous constitutional position of England has been the subject of much debate since Scotland's independence referendum. Ed Cox, for example, writing in a recent IPPR publication, argues that not only has England 'been looking on with envy' as the UK's asymmetrical devolution settlement has been taking shape (Cox, 2014: 147), but that the devolution process itself has been unfolding against the backdrop of economic austerity. However, this provides the opportunity for further political devolution in England to be linked to the theme of economic growth. Cox identifies a number of barriers that work to prevent the UK government from 'letting go' of power. Firstly, decentralization can be a complex business, and its precise shape tends to vary with each individual service area or function. Secondly, the UK government lacks confidence in the ability of local authorities to deliver devolved government effectively, particularly in a context where the 'Marshallian model of welfare' (and the associated fear of creating postcode lotteries) holds such deep sway, as it clearly does in the UK (Cox 2014: 151). Finally, the issue of English decentralization suffers from low salience politically. It simply fails to capture the imagination of the voting public.

As for implementing English decentralization, Cox joins the growing call for a 'big bang' city deal approach. This looks remarkably like the devolution agenda that was being driven forward by George Osborne in 2015/16 while he was still Chancellor of the Exchequer. However, Cox warns that such an approach needs to be part of a longer-term calculation. It doesn't matter too much if there is a degree of asymmetry about it, particularly in the early stages. This is because attempts to decentralize across the board inevitably get weakened

down to the ‘lowest common denominator level’, which is one of the main reasons why English localism has been so limited to date (Cox, 2014: 157). Also, Cox warns that it might be better to implement the new city deals without holding a public referendum in advance. This is to avoid the possibility of any proposal being hi-jacked by a vociferous ‘no’ campaign. Instead, there could be a ‘post-hoc’ referendum on each devolution deal some three to five years after the event. This would allow time for proper lessons to be learnt from the new arrangements.

Finally, in her book *How Europe Shapes British Public Policy* Janice Morphet makes the rather startling point that, since the Single European Act was passed in 1986, the EU has exerted significant influence on territorial policy within the UK (Morphet, 2013: 163–189). This has been evident not just in respect of the allocation of EU regional funds, but also in the shape of a whole succession of institutional reforms that have taken place within UK sub-national governance since that time. These include the establishment of the Government Offices of the Regions in 1993, followed later by the Regional Development Agencies in 1998; and by the subsequent devolution of political powers to the Celtic nations and Greater London in the late 1990s. More recently there has also been the promotion of cities policy and Combined Authorities under both Labour and Coalition governments, as well as the development of Local Economic Partnerships from 2010 onwards. Finally, Morphet highlights a very gradual increase in the powers of UK local government over recent years. This follows a significant period of hollowing out under the period of Conservative rule from 1979–1997 (Stoker, 2004; John, 2014).

9e. Sub-national governance and localism in England: towards a new order?

This section presents a high-level account of sub-national and local government reform in England as it has unfolded in recent years. The account focuses on the period since 1997 when Tony Blair’s Labour government first came to office. As the account proceeds, it will be important to keep in mind the varying spatial levels that constitute the ‘sub-national’ realm in England. These include both the regional and sub-regional tiers, as well as the dual hierarchy of urban and rural local governance. On the urban front, the local governance hierarchy comprises the city and urban neighbourhood levels; and in rural areas, the

county/district/town/parish levels. Some of these levels have coherent and often quite long-established governance structures associated with them. In others, the degree of institutionalized governance is much more fluid and contested. With all these spatial categories in mind, this account seeks to present a historically-based institutional analysis of sub-national governance reform in England over the period in question.

The main themes addressed in this section include: ‘traditional’ local government in England; community leadership and co-governance; micro-level governance (i.e. governance at the town/parish/neighbourhood levels); and city and regional government. Each of these four themes is presented in turn and briefly analysed below. The four-part thematic account is then placed in a broader theoretical context, and some emerging developments and possible models for the future are highlighted. To conclude, the section presents a snapshot of how energy and climate change policy has operated at the sub-national level since the millennium. This policy area prepares the way for the in-depth account of localism in Cornwall that will be presented in the remaining sections of this chapter.

English local government

According to Peter John, English local government (ELG) is the ‘great survivor’ of the sub-national governance scene. During the course of its 150-year history, its demise has often been predicted, but it has continued to adapt and has frequently prospered over this long period (John, 2014: 688). Two of its key characteristics are the strength of its party politics and its core of local political control. Over time, local government bureaucracies have increased in size, and have become considerably more professional in their approach. The interests of the local professional cadre seem to have meshed together well with those of the elected councillors who exercise political control; to the extent that the two now effectively form a ‘dual elite’ of members and senior officers working in tandem at the local level. The focus of this dual elite is predominantly on the effective delivery of services, rather than on promoting local democracy. Despite the UK’s overall trend towards political centralization over the latter part of the twentieth century, ELG has frequently found itself at the heart of new networks, and it remains the most powerful and legitimate player in the local governance landscape today (John, 2014: 694). Even where its services have

been restructured and contracted out to other bodies, it has generally retained its role as the service principal.

Under the Coalition government of 2010–2015, ELG suffered a huge assault on its funding and spending, but paradoxically it has benefited from this in a number of ways as well. It has acquired a new power of general competence, as well as new financial flexibilities. Meanwhile, the Audit Commission and the various regional government structures which used to stand over it have now been dismantled. ELG has also taken the lead in implementing new economic development powers, and it has managed the huge cuts in public expenditure it has been required to make with aplomb. This underlying pragmatism is what characterizes the culture of local government in England. It prefers to search out new forms of local administration, rather than engage in confrontation with central government. However, its very success has probably prevented a more engaged form of local politics from emerging at the local level (John, 2014: 700).

As for the current pattern of English local government, most observers agree that it makes little sense as it currently stands. Given *carte blanche*, no government would ever design such an incoherent set of arrangements (Fenwick, 2015: 10; see also section 7c above). Structurally, the main cleavage is between those parts of England which are governed by a ‘unitary’ (or single-tier, all-purpose) local council, and those which are still governed by two separate council tiers, with split and sometimes overlapping powers. The latter model is mainly to be found in the more rural parts of England³². Fenwick notes that in recent times there has been a growing tendency for government to create more unitary councils, especially unitary counties within rural areas. Indeed Cornwall Council, created in 2009, is one of the most recent of these. Furthermore, Lord Michael Heseltine has recently made a strong recommendation to the UK’s government urging that unitary councils now be created across the whole of England, and that the remaining two-tier areas be brought into line with this pattern (Lord Heseltine, 2012). However, the danger of such a move is that it would lead to much greater centralization of powers, something which civil servants in the Department of Communities and Local

³² In England’s rural areas there is often also a third tier of town, parish and community councils. This micro tier of local administration will be discussed in more detail slightly later in this section

Government might not necessarily be averse to seeing (Leach, 2009: 68). However, this is likely to weaken local democracy in England even further (Game, 2009).

On the other hand, unitary authorities, especially unitary counties like Cornwall, also offer some significant advantages in relation to the two-tier structures which they have replaced. Firstly in comparison to two-tier areas, they help to clarify where accountability for services actually lies. Secondly, particularly where they are based on traditional shire counties, they provide a strong territorial identity that citizens can often relate to on an emotional level. Finally, from a resource point of view, they tend to offer greater economies of scale. In the current climate of austerity, this is crucial since it is often the smaller, lower-tier District Councils which are the ones feeling the effects of government funding cutbacks most acutely. The majority of District Councils are now being forced to share at least some of their back-line and front-line services with neighbouring authorities, as well as their senior management teams (Local Government Group, 2011).

In 2010 Ian Hasdell predicted with some foresight that ELG was facing up to a prolonged period of financial austerity. He also argued that this presented it with a once-in-a-generation chance to transform its traditional ways of working (Hasdell, 2010: 58). Later, in 2013, Vivien Lowndes and Kerry McCaughie noted that local authorities were experiencing a 'perfect storm' of cuts in revenue and capital spending, amounting to some 30% of their total budgets in the period leading up to 2015. With this in mind, the authors examined whether authorities were simply 'trimming' to avoid the worst of the cuts, or whether they were actually beginning to transform themselves in a more fundamental way. They concluded that ELG seemed to be focused mainly on institutional 'bricolage', with the guiding purpose of 'keeping things together' and of 'hanging on in there' (Lowndes and McCaughie, 2013: 544). They did not observe any decisive break with past paradigms, nor did they see any new narratives emerging either.

Despite these academic findings, it is clear from reading the current local government press that councils in England are actively pursuing a range of initiatives for ensuring both their own financial sustainability as well as the long-term wellbeing of their residents. Often these ideas involve strategic asset purchases such as commercial and leisure property holdings (Ashford Borough

Council and Teignbridge District Council), or else of land for residential development or for local energy generation (Wolverhampton Borough Council and Oxford City Council) (Municipal Journal, 2016a). In the areas concerned, these strategic schemes are often being carried out in partnership with the private and not-for-profit sectors.

Community leadership and co-governance

Returning to Peter John's thesis presented at the start of this section, one of the reasons that local government has remained a central player in the sub-national governance of England is the community leadership role that it acquired under Labour after 1997. According to Gerry Stoker, this radical new perspective on the role of local government emerged from the Economic and Social Research Council's (ESRC's) major research programme in the 1990s on the structure and processes of ELG. The project had initially been inspired by Rod Rhodes's seminal findings on the differentiated polity and on the changing nature of UK government beyond Whitehall and Westminster (Stoker, 2011: 16; see also section 9d above). This research played a key part in challenging the 'new public management' ideology of the 1980s, and in arguing for a view of the world in which networks are as important as markets and bureaucracy as a means of delivering solutions for local communities. This work strongly promoted the development of 'governance' at the local level, as opposed just to management or administration. It also advocated a new community leadership role for local government in the UK. According to Stoker, the main purpose of community governance is more than just efficiency or value-for-money, but the achievement of public value in the broadest terms. This public value model sees local councils actively working to join up and steer a complex set of social, economic and political processes within their areas.

The community governance model was given institutional form by the New Labour government as part of the Local Government Act 2000. The act gave local authorities the power to promote the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of their areas, and to set out their proposals in the form of a community strategy. Community strategies (later renamed 'sustainable' community strategies) were to be drawn up by local authorities working with other public bodies and with the business and voluntary sectors in their areas, within the framework of a local strategic partnership (LSP). The intention of

these new 'co-governance' partnership bodies was ostensibly to put local people at the heart of the governance process. Indeed, authorities were asked to make special efforts to include marginal groups within them (DETR, 2000). At the same time as these strategic-level partnerships were developing, their number was being augmented by more than 5000 other partnership bodies which were also set up by Labour to co-ordinate a range of service functions at the local level. These included sectors such as early years and childcare, learning and skills and crime and disorder (Smith et al., 2006).

Labour's institutionalization of the co-governance approach continued throughout the whole of the 2000s decade (DCLG, 2009). As it unfolded, it was refined and strengthened by other guiding ideas, especially that of the 'place-shaping' role of local authorities. The latter was memorably spelled out by the Lyons enquiry into local government, whose final report was published in 2007. According to Lyons, place-shaping goes well beyond local government's role as a service provider and regulator. It comprises elements such as: building and shaping local identity; working to make the local economy more successful; understanding local needs and commissioning the right services to address them (Lyons, 2007: 3). The key point about place-shaping is its strategic and leadership focus.

However, as the reality of Labour's governance-through-partnership model began to unfold, so the critiques of its workings became sharper. For George Jones and John Stewart, the proliferation of partnerships produced 'tangled lines of accountability for...monitoring and auditing different streams of public money and for decision-making' (Jones and Stewart, 2009: 63). Meanwhile Fenwick et al. noted that most of the non-state actors involved in co-governance partnerships were from 'professionalised organisations', often with comparable structures to those in the public sector. They quickly morphed into a kind of *meta-bureaucracy*, in which both state and non-state actors combined forces to implement what was effectively central government policy (Pratchett, 2004: 369; Fenwick et al., 2010: 17).

Micro-level governance

As for micro-level governance, one of the Labour's most significant policy initiatives during its initial period in office was its National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal (Social Exclusion Unit, 2001). This top-down

programme was focused on tackling poverty and social exclusion within urban neighbourhoods in England (Wallace, 2001). It was based on the recognition that over a period of time, hundreds of poor neighbourhoods had seen their quality of life and services deteriorate in relation to those in the rest of society, and that there was a particular concentration of vulnerable people living in such communities. The aim of this very rigorous and coherent strategy was to identify these particular neighbourhoods and target them for special attention. This was with the aim of improving outcomes in the five core policy areas of jobs, crime, health, schooling and housing. The improvements sought through the policy were to be achieved through a combination of additional public investment and the implementation of new policy ideas based around the themes of economic renewal and community empowerment. The intention was to improve mainstream public services, but at the same time to develop joined-up solutions that could be tailored to the needs of each neighbourhood. Another key element was to ensure that the strategy was followed through systematically over a period of ten to twenty years. Within the context of the initiative, an important priority was for the government to develop better-quality, national-level data on individual neighbourhoods. Possession of such data would enable central government to pinpoint specific pockets of deprivation within local areas.

Partly as a reaction to the top-down character of this strategy, a second theme to emerge strongly in this period was 'new localism'. The localism idea was quickly taken up by politicians of all persuasions (Wilson and Game, 2006: 379–381) and most prominently by David Miliband who briefly became Labour's Minister of State for Communities and Local Government after the 2005 general election. In a number of ministerial speeches and articles, Miliband promoted the idea of 'double devolution'. This involved both central *and* local government in devolving some of their powers. In local government's case, this meant handing powers down to the thousands of towns and parishes across England, and even beyond the micro tier of governance to neighbourhoods and to groups of citizens directly (Miliband, 2006). Although the ultimate beneficiaries of Labour's 'double devolution' idea were often left rather open-ended, what is significant about this new discourse of localism is that for the first time ever governance at the micro level was seriously being brought into the frame of local government reform in the UK.

Since 2010, local governance reform at the micro-level has been pursued with even greater vigour by the Coalition government. The Coalition has strengthened the measures that Labour introduced in 2007³³, simplifying the procedures for setting up new parish and community councils (DCLG, 2015). It also introduced a raft of more specific measures as part of the Localism Act, 2011. In a document entitled *You've Got the Power* (DCLG, 2013), the government sets out a total of nine new rights and powers that it claims to have enacted since 2010 in support of councils and communities at the most local, P1-level. These include local rights to bid for assets of recognized community value and to reclaim publicly owned land for community purposes; to draw up neighbourhood plans for the future development of the local environment and infrastructure; and to sponsor specific building developments in accordance with an approved neighbourhood plan.

Neighbourhood planning is potentially a powerful tool, and it has some similarities with the people's planning initiative in Kerala (see section 8h above). Unlike people's planning in Kerala, however, neighbourhood planning in England is only an optional power. That said, it has been taken up quite enthusiastically in urban and rural communities across most parts of England. Recent figures from the DCLG show that some 2000 communities representing an estimated eight million English residents are currently involved in preparing a neighbourhood plan. By the spring of 2017, more than 300 plans had passed the final hurdle of being confirmed through a referendum of local citizens (DCLG, 2017).

Another new local power introduced by the Localism Act is a right to challenge to take over the running of existing Council services. This power extends not only to communities and to micro-level councils, but also to public service employees as well. This is indicative of an unmistakable strain of contestation running through many of the Coalition's localism measures, particularly in relation to established local government. For example, under the Localism Act 2011, local authorities are required to publish details of all items of public expenditure exceeding £500 on a regular basis. The same legislation also requires that they hold a referendum of local residents, if they propose to raise their annual Council Tax by more than the rate specified by the Secretary of

³³ As part of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act, 2007

State in any one year. Commenting on these developments, Michael Buser argues that under the Coalition's localism policy, participatory processes seem to have been designed not to strengthen local democracy, but more to act as a 'framework for opposition'. What they lack, according to Buser, is any idea of mutuality or, of 'consideration of the respective roles of, and relationships between, citizens, civil servants and planners, and politicians at local and national levels'. Also, within the Coalition's agenda, there seems to be a tendency to equate civic participation with democratic renewal. However, without some sort of reform of the state's overall framework for democracy, the incitement to citizen engagement and contestation could end up undermining the conditions under which people can develop as free and equal (Buser, 2013: 17).

Sub-regional governance

Turning from developments at the micro level to sub-regional-level governance, both Labour and the subsequent Conservative-led governments have tried to carry out institutional reform in this area as well. It is possible to see some of these reform efforts as having been inspired specifically by EU regional policy (Morphet, 2013: 163–189; see also section 9d above). In Labour's case, this was through measures such as its advocacy of Multi-Area Partnerships and City Regions in the *Strong and Prosperous Communities* White Paper of 2006; its championing of the Single Regional Strategy approach involving Regional Development Agencies and local authority leaders; and the creation of Combined Authorities and Economic Prosperity Boards under the 2009 Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act (Pearce and Ayres, 2012). These measures created a politics of flux and flows, in which 'regional assemblages' of power and influence became very prominent for a short period (Allen and Cochrane, 2007; 1171). These 'assemblages' involved a shifting cast of actors drawn from central, regional and local bodies engaged in a complex set of mobilizations. According to Pearce and Ayres (2012: 3), this new governance activity marked a decisive break with the past, and constituted a significant shift in the locus of decision-making away from Whitehall.

After the 2010 election, the Coalition government made significant changes to certain elements of Labour's regional economic policy, but left others virtually untouched. One of the first steps the Coalition took was to dismantle Labour's

system of Regional Development Agencies (RDAs). These bodies had been established in 1998 with the aim of supporting economic development at a strategic level across the whole of England. The RDAs were replaced with 39 Local Economic Partnerships (LEPs – HM Government, 2010). The areas covered by these bodies are loosely based on those of England's shire counties and major cities, and they now constitute a recognizable pattern of economic sub-regions. They are intended to be led by local business and supported by councils and other key interests in the area, most notably the further and higher education sector. In addition to creating the LEPs, from 2012 onwards the Coalition entered into a number of 'City Deals' with England's eight largest 'core' cities and a further 20 'key' cities (HM Government, 2012b)³⁴.

One significant feature of the City Deals policy is the way in which the government has tried to link it to what it sees as strong and accountable political leadership in the form of a directly elected executive mayor. The power of English local authorities to have a directly elected mayor was originally conferred by Labour as part of the Local Government Act 2000. However, following its introduction, this measure had been largely ignored by local authorities. As part of the Localism Act 2011, the Coalition government placed a requirement on England's twelve largest cities to hold a consultative referendum on whether or not to introduce the role of mayor. The referendum was due to take place by May 2012. As it happened, two of the twelve cities concerned (Leicester and Liverpool) agreed to have an elected mayor in advance of this date, without even a holding a referendum. And in another city (Bristol), the consultative referendum that took place in May 2012 yielded a small majority in favour of moving to a mayoral system. However, in the nine remaining cities, the mayoral proposal was firmly rejected by the electorate. This means that of the small total of 17 executive mayors who currently hold office in England, fewer than half of them have been elected to serve in the country's largest cities (Stevens, 2017). However, this position is due to change somewhat in 2017 and beyond as the Conservative government's devolution policy starts to roll out across different parts of England.

³⁴ The eight 'core' cities for which city deals were concluded were: Bristol, Birmingham, Manchester, Leeds, Liverpool, Newcastle, Nottingham and Sheffield. The 20 'second wave' cities comprised the next largest 14 cities outside London after the 'core eight', as well as six of the fastest growing smaller English cities.

In terms of continuity with the previous Labour government's policy, the most obvious example is the way in which the Combined Authority provisions contained in Labour's 2009 'Local Democracy' Act and set out in subsequent detailed guidance (DCLG, 2010), have been taken up both by the Coalition, and most particularly by the 2015 Conservative government. Combined Authority status enables a group of 'sovereign' local authorities to come together to create a larger 'combined' public body for the purposes of economic development and transport planning. By the summer of 2015, there were already five such 'super-authorities' involving a total 33 local councils established under the 2009 legislation³⁵; and a number of others were in the pipeline (Sandford, 2015). Since then, Combined Authorities have become the UK's government's preferred mechanism for addressing the problem of sub-national governance in England.

After its 2015 general election win, the Conservative government pressed forward rapidly with its English devolution agenda. Firstly, as mentioned in section 9a above, it moved swiftly to agree a devolution deal with Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly. This deal was concluded with some fanfare in July 2015. The key areas it covers are public transport, health and social care, employment and skills, support for business, energy and environmental resilience, public estate and heritage (Cornwall Council et al., 2015). Significantly, the deal did not include any requirement for the Cornwall sub-region to have an elected mayor.

At the same time as concluding this initial deal, the government also invited all areas in England to express an interest in acquiring greater devolved powers. In total, 32 separate expressions of interest were received by the closing deadline of September 2015 (Municipal Journal, 2016b). After that, discussions took place amongst groups of local authorities to finalize specific devolution packages, and legislation to enable devolution to take place more widely across England was also passed by Parliament³⁶. In March 2016, the then Chancellor George Osborne announced the creation of three new Combined Authorities – East Anglia, Greater Lincolnshire and West of England – to add to the five previously established under Labour's 2009 Act. But the East Anglia proposal in particular has been mired in disagreement since then. This concerns both the

³⁵ The first five Combined Authorities to be established were in Greater Manchester (2011), and Liverpool City Region, North-East, Sheffield City Region and West Yorkshire (all in 2014).

³⁶ The Cities and Local Government Devolution Act, 2016

territorial extent of the proposed sub-region, and whether it is feasible, or indeed legitimate, for one directly elected mayor to have political authority over such a large swathe of Eastern England. At the time of submitting this thesis, only one specific part of it (a new combined authority involving Cambridgeshire and Peterborough) had been fully signed off.

The stand-off over the proposed East Anglia CA is a sign of the huge anxiety that was felt by many at the Conservative government's approach to devolution. In May 2016, the head of the National Audit Office warned that the government had no clear view of either the landscape or the intended destination of its devolution policy. In June 2016, the House of Lords Constitution Committee voiced similar criticisms. It also took the government to task for trying to force local areas to accept elected mayors, and for the overall lack of public communication and democratic accountability evident in the government's proposals (Municipal Journal, 2016c).

Emerging trends in English sub-national governance

Given the increasing pace of institutional reform that has been taking place at the sub-national level in England during the past 40 years, it makes sense to draw upon the insights that a multi-level governance perspective is able to provide. Not only can MLG help scholars analyse past and recent events, it also provides a framework for projecting emerging scenarios forward into the future.

Regarding the current position, there are some key points to be made. Firstly, there is clearly an accelerated process of re-spatialization taking place at the sub-national level in England. This contains both a strategic and a neighbourhood dimension. At the strategic level, what seems to be emerging is a broad consensus across the political spectrum on the desirability and viability of 'sub-regional' governance. In turn what this seems to be producing is a pattern of city- and shire county-based sub-regions, on the European Union NUTS-2 model (see also section 9b above). The Combined Authority provisions contained in existing UK legislation provide a flexible fit for this emerging spatial consensus. Meanwhile at the micro level, there is now also an accepted view that local communities at the P1 and P2 levels should be able to exercise much more substantial political powers in their own right. With this in mind, the Coalition's localism reforms (and particularly those around neighbourhood

planning – see previous sub-section) have to be seen as the first steps towards enacting such powers into UK law.

The key question that emerges from all of this is how these two critical dimensions of sub-national governance – the strategic and the neighbourhood levels – can be optimally aligned within the English context. An equally important question is how these two emerging sub-national dimensions might articulate most effectively with national and supra-national governance at the UK and (potentially) EU levels. These are quite properly questions of political system design. The three-tier *Panchayati Raj* system in India and Kerala may offer a possible model for would-be system designers. But while *Panchayati Raj* is strong on democratic rights and processes, it is also quite a cumbersome and heavily institutionalized way of organizing political governance (see Section 8i above). This is where the experience of Cornwall Council since it was reformed in 2009 may be worth looking at carefully. However, before considering the experience of Cornwall Council in detail, it would be useful to focus some analytical attention on an area of public policy that localism in Cornwall is very closely associated with. With this in mind, the final paragraphs of this section outline briefly how English sub-national government has been involved in energy and climate change policy in recent years.

Energy and climate change policy at sub-national level in England

During much of the 1990s and 2000s, energy was seen as an integral part of economic and industrial policy by the UK government. This view rested on the particular set of power relations that existed at the time between the big six energy companies and a ‘hands-off’ government. This state of affairs enabled a few dominant market players to exercise considerable leverage over UK energy policy (Kern et al., 2014: 517). However, from the early 2000s onwards, there was a gradual turn towards localism in energy policy. For example, the 2003 Energy White Paper was one of the first official documents in the UK to mention the importance of the local dimension in energy provision (Catney et al., 2014: 719). This led to a number of targeted, area-based initiatives such as the Community Energy Saving Programme (CESP) and the Carbon Emissions Reduction Target (CERT). Following Labour’s Energy and Climate Change Acts of 2008, energy policy became directly associated with the notion of climate

change³⁷ and a national feed-in tariff was also introduced for individual and small-scale production of renewable energies. The feed-in tariff was a significant step forward. Amongst other things, it paved the way for a much greater local authority role in leading and supporting local energy projects.

As for local authorities' previous involvement in energy and climate change policy, Shaw and Theobald note that in the past this had never been seen as a mainstream area for local government. This is despite the Nottingham Declaration of September 2000, to which more than 300 local authorities eventually pledged themselves. By signing the declaration, the authorities concerned undertook to develop plans 'to progressively address the causes and impacts of climate change' (Shaw and Theobald, 2010: 1). However, in spite of these fine words, there have always been some concerns about the extent to which sub-national government in England is able to address climate change policy in practice. This may be a consequence of the relative centralization of energy and climate change policy within the UK's current constitutional settlement (see also section 9d above). Even after the Climate Change Act of 2008, a coherent legislative framework with binding targets and clear responsibilities at the local level has still to be put in place. This leads to excessive variation across different parts of England. In connection with this, Ian Bache and colleagues, writing specifically about transport-based emissions, draw attention to the significant governance gap that exists between the ambitious statutory targets enshrined in the Climate Change Act and the paucity of practical levers that exist at the sub-national level for achieving any of these targets. This, they argue, stems from national-level politicians consciously exploiting the 'fuzzy accountability' that is inherent in MLG structures to avoid taking any of the blame whenever such targets are missed (Bache et al., 2015: 82–86).

From a localism point of view, the most significant development in energy and climate change policy in recent years has been the UK government's Community Renewable Energy (CRE) Strategy. This was launched in January 2014 and personally championed by Liberal Democrat Energy and Climate Change Secretary Ed Davey (DECC, 2014; see also section 5b above). The

³⁷ The ministerial Department of Energy & Climate Change (DECC) was established in October 2008 and disbanded in July 2016. Energy is now part of the newly created department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS)

Coalition government's Community Energy Strategy has come in for sharp criticism from some quarters. Philip Catney and his Keele University colleagues, for example, see the strategy as a classic example of what they term 'Big Society' localism. This is because it seems to favour affluent, better-connected, more self-sufficient communities, rather than those which are disadvantaged or whose social capital is less developed. This, they argue, is a 'localism trap' set by central government under the guise of environmental sustainability. More likely than not, it will end up exacerbating energy inequalities across the UK (Catney et al., 2014: 724).

Since the current Conservative government came to power in May 2015, it is clear that CRE has reverted once again to being a low priority within DECC, along with renewable energy policy more generally. However, despite a lack of official encouragement at national level, many local authorities are continuing to press ahead with a variety of schemes aimed at supporting local energy generation in their areas. They are now significant 'niche players' in the renewable energy economy (Fudge et al., 2016). In the past two years, a number of councils such as Bristol, Cheshire East and Chester, Nottingham City, Peterborough and Islington have all used their newly acquired power of general competence to set up their own publicly owned renewable energy companies, in partnership with independent energy suppliers such as OVO. Some of these enterprises are now supplying electricity to their local residents at competitive rates. The Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, has recently pledged to pursue a similar policy in the capital (Municipal Journal, 2016d; The Guardian, 2016). Other authorities such as Oxford and Plymouth City Councils have provided loans and organized share offers in order to enable local residents to invest in local generation projects of their own (Harmes, 2014).

Paradoxically, such initiatives are being given extra stimulus by the government's continuing austerity agenda for the period 2016–2020, particularly since one of its aims is to significantly reduce local council finances further (see also page 123 above).³⁸ This is forcing councils to invest urgently in a whole range of income-generating assets and activities. For financial, policy and political reasons, therefore, energy generation is now very high on the list of

³⁸ over the course of the 2015–20 Parliament, under current plans, the government plans aims to reduce the level of its revenue support grant to local authorities by almost 60% (Municipal Journal, 2015)

such council activities. It is also a particularly high priority for the Cornwall/Isles of Scilly sub-region.

9f. Cornwall as part of England, the UK and the EU: a land apart?

From a place-shaping point of view, Cornwall has many elements from which a compelling political narrative could be fashioned. Most prominently these include the sub-region's long history of peripherality in relation to the rest of Britain (Payton, 1992). In this context, one can cite the isolationism of Cornwall's original Celtic population in respect of Britain's Saxon and Norman invasions; or its steady decline following the collapse of the Cornish mining industry in the late nineteenth century; or, finally, Cornwall's 'branch factory' status following the post-war economic boom of the 1960s and 1970s. The last two factors have left Cornwall particularly vulnerable to fluctuations in the UK and world economies. Over a period of time, these have depressed incomes and living standards in the county. Cornwall's post-war decline has been exacerbated by the widespread perception of it as a 'lifestyle destination' for holidays, retirements and second-home ownership. This perception has led to an idealized view of Cornwall, which is at odds with the experience of many who have been born and brought up there (Willett, 2016). This in turn has led to many young people leaving Cornwall as soon as they are old enough to do so, to go off and build more satisfying and prosperous lives elsewhere. Despite significant levels of inward migration, a pattern of steady decline has been evident in Cornwall for many years.

Writing in 2009, Joanie Willett notes the efforts of public agencies such as the former South West Regional Development Agency (RDA), which previously had an office in Truro, to address Cornwall's economic stagnation. The RDA's regeneration strategy was largely based on promoting the knowledge economy. This often meant persuading hi-tech companies to relocate to Cornwall from elsewhere in the UK. However, the image of the Cornwall presented in the RDA's marketing material was simply a hyped-up version of the traditional image of 'lifestyle Cornwall' highlighted in the previous paragraph. The RDA invariably portrayed Cornwall as a 'cool' place to live and do business, with just the sort of high-quality environment and lifestyle that was likely to attract up-and-coming professionals. Willett notes that this strategy is being promoted almost exclusively by people who have themselves recently moved to Cornwall

from outside, and who are now in relatively highly paid public sector jobs. She doubts that the RDA strategy can address the fundamental needs of Cornwall's economy and she argues instead for a more evolutionary approach to Cornwall's economic development; one which works closely with the grain of local labour-market conditions. She calls for more local political control over the priorities and budget of the RDA. It is dominated by 'unaccountable' civil servants whose values and priorities are far removed from those of local people (Willett, 2010).

Willett's critique reflects an important strain of political opinion in Cornwall. This is expressed in the policies of Mebyon Kernow³⁹ (MK), Cornwall's leading nationalist party founded in 1951. MK describes itself as a progressive, outward-looking, left-of-centre party founded on the principles of social justice, environmental protection and prosperity for all. Crucially, it sees Cornwall as one of four principal nations co-existing on the British mainland, and thus having the same rights to self-determination as England, Wales and Scotland (Mebyon Kernow, 2016)⁴⁰. With this in mind, MK played a leading part in establishing the Cornish Constitutional Convention in November 2000. The main objective of this cross-party alliance of political and civil society organizations is to establish a devolved Cornish Assembly, or *Senedh Kernow*. This would be a body along similar lines of the Welsh Assembly in its pre-2014 form (see section 9d above) with the power to enact secondary legislation, but also to opt out of particular areas of devolved competence (Cornish Constitutional Convention, 2002: 7). Despite its strong nationalist pitch, MK's successes at the ballot box have been remarkably sparse during the course of its 65-year existence. In April 2017, for example, it has just four out of 123 elected members on Cornwall Council. Even so, it is argued that its impact on Cornwall's politics, and particularly on the way in which Cornwall is viewed from beyond its own borders, has been quite significant (Deacon et al., 2003).

For several years the South West RDA, mentioned above in connection with Willett's critique, was the main body responsible for determining the allocation of Cornwall's EU grant and match funding (see section 7d above). A very large proportion of the funding involved was invested (and continues to be invested)

³⁹ The name means literally 'sons of Cornwall' in the *Kemewek* language

⁴⁰ Interestingly, too, MK supported the 'Remain' side in the UK's referendum on EU membership in June 2016

in supporting the Combined Universities Cornwall (CUC) project. The CUC was established in 1997 by the Universities of Exeter, Falmouth and Plymouth, and by the further education sector in Cornwall. This was with the express intention of reversing the trend of young people leaving the far south west after completing their secondary schooling (CUC, 2016). Amongst other things, EU funding has been heavily invested in developing the two main CUC hubs at Tremough, near Falmouth and at the Treliske Hospital site just outside of Truro. Both of these developments have received strong support from the public and business sectors in Cornwall, and Cornwall Council has a seat on the CUC's steering and executive groups. According to the CUC's website, some four out of five further education students at CUC colleges are currently from Cornwall, as are around a quarter of the university students enrolled at the Tremough campus.

9g. Cornwall Council: painful birth of a new polity (2007–2009)

Prior to 2009, the structure of local government in Cornwall reflected the classic two-tier pattern established in England's rural areas by the last comprehensive reorganization of local government that took place in the UK in 1974. As a result, the former Cornwall County Council had been made responsible for school education, libraries, social care, highways, strategic planning and waste disposal across the whole of the county of Cornwall. As for the six districts, they each had responsibility for housing, local planning, leisure and waste collection in their respective areas. In budgetary terms, this division of functions amounted to some 80% to 20% in favour of the County Council.

In January 2007, the former Cornwall County Council was one of 26 councils to submit a business case to the UK government aimed at establishing an all-purpose unitary council for the whole of Cornwall. This followed an invitation to councils in England's remaining two-tier areas in Labour's *Strong and Prosperous Communities* white paper. The invitation criteria asked councils to demonstrate how a new unitary council would provide both 'effective strategic leadership' and 'genuine opportunities for neighbourhood empowerment', as well as offering 'value for money and equity in public services' (DCLG, 2006b: 12–15). These criteria were criticized by several commentators at the time for being confusing and, to some extent, contradictory. In particular, the emphasis on strategic leadership was seen as reducing the scope for effective

neighbourhood empowerment, and vice versa (Leach, 2006; Elcock et al., 2011: 332). And yet the designing-in of these two seemingly conflicting elements – strategy and community empowerment: macro and micro – can be just as easily seen as heralding a new, ‘multi-level’ approach to thinking about sub-national government in England (Harmes, 2012).

The County Council’s business case for unitary status was set out in a comprehensive three-part document (Cornwall County Council, 2007). This effectively addressed the application criteria outlined in the government’s Invitation to Bid document. Cornwall’s submission proposed (Part 1, pages 28–32) a ‘new framework of governance’ for Cornwall based on the establishment of 16 new ‘community network areas’ and an enhanced role for Cornwall’s 213 town and parish councils (pages 40–41). This proposed new pattern of neighbourhood governance would be overseen by a unitary council working as the lead body within the then Cornwall Strategic Partnership. These changes, together with the creation of a new Cornwall Development Agency aimed at promoting economic regeneration locally, would result in the new unitary council being able to speak with a much stronger voice for Cornwall nationally.

Predictably, the County Council’s unitary bid unleashed a period of bitter political wrangling within Cornwall itself. On the one hand, this pitted the six existing district councils against the county council; and on the other, it also brought Cornwall’s main political parties into conflict with each other. The Liberal Democrats, with their overall majority on Cornwall County Council, were broadly in favour of the unitary proposal. The Conservatives, with their strength mainly in the district councils, were largely against it. And Mebyon Kernow, the party for Cornwall, argued that the unitary proposal didn’t go far enough in the direction of a Cornish Assembly (Cole, 2012). Notwithstanding these political differences, Cornwall’s unitary bid was one of 16 that were longlisted for further ‘stakeholder consultation’ in March 2007. Subsequently it was announced that Cornwall would be one of nine new English unitaries to be approved by government and confirmed in legislation in October 2007⁴¹. In a ruthless display of collusion between national and local elites (Bogdanor, 2009b; see also section 9d above), the decision on unitary reorganization was forced through in

⁴¹ The nine new unitaries that received parliamentary approval in 2007 were Bedford; Central Bedfordshire; Cheshire East; Cheshire West and Chester; Cornwall; Durham; Northumberland; Shropshire; and Wiltshire

less than a year, with only perfunctory consultation on the matter ever taking place within Cornwall itself.

The bitterness unleashed by the decision-making process continued throughout the implementation phase. Preparations for the establishment of the new pan-Cornwall Council were overseen by a specially convened Implementation Executive (IE). This 24-member body had equal representation on it from the County and the six District Councils. It ran alongside them during their final eighteen months of existence, and it continued to operate until elections to the new council eventually took place in June 2009. According to the former leader of Cornwall County Council, a majority of the Executive's members were opposed to the unitary proposal, and some of them continued to oppose it throughout the IE's lifetime. These 'ultras' included one councillor who unsuccessfully proposed several motions of no confidence in the leader during this period (Interview 1, 2009).

As for the wider public perception of the new Council, this was heavily influenced by the uniformly negative portrayal of the new unitary, which appeared in the local press and media during the implementation period. For example, there were the controversies over the three-week closure of Newquay Airport (before the former County Council took over its running in December 2008) and the new Cornwall Council logo which the IE was forced by hostile public opinion to abandon in January 2009. There was also confusion in the media over the short-term costs of transition to the new council structure and the longer term costs of transformation of the new council's systems and processes. The latter would require substantial initial investment in severance payments for retiring staff, as well as the procurement of new systems. This was presented in the media as the 'escalating cost' of the unitary project (Improvement and Development Agency, 2009: 32). At the same time, there was also extreme instability within the top management of the County Council, with a succession of short-term chief executive appointments and various key functions and services identified as failing by national inspectorates (Interview 2, 2009).

In January 2009, the unitary council's newly appointed chief executive won some respect in the media and from the unitary council's opponents for spelling out the dangers of the new council's position. In a specially arranged

presentation, Kevin Lavery told councillors that the transition to the unitary authority was trying to achieve too much and that it was getting completely bogged down as a result. He acknowledged the unitary council's poor public image, and warned of the possibility of direct government intervention if the inadequacies of the implementation process were not addressed urgently (Western Morning News, 2009). During the next few months, Lavery became the public face of the new authority, particularly for example on vesting day itself, 1 April 2009. On this date, the County Council and the six District Councils were amalgamated into a single, pan-Cornwall 'unitary' council. The new council assumed responsibility for all local government functions in Cornwall. These ceased to be distributed across two different tiers of government, and the 'lower', district-level tier disappeared completely. At a stroke, Cornwall Council became one of the largest local authorities in the UK, in terms of its population and geography, (Office for National Statistics, 2010),.

The final stage in the implementation process was the election of councillors to seats on the new council. This took place in June 2009. As expected, the political parties which previously opposed the creation of the new unitary council did relatively well in that election, whereas the Liberal Democrats who had done the most to drive Cornwall's unitary reform forward lost much of the support that they had had previously. The Conservatives ended up as the largest party on the new council with 50 out of the 123 seats contested. The Liberal Democrats won 38 seats and the Independents 32 seats. The only other party to win any representation on the new council was MK with 3 seats. In the aftermath of the election, the Liberal Democrats decided to accept the verdict of the Cornish electorate and go into opposition, leaving the Conservatives and Independents to jointly form the new council's first administration.

9h. Cornwall Council: hopeful but fraught transition (2009–2013)

The new council structure which emerged from this reorganization was purposefully designed to create a synergy between sub-regional strategy on the one hand, and community-based localism on the other. How well the Council succeeded in meeting this aim during its first four-year term is debatable. But from both a theoretical and practice point of view, the intent behind it was certainly significant.

At the strategic level, Cornwall Council's new intent was embodied in an ambitious set of goals for the long term. These were set out in Cornwall's Sustainable Community Strategy entitled *Future Cornwall*. This partnership document was drawn up not only by Cornwall Council, but also by representatives of all the main statutory agencies operating within the sub-region, as well as key stakeholder groups such as Cornwall's business associations and voluntary sector bodies. By 2030, the Strategic Partnership's aim was for Cornwall to have achieved 'a leading position in sustainable living' (Cornwall Strategic Partnership, 2011: 10). Cornwall would also be 'an industry leader in environmental technologies...and at the centre of a global network of industries'. It would combine 'internationally recognized research with skills in environmental technologies across the workforce.' The strategy also stated the intention of all the partners to act as a kind of regional authority for Cornwall. This 'Big Cornwall' would in turn devolve more responsibilities and assets to town and parish councils and to civil society organizations.

Apart from the aspirational rhetoric of the Community Strategy, one of the most obvious impacts of unitary reform in Cornwall was the Council's much more explicit engagement with local communities. In order to support this, Cornwall Council took the decision to invest a sum of more than £2m per annum into creating a new dedicated Localism Service. This enabled the council to employ some 30 full-time equivalent posts and to work in a generic way across the whole of Cornwall. Significantly, this sum has been largely protected from budget cuts ever since. The Service's main task is to support the county's 19 'community network areas' (CNAs)⁴². The CNAs are an entirely new tier of spatial governance created at least partly, it seems, to compensate for the disappearance of the district councils. Each network area serves a recognizable group of communities, based normally around one or more key towns. In addition, the Localism Service is responsible for co-ordinating the council's new relationship with Cornwall's 213 town and parish councils (TPCs).

Considering Cornwall's 19 community network areas first of all (see maps at the end of this chapter), each of them has a flexibly constituted network 'panel' which meets on a regular basis. The two main elements comprising the panels' membership are representation from local Cornwall Councillors on the one

⁴² Note that this is an increase of three over the 16 CNAs proposed in the original unitary bid in 2007 (see section 9g above)

hand, and from town and parish councils on the other. Key local agencies are also represented on the network panels. According to one of the main architects of the new council structure, the principal benefits of these new networks are, firstly, that they draw in local people who are community-minded but who don't necessarily want to become elected councillors; secondly, they bring local organizations like the Police, Health and the voluntary sector together around the same table, something which couldn't easily be done at local level under the previous pattern of local government. Finally, town and parish councils vary hugely in the neighbourhoods and populations that they serve. Yet their interests are often closely bound up with those of adjacent parishes. With these factors in mind there needs to be some mechanism for bringing together the residents of those parishes to discuss issues of common interest (Interview 1, 2009).

Each of Cornwall's 19 community networks is supported by a dedicated Community Network Manager from Cornwall's Localism Service. For each network area, the council maintains a comprehensive statistical profile which is publicly available online (Cornwall Council, 2010a). This resource was used by the networks to help them to draw up their initial network area plans. These plans were subsequently collated into a summary report (Cornwall Council, 2010b) which in turn informed Cornwall's Sustainable Community Strategy (see above).

A key point to understand about localism in Cornwall is that it is not intended to be a 'delivery service'. Rather its aim is to facilitate a particular way of working with communities of place, interest and need. With this in mind, one of localism's biggest internal challenges has always been seen as persuading the Council's main service directorates such as Children and Families and Adult Social Care to work in a more 'localist' way (Interview 6, 2010). In April 2010, the Localism Service transferred from the Communities Directorate into the Chief Executive's Department. This meant that the service effectively became 'the Chief Executive's agent in local communities'. Its role was seen as setting things up, providing initial support and then withdrawing and letting local people get on with it, whilst continuing to monitor key developments from a distance. Indeed, the longer term goal of the localism service was seen as helping to change the dependency culture in local communities. With this in mind, the

Service's approach began to attract interest from outside Cornwall. In 2010 the Service's then portfolio holder was reported to be actively promoting Cornwall's approach at national level through his involvement in the Local Government Association and in the National Association of Local Councils. In May 2011, following a Cabinet reshuffle, the council created a new dedicated Cabinet portfolio for 'Localism and Devolution'. In June 2013, as part of the Council's internal governance reforms, Localism and Devolution also gained its own dedicated Portfolio Advisory Committee as well.

Another core task of the Localism Service in Cornwall was to engage with and support town and parish councils (TPCs), which one of the localism officers described to me at the time as Cornwall's 'forgotten sector' (Interview 6, 2010). In addition to encouraging their involvement in the 19 community networks, Cornwall Council made it clear that it wanted to establish a one-to-one relationship with each individual town and parish council in its area. In order to do this, Cornwall initially invited town and parish councils to sign up to a formal agreement (Cornwall Council, 2010c) which set out the basis on which the two parties would work together. Built on the principle of mutuality, the agreement covered such issues as communications, consultations and meetings.

More tangibly, Cornwall Council also actively began to seek ways of devolving specific powers and responsibilities to town and parish councils. For example, as part of its 'Active Partnering' initiative (Cornwall Council, 2010d), it identified 25 service areas which it suggested could be suitable for devolution. These included street cleaning, play areas, tourist information and car parking. By the end of the Council's first term in May 2013, a total of 23 bespoke service packages had been officially handed over to 16 individual town and parish councils across Cornwall, and a further 80 were at various stages of negotiation (Cornwall Council, 2013c). In addition to facilitating the various ongoing discussions on devolution, Cornwall's Localism Service was also supporting TPCs in other tangible ways, for example by assisting them to draw up Neighbourhood Plans under the Localism Act 2011 (see also section 9e above)⁴³; or by helping them to draw up local resilience plans; or by supporting high street regeneration projects under the Coalition Government's town centre regeneration initiatives (HM Government 2012c).

⁴³ 57 different TPCs were at various stage stages of involvement in this process in May 2013

Looking at the balance of localism work in Cornwall over the period of the first unitary council administration (2009–2013)⁴⁴, it is clear that while much of the council's initial focus was on the 19 Community Network Panels, as time went by the emphasis of the work shifted more towards the micro level of governance and towards Cornwall's 213 TPCs in particular. This in turn led to a significant reappraisal of the role of the Network Panels. For example, Cornwall Council's own governance review carried out in 2012–13 (Cornwall Council, 2012a: 29–31) raised serious doubts about the Panels' effectiveness, including:

- Lack of clear purpose and clarity regarding their role and function
- Panels acting mainly as 'talking shops' and having few powers either to take action or to make budget decisions
- Panels not being well attended by the local community nor by town and parish councillors
- Panels being seen by some as an artificial extra layer of bureaucracy that gets in the way of proper engagement with communities.

As for Cornwall's relationship with local communities, that also started running into trouble partly as a consequence of the major budget cuts which the unitary council was forced to implement in response to central government austerity during the period 2011–15. The reductions amounted to £170m in total per annum, which was equivalent to some 15% of the council's annual revenue budget at the start of the period. Two of the savings measures that most incensed local communities were the forced devolution of public toilet provision to TPCs, and Cornwall Council's attempt to standardize charges in council-run car parks across the county, whilst at the same time insisting on keeping most of the revenue generated from them. As the council's first four-year administration wore on, these 'bread and butter' issues became long-running sores in the Council's relationship with its TPCs and local communities (Interview 11, 2013). They also helped to fuel a sense of remoteness from the council's main seat of decision-making in Truro.

During this initial term, the Council's budget pressures also played out in much more high-profile ways. In October 2010 for example, the Council's Chief Executive was pressurized into declaring a voluntary 5% reduction on his £200k

⁴⁴ A new council was elected to serve for a four-year term in Cornwall in May 2013

annual salary and into foregoing any future incremental pay rises (BBC News Cornwall, 2010). Kevin Lavery also came in for increasing criticism for forcing the pace of institutional reform within the council. He was said to be the leading force behind a plan to outsource a wide range of council services as part of an ambitious partnership deal with the telecoms company BT. It was argued that the deal would result in estimated savings £2.5m per year for the council, as well in the creation of 500 additional new jobs in Cornwall. However, this proposal caused deep dissension within the council's Conservative-led administration which eventually split over the matter, and also over the position of Council leader Alec Robertson. Robertson was forced out of the leadership in a dramatic vote of no confidence at a full Council meeting in October 2012, and several of his cabinet colleagues decided to resign along with him (BBC News Cornwall, 2012). Despite this, the Council did shortly afterwards approve a somewhat less ambitious outsourcing contract with BT⁴⁵. Having secured this more limited outsourcing deal, Kevin Lavery then promptly resigned to take up the Chief Executive's post in Wellington, New Zealand (BBC News Cornwall, 2013).

As Cornwall Council's first administration was being rocked by these high-profile events, elsewhere it was making encouraging progress with regard to environmental sustainability and renewable energy. In 2011, as part of its new Green Cornwall strategy (Cornwall Council, 2011) the council became an official signatory of the European Covenant of Mayors and its EU-inspired emissions and renewable energy targets (see also section 5b above). In connection with this pledge, the council approved and submitted its own, very detailed Sustainable Energy Action Plan (SEAP) to the Covenant of Mayors' secretariat in May 2013 (Cornwall Council, 2013d). The SEAP sets out both the Council's overall carbon reduction targets and some 50 specific actions aimed at implementing the three main strands of the Green Cornwall Strategy, namely 'Green Council', 'Green Economy' and 'Green Communities'. As far as the Green Communities strand is concerned, the Council has been keen to support the development of local energy generation, and the SEAP clearly confirms the Council's intention to provide funds to support new community schemes

⁴⁵ This deal was subsequently terminated by Cornwall Council after just two years. This was because of BT's alleged failure to deliver the terms agreed in the contract, and in particular failing to create anything like the promised number of additional jobs. Cornwall's decision was eventually backed by the High Court following a legal challenge from BT (Municipal Journal, 2016e)

(Cornwall Council, 2013c: 58–59). It had already embarked on this route in the previous year by setting up a £1 million ‘revolving loan fund’ specifically aimed at supporting community energy schemes. Over a twenty year period, the expectation was that this sum would recycle itself several times, while also earning the Council a guaranteed financial return on its investment (Cornwall Council, 2012b).

Although Green Cornwall was briefly part of the Localism portfolio, after the major political upheaval of 2012 it was transferred back to the Council’s Economic Development portfolio. This is where it remains currently in April 2017. However, the Localism Service has continued to play an important part in supporting the Communities strand of the Green Cornwall strategy (Interview 11, 2013). According to the Council’s Green Cornwall Co-ordinator, there were some 10–15 community energy projects active in Cornwall in 2012. The most high-profile of these was the Wadebridge Renewable Energy Network (WREN) in North Cornwall (see map of Cornwall at the end of this chapter). WREN covers the whole of the Wadebridge Community Network Area and it is working with a mix of technologies including solar, wind, anaerobic digestion and biomass. According to its business plan, it is aiming for 100% of the area’s total energy consumption to be provided through renewables by 2020. The Council has devoted significant resources to supporting this flagship project, for example by funding it to employ a full-time co-ordinator post. This was to enable it to develop a model that could be replicated in other communities of similar size and population (Interview 10, 2012).

9i. Cornwall Council: growing maturity and confidence (2013–2017)

Following the Council elections in May 2013, Cornwall’s new political make-up was a good deal more fragmented than in the previous council. Three ‘larger’ parties (Liberal Democrats, Independents, Conservatives) managed to win representation on the council, as well as several ‘smaller’ ones (Labour, UKIP, Mebyon Kernow and others including the Greens). However, as the two parties with the largest numbers of seats, the Lib Dems and the Independents had no difficulty in forming a viable joint administration. The new council leader, John Pollard (Independent), had been the localism portfolio holder under the previous administration during the months prior to the May 2013 elections; and deputy council leader Jeremy Rowe (Lib Dem) now became the new portfolio holder for

Localism and Devolution. Rowe has held the localism brief ever since and more recently has added the influential property brief to his responsibilities⁴⁶. A third member of the new Cabinet, Julian German (Independent), who is the lead member for Economic Development and Culture (the brief which includes the Green Cornwall agenda), was also a previous Localism portfolio holder in the 2009–13 administration. All this means that since 2013, the localism agenda in Cornwall has had powerful backing from the highest level of the council's leadership. In addition it has enjoyed wide support from local councillors across the political spectrum (Interview 14, 2015).

Politically speaking, the Cornwall Council's second administration has been characterized by stability, sound decision-making and good relationships. Perhaps as a result of this, Cornwall's influence in wider political circles has grown accordingly. For several years Cornwall has been regularly consulted by the DCLG on specific localism matters such as town centre management, resilience planning and neighbourhood planning (Interview 14, 2015). In December 2015, council leader John Pollard was named by Britain's *Municipal Journal* as one of the 100 most influential people in local government⁴⁷. This accolade was clearly connected with the announcement of Cornwall's devolution deal with central government earlier in the year (Cornwall Council, 2015b; see also section 9e above).

Despite this growing confidence and maturity, the 2013 administration has been obliged make a further round of major budget cuts. These are in addition to the £170m savings that the previous administration had to make during the four-year period up to 2015 (see previous section). Between 2015 and 2019, the council is planning to reduce its annual spending by a further £196m. This sum amounts to more than a third of its total net spend in 2014/15 (Cornwall Council, 2014d). This in turn means ever more substantial cuts to mainstream services such as libraries, leisure centres, youth provision and social care. One of the few ways to keep such services running is to devolve more of the responsibility for funding and managing them to town and parish councils or to other community groups. This has meant that out of necessity devolution to TPCs has remained one of Cornwall Council's highest priorities.

⁴⁶ In the meantime Rowe has stepped down from the role of Deputy Leader of the Council and is stepping down from the council altogether in May 2017

⁴⁷ Pollard was ranked 24th on the list

A prime example of this, are the critical discussions now taking place across Cornwall about devolving the running and funding of the council's 36 library and one-stop-shop sites to TPCs from April 2017 onwards. This is a massive devolution challenge for the current administration, and the biggest that the council has had to face so far. Under the proposals being discussed, Cornwall Council would continue to provide finance for book purchase, professional standards and training from the central budget, but all local staffing and running costs would be devolved to the micro tier of governance (Cornwall Council, 2015c; Interview 17, 2016). A report to the Council's Communities Policy Advisory Committee in April 2016 noted that the prospects for completing a handover of the service to local communities in time for the April 2017 deadline were seen as viable in around 75% of the communities concerned (Cornwall Council, 2016a: 4–6).

One of the towns that have been in the vanguard of the double devolution agenda in Cornwall is Falmouth (see map at the end of this chapter). Together with its close neighbour Penryn, the town has a population of 33,000. It has a significant seafaring tradition and it was a county borough in its own right before local government reorganization took place in 1974. In more recent times it has become home to a new university campus whose student numbers are still expanding rapidly (see section 8f above). According to its Town Clerk, Falmouth has fully embraced the devolution agenda that Cornwall Council has been pursuing in recent years. Falmouth now runs its own public toilets, visitor information, CCTV camera system, business improvement activity and preventative youth work. It is currently in negotiations with Cornwall Council over further devolution projects, and it expects to take over responsibility for running the town's library/one-stop-shop service, as well as its leisure centre, in the near future. In order to fund the continued provision of these services, Falmouth has been willing to raise its local council tax precept substantially in the past few years. For example, in 2014–15, the town's precept was increased by more than 29% in comparison with the previous year⁴⁸. Despite such a large rise, the Council received just one formal complaint about this decision to raise local taxes. In raising taxes in this way, the official view is that the Town Council

⁴⁸ It is important to note that town and parish councils in England still enjoy the freedom to levy substantial council tax increases without having to put the matter to a local referendum (see section 9e above)

is responding to the expressed wishes of its residents and businesses, and that it consults them regularly on policy options (Interview 16, 2015).

In addition to moving forward purposefully with devolution, Cornwall Council has worked hard to breathe new life into the 19 Community Network Areas and Panels. This was the main localism issue left unresolved by the 2009–2013 administration (see previous section). In 2014, after carrying out a thorough review of the CNA system, the Council concluded that the Panels were a fundamental part of Cornwall's engagement with local communities and with the public generally, and that they should undergo a significant 'refresh'. In future, Panel meetings would be clearly advertised in advance and the public would be encouraged to participate in them. There would also be a proper procedure for the panels to raise issues formally with Cornwall Council and to receive a detailed response from a senior officer (Cornwall Council, 2014c). The refreshed local network structure is now proving useful in the discussion of future library provision (see above) and in 'oiling the wheels' of devolution discussions more generally (Interview 17, 2016).

In 2015, the Council went further and decided that it would earmark a £608k underspend from the previous financial year to distribute to the panels in the form of a one-off 'devolution fund'. Each panel received an allocation from the fund ranging from £15k to £67k, depending on the number of Cornwall Councillors located within the network area (Cornwall Council, 2015d). Devolution fund monies can be spent on a range of projects that will benefit the area, but the choice of projects must be agreed through discussion and broad consensus within the network. Each proposed scheme has to be signed off by personally by the portfolio holder for localism and devolution with advice from the relevant officers. In spring 2016, for example, the Camelford panel was well advanced on putting together a proposal to establish a local health centre using monies from the devolution fund. These monies are the first substantial sums that the Panels have had to work with during the whole of their seven years' existence. It is hoped that with Cornwall Council's support, this funding initiative will encourage them to work more closely with each other to decide on the priorities for their area. For the future, it is hoped that other more sustainable funding streams can be found to support the area networks, for example

Community Infrastructure Levy receipts; European Grant monies⁴⁹; or a share of some of the £1.5m capital funds currently earmarked to support local devolution schemes in Cornwall (Interview 17, 2016).

A further significant development in Cornwall's approach to localism in recent years is the way in which it has embraced the voluntary and community sector (VCS) as part of its localism work. In 2014 the VCS in Cornwall comprised around 4000 separate organizations, employed over 22,000 staff, and involved more than 150,000 individual volunteers (i.e. more than a third of Cornwall's adult population) in its activities (Richardson, 2014). In that year, for the first time, the sector was invited to attend Cornwall's annual localism summit for town and parish councils, and it is now regarded as a key player in Cornwall's localism landscape. An increasing number of TPCs understand the advantages of working with local voluntary organizations or Community Interest Companies, and sharing the benefits of the easier access that such organizations enjoy both to external funding, and to tax advantages such as Business Rates Relief (Interview 14, 2015).

The VCS in Cornwall is now also an active candidate for devolution of services and assets in its own right, alongside the TPCs. It has been the lead partner in about 10% of the devolution schemes agreed so far (Interview 17, 2016). Some of these schemes are being driven by the public health agenda and by the perceived need to address issues such as loneliness and isolation, especially amongst older people in rural communities. A number of Community Transport schemes, mainly run by VCS organizations, have already been put in place to tackle this problem in Cornwall. A fundamental point about this kind of provision is that it is inherently local and neighbourhood-based in the way that it operates. Thus it needs to be nurtured from the bottom up, rather than willed into being by strategic commissioners from the top down. With this in mind, Cornwall's Localism Team has played an increasing role in championing this social action approach and in providing a two-way signposting service between local VCS groups and health and social care commissioners. Cornwall's work in this area was reported to be attracting some interest at the national level (Cornwall Council, 2016b: 2).

⁴⁹ This particular source of funding now seems to be much less of a possibility now after Britain's vote to leave the European Union

Cornwall's Localism Strategy, agreed by Cabinet in January 2016, is a significant step forward in that it sees localism as one of a number of 'organisational development' priorities which all council members and employees are expected to take account of in their day-to-day dealings with the public. This is appropriate given that the process of devolution is now impinging on the work of many council departments, and not just on that of the Localism Team. Localism is now becoming part of the culture of the council as a whole (Cornwall Council, 2015e). This was a significant factor in persuading Council Leader John Pollard to agree to Jeremy Rowe taking on the property portfolio in 2015. The move seems to have had a considerable impact on the way in which senior officers in the Property Department engage with the localism agenda (Interview 17, 2016). Property officers are now said to be much more open to the idea that the management of significant council assets, such as the large Cattle Market site in Helston (see map at the end of this chapter) and its associated facilities, can be put out to tender for local community groups to run. Such groups are much more likely to be able to access external funding to regenerate facilities of this kind than the Council itself is.

With regard to Green Cornwall and the local renewable energy agenda, there have been further significant developments since 2013. Various charities and social enterprises in the county, including the Eden Project, EnergyShare and Communities for Renewables have been addressing the question of what it would require for Cornwall to become self-sufficient in energy by the year 2030 (Harmes, 2013). This was the vision that inspired the 'Cornwall Energy Island' event at the Eden Project, in which representatives of government, business, civil society and academia⁵⁰ participated in March 2015. The scenario that the participants agreed to explore was one in which by 2030 overall energy demand in Cornwall had fallen by 50% on current levels, and where at the same time renewable energy supply exceeded demand by 30%. This would enable Cornwall to become a net exporter of energy generated from renewables, and so provide a boost for Cornwall's economy and prosperity (Melville et al., 2015: 6). The Energy Island participants also agreed that Cornwall Council should continue to play a central role in driving these developments forward, but

⁵⁰ Including the University of Exeter as a leading contributor

crucially that the leadership for the social and economic transformation required to implement the 2030 vision should come from a variety of quarters.

With regard to the Council's own contribution to carbon reduction, the Green Cornwall agenda has moved forward significantly in recent years. However, a key point to note is that 'Green Cornwall' tag has now been effectively dropped by the council. By 2015, the Green Cornwall agenda had already been largely re-badged as 'future economy' (Interview 15, 2015). By that stage also a Cornwall-wide infrastructure of electric vehicle charging points was being set up; over 2000 Cornish properties had been retrofitted to become more energy-efficient through a strategic partnership with British Gas; investment had taken place in the creation of a significant portfolio of council-run renewable heat and power installations across the county, with an estimated generating capacity of 100MW in total; and over £80m of further investment was being planned in energy-related developments as part of Cornwall's EU funding programme between 2014–2020. Such developments included the generation of energy from geothermal and marine-based sources, both of which are largely unique to Cornwall. Cornwall's EU-funded energy programme also included the development of anaerobic digestion facilities aimed specifically at the farming sector, and a range of 'smart-tech' developments designed to help the local electricity grid cope more flexibly with the intermittent nature of renewable energy generation. Overall Cornwall's EU programme was shaping up to be a powerful one which, when implemented, would help to place Cornwall at the forefront of UK energy developments (Interview 15, 2015).

Despite the range of initiatives outlined above, there are a number of intractable issues around the development of renewables in Cornwall, which still need to be addressed. For example, although abundant sources of capital funding are available, community projects often find it hard to get off the ground in Cornwall. This is because of fierce local opposition to the construction of wind turbines and solar panels, and the technical and financial complexities involved in running a local energy scheme. These can often prove to be much too daunting for volunteers, and a number of the schemes that have received outline funding approval from Cornwall's revolving loan fund have collapsed before the schemes themselves could be implemented. Another major difficulty which local schemes face is the parlous state of the electricity grid in Cornwall and across

the South West generally. The region's grid has now just about reached breaking point, and there are major capacity bottlenecks in the area south of Bristol. This means increased waiting times (up to three years in some cases), as well as substantial contractors' fees before any new generating facilities can be connected to the grid. With this in mind, the Council's Future Economy lead has been taking part in discussions with Western Power Distribution⁵¹ and with representatives of other UK regions (especially Wales and Scotland) to try and address the problems caused by the grid's creaking capacity. According to the view taking shape in these conversations, the UK's peripheries now need to be seen as major energy centres in their own right, with greater freedom to set their own priorities on how new renewable energy technologies should be developed and on how their product is distributed (Interview 15, 2015).

Significantly, Cornwall's devolution deal with central government agreed in 2015 (see section 8e above) reflects many of the priorities set out in Cornwall's European Funding programme and in the earlier Green Cornwall strategy. Within the Devolution Deal itself, energy has been linked with environmental resilience as part of a single programme area (Cornwall Council et al., 2015: 16–17). This programme area in turn has six specific work streams: five of them relate to renewable energy generation and one to environmental resilience. It is overseen by an officer group which reports to a high-level Devolution Deal Monitoring board (Cornwall Council, 2016c: Appendices 6 & 7). In many ways the energy and resilience theme is the most exciting and forward-looking of the eight programme areas that are being worked up as part of Cornwall's Devolution Deal. For example, the Energy and Resilience section of the deal contains a pledge that the government will work with Cornwall Council 'to consider what role it could play in helping to address network constraints within the region, with a focus on the deployment of smart grid solutions'; and also that it will work with the council 'to develop a series of pilot projects that could support the roll out of community energy and be replicable nationally' (Cornwall Council et al., 2015: 16).

The Devolution Deal has now become a major part of the Council's day-to-day activities and it is forcing Cornwall Council to work even more closely with key public and private sector partners within the sub-region, including Kernow NHS

⁵¹ The company that operates the electricity grid in the South West

Clinical Commissioning Group; Cornwall & Isles of Scilly LEP; Isles of Scilly Council and many central government departments and public bodies. Assuming that the Deal is implemented in the way in which it has been set out in the devolution agreement, it will place extensive new demands on the Council's constitutional powers and governance capacity. This in turn will pose particular challenges for health and social care provision, where the Deal commits all the parties concerned to working together to create a more joined-up set of services and processes (Cornwall Council et al., 2015: 18). The Council will need to create a more strategic, integrated decision-making capacity involving other public sector bodies in Cornwall. A number of partnership bodies, such as the Public Sector Group⁵², already exist; but before the appropriate arrangements can be formalized, there will need to be a further comprehensive review of the existing governance arrangements for Cornwall. At the same time, it has been agreed that the governance review should run in parallel the Boundary Commission's long-promised re-examination of Cornwall Council's electoral arrangements, including the overall number of electoral divisions and councillors (Cornwall Council, 2015f).

As the time of writing Cornwall's governance and electoral reviews are both well under way. They have been planned in such a way that they will proceed in parallel and inform each other at each stage. The governance review is being led by the Council's Constitution and Governance Committee and was reported to the full Council in Autumn 2016. Since then the Council has also made the final submission on its electoral review to the Boundary Commission for England. The Commission will issue its findings in summer 2017 shortly after the new Council administration for 2017–2021 has been elected. This will be the last administration to be elected on the basis of the current boundaries. The Boundary Commission's findings are likely to impinge not only on Cornwall Council, but on some town and parish councils as well. With this in mind, there may be significant knock-on effects for Cornwall's micro tier of governance, as well as for the current structure and working patterns of localism in Cornwall (Cornwall Council, 2016d).

⁵² This is the informal successor to the Cornwall Strategic Partnership (see section 9h above) which was officially disbanded in 2011.

9j. Taking stock: localism in the UK and Europe

This chapter has presented a multi-level analysis of how the core and secondary strands of localism are currently being addressed in the UK, and also within the EU more generally. At the sub-continental level, localism has to be seen principally in terms of the EU's long-standing commitment to the ideas of subsidiarity, regional economic development, and cohesion. All these are deeply enshrined in the EU's most recent treaty signed in Lisbon by European heads of government in 2009 (Vara Arribas and Bourdin, 2012). The EU's approach to these matters can be described as being one of genuine, mutualistic federalism (Nicolaidis, 2001), in which top-down and bottom-up tendencies are finely balanced.

Over the course of its 44-year membership of the EU, the UK government has resisted many aspects of the EU's approach to policy making (Morphet, 2013). But contrary to appearances, UK policy has also been profoundly influenced by the EU as well (Jordan, 2003; Bulmer and Burch, 2009). With regard to devolution and localism, Janice Morphet argues that the EU has had significant impact on the UK's territorial policy over a number of years. This has been evident in many of the measures taken by UK governments since the early 1990s, including devolution to Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, as well as a succession of regional and sub-regional economic initiatives continuing right up to the present day (Morphet, 2013: 263–289).

Of all the measures that have been pursued over this period, clearly the most significant is devolution to Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. The ramifications of devolution have gradually been eroding the UK's 200-year old constitutional settlement. As a result of this, the anomalous position of England within that settlement is being increasingly exposed (Gamble, 2016). The two recent referenda – firstly on Scottish Independence in 2014, and secondly on the UK's membership of the European Union in 2016 – have brought the UK's union settlement, as well as its relationship with the wider world, right to the very forefront of the political agenda (Wellings, 2016). At present, Britain's top-down political reflexes seem to be intent on asserting themselves again, but at the same time the British Political Tradition is now also coming under sustained attack from many quarters (Bogdanor, 2009a; Keating 2012).

Within England itself, there is considerable ferment over possible future patterns of territorial governance (Cox, 2014: 147). This follows almost 40 years of half-hearted attempts at reform of English sub-national governance. Over that period the reforms have been initiated mostly from the top down by governments of differing political persuasions (Leach, 2009). Most recently, the reforms seem to have crystallized around two spatial types in particular: sub-regional city and rural areas on the one hand, and local towns, neighbourhoods and parishes on the other (DCLG, 2013; UK Parliament, 2016). In both of these cases, the reforms concerned have been driven forward in a distinctly top-down manner by the UK's central government. Indeed it has been widely argued that the processes used to implement these reforms have been severely lacking in transparency and balance (Buser, 2013, *Municipal Journal*, 2016c).

One specific policy area which has been increasingly bound up with the development of localism in the UK is that of climate change, and in particular the development of renewable energy technologies. Until recently, successive UK governments had been rather reluctant to allow English local authorities to have any substantive responsibilities in this area (Shaw and Theobald, 2010; Bache et al., 2015). However this stance appeared to change in 2013, if only briefly, when a new Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change invited local councils, community enterprises and civil society organizations to make their own distinctive, bottom-up contribution to the national policy agenda (HM Government, 2013a; DECC, 2014). Many local councils responded positively to this invitation, and quite a number of them, such as Bristol, Oxford and Plymouth, have subsequently taken advantage of the new flexibilities built into the UK's Localism Act, 2011 to launch themselves into the renewable energy business in a serious way.

One local authority which has a particularly ambitious renewable energy agenda is Cornwall Council. Together with the Isles of Scilly, Cornwall is using its own dedicated stream of European convergence monies to finance a very wide range of energy initiatives, including the development of innovative generation technologies such as marine and geothermal energy. This puts the Cornwall/Isles of Scilly sub-region at the leading edge of UK energy developments currently (Interview 15, 2015). However, the future of this ambitious programme, together with the EU funding that goes with it, are both

now in serious doubt following the EU referendum result of June 2016. Despite the current uncertainties, the Cornwall/Isles of Scilly sub-region still provides a worthwhile model for what a sub-national polity in rural England might look like in future, and how it might operate.

Since it became a unitary council in 2009, Cornwall Council has developed into an effective, 'can-do', multi-level body. It has made efforts to cultivate grown-up, mutualistic relationships with its towns and parishes, its voluntary sector and its public sector and business sector partners (Interview 17, 2016). Having become the first rural authority in England to be offered a devolution deal by the UK government in 2015, it is now in a clear position to lead the way for other parts of non-metropolitan England. Cornwall has the potential to become an exemplar of core and secondary localism in action, just as Kerala in India is already.

These reflections conclude Chapter 9 and with it Part III of this thesis. The thesis now moves into its closing chapter, starting with a detailed, point-by-point comparison of the two case study areas presented above.

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Figure 4: Outline map of Great Britain with Cornwall highlighted

[This image has been removed by the author of this thesis for copyright reasons.]

Figure 5: Map of Cornwall showing Cornwall Council's 19 Community Network Areas and the county's main towns

PART IV

Discussion, Implications and Conclusions

Chapter 10: New Design for the Governance of Places and Communities?

This chapter draws together the strands of all the arguments laid out in the preceding nine chapters. It considers their implications for theory, political practice, and future research.

The first section briefly restates the outcomes framework for an effective political localism that was introduced in section 6c above. The framework itself is then applied systematically to the two multi-level case study clusters presented in Chapters 7, 8 and 9. This analysis is intended to address the first of the two case study questions set out in section 7a above⁵³. In the light of the analysis, the performance of the two case study areas is evaluated, and some points of special note are highlighted in the form of ‘green’ and ‘red’ flags (Audit Commission, 2009a; see also section 6d above). Following this, the chapter goes on to address the second question that was posed in relation to the case studies. It considers some of the underlying reasons for the comparative findings noted, and explores possible future scenarios in each of the case study areas.

Having completed the analysis of the two case studies, the chapter then considers the wider implications of the comparative findings. This is in direct response to the second of the three research questions set out at the very beginning of this thesis, namely: ***‘How useful and important a concept is localism?’*** (see section 1b above). Here the main concern will be with the value of localism as both an analytical idea and as a normative doctrine. This is followed by an assessment of the implications of using localism as a core principle in the design of political systems. This responds to the third of the

⁵³ ‘To what extent do these two multi-level clusters and the sub-national settings highlighted within them meet the standards set out in the framework of indicators for an effective localism in section 6c above, and what is the pattern of strengths and weaknesses in each case?’

three research questions set out in section 1b, namely ***‘How can localism make a meaningful contribution to the task of institutional and system design?’*** The chapter concludes with a number of key principles and proposals for researchers, commentators, policy makers and legislators to consider, as well as some suggestions for further research.

10a. Recapitulation: an outcomes framework for localism

In section 6c above, I set out a framework of indicators for assessing the quality of public policy outcomes in localities, particularly those at the most local, P1 level. The framework contains seven normative indicators drawn from a number of core public value domains. Five of the seven indicators focus on outcomes specifically at the local level. The two remaining indicators are concerned with the broader political systems which individual localities are part of. Each of the seven indicators takes the form of short statements or ‘descriptors’ of what effective localism might look like in relation to the public value domain in question. For convenience, the framework is re-stated below, but with the individual descriptors separated out as bullet points.

Domain One – Local identity

- the locality concerned has a distinctive, well-defined identity
- this is effectively promoted through landscapes, buildings, histories, images, the arts and culture

Domain Two – Local prosperity and flourishing

- people in the locality contribute effectively to a sustainable local and wider economy
- they enjoy good levels of health and education, and a reasonable standard of living

Domain Three – Civil society and governance

- the locality has a vibrant and diverse social and cultural life
- a significant number of its residents contribute meaningfully to local decision-making and governance
- local ecosystems are well managed and the locality as a whole is resilient

Domain Four – Links with the wider world

- the locality and its residents enjoy good transport, communication and activity links with other nearby communities and with places further afield

- the locality welcomes visitors and people from outside, including those from different races and cultures

Domain Five – Autonomy and upward influence

- the locality and its citizens are regularly able to exercise effective upward influence upon the broader power structures that govern their lives
- they are also able to shape their own affairs accordingly

Domain Six – Constitutional recognition

- the political arrangements of the jurisdiction of which the locality is part clearly recognize the role that localities play
- these political arrangements also give localities explicit powers in the exercise of public and democratic functions

Domain Seven – Mutuality and cohesion

- the jurisdiction in question has effective arrangements to help localities overcome any structural disadvantages which may affect them
- the jurisdiction also has in place effective arrangements to encourage localities to work together with other social and political partners in connection with issues of common interest and concern.

In the next section, each of the above indicators is systematically applied to the two sub-continental case study areas presented in Part III above.

10b. Comparing systems: applying the localism outcomes framework to the case studies

The purpose of the approach set out below is to ensure the empirical material presented in each of the case studies is compared in a consistent way, and that it clearly refers back to the theoretical framework for the study. This may help to provide useful pointers for the advancement of theory, methodology and further research generally. A secondary, but nevertheless important, purpose is to generate specific recommendations for future policy and institutional design in each of the case study clusters themselves. For the sake of consistency, the analysis in this section is focused on the most local levels of place and scale. Thus, within the Indian context, the main focus of the analysis will be on the villages, blocks, districts, municipalities and municipal corporations of Kerala, and less on the state of Kerala itself. Needless to say, Kerala and India will be referred to at various points in the analysis, but principally as contextual or shaping factors. Similarly, in the case of the EU and the UK, the main focus of

the analysis will be on Cornwall/Isles of Scilly sub-region and its localities. Other, more geographically extensive levels of governance will generally be treated as contextual or shaping factors.

Domain One: local identity

In relation to the first of the seven criteria for an effective localism, Kerala has a number of internationally recognized cities and towns (e.g Kochi, Kollam, and Munnar). These places have identities that have been well shaped through their distinctive histories and, more recently, through their involvement with tourism. More generally, Kerala now also has twelve hundred self-governing villages, towns, cities, areas and districts each of which has a recently enhanced legal identity and place-shaping responsibility of its own. An increasing number of these political communities have functioning websites and a social media presence, so information about them can be disseminated, accessed and researched internationally. Overall, the outcomes achieved by Kerala's communities in relation to this domain are consistently 'good', particularly given Kerala's relatively short history as a sub-national state.

As for the second case study, there is no doubting that Cornwall and many of its individual localities have distinctive local identities. Cornwall's distinctiveness in relation to the rest of Britain and to rest of the EU lies principally in its geography and culture. Cornwall's rugged topography and impressive coastline have already been referred to in section 7d above. Chapter 7 also mentions Cornwall's distinctive pattern of small and medium-sized towns scattered fairly evenly across its territory, with no one large city dominating it⁵⁴. Cornwall also has its own ancient language, now included in the European Charter for the Protection of Regional Minority Languages; its bardic traditions; and its own unique mythical legend in the shape of King Arthur and his Round Table. Long before most other regions in the UK were ever encouraged to think about place-shaping (Lyons, 2007), Cornwall already possessed its own very distinctive sense of place. This has helped to shape a strong political narrative based on resistance to, and non-domination from, the outside. Despite this, Cornwall has been under the economic and cultural dominance of the rest of mainland Britain for most of the past 150 years. In this connection it has been regarded as a

⁵⁴ The only large city to impinge economically on Cornwall is Plymouth. It lies on the south coast just across Cornwall's border with Devon

prime destination for holidays, retirements and, now more recently, for lifestyle-inspired professional relocations – especially within the arts and leisure sectors. Since the millennium, however, local public sector bodies backed by EU funds have begun to address the deep-seated issues inherent in Cornwall's peripheral status. Most recently, these efforts seem to have unearthed a new potential identity for Cornwall as a 'south-western powerhouse' for renewable energy technologies. Taken together, Cornwall's outcomes in this domain of public value are judged as 'outstanding' and are considered to be well worthy of 'green flag' status.

Domain Two: local prosperity and flourishing

The evidence presented in Chapter 8 indicates that a fair proportion of people within Kerala's localities are contributing to a sustainable⁵⁵ local and wider economy. This is predominantly through a long-established pattern of small-scale agriculture, but it is now being increasingly driven by growth in the tourism sector. The evidence presented in Chapter 8 has also shown that people in Kerala's localities enjoy decent levels of health and education. These two key aspects of wellbeing have reached a more advanced level in Kerala's communities than they have in any other part of India. They are also in line with many of the world's most 'highly developed' nations. One persistent problem that has arisen from Kerala's success in this policy domain is its inability to convert its relatively high levels of social and educational achievement into effective economic development, either at the state or at the local level. This is the main reason why in recent years more than two million of Kerala's school and college graduates have opted to migrate to the Middle East in order to take up relatively well-paid jobs there (see section 7c above). That said, Kerala's localities also benefit from having a high proportion of literate and well-educated people on hand, particularly amongst the female population, to help it run its councils and to implement innovative community development programmes such as *Kudumbashree* (see section 8h above). Such programmes are helping Kerala's communities to improve what in global terms are still relatively low standards of living, even within India itself. Given its overall context, Kerala's

⁵⁵ The term 'sustainable' is used here primarily in its economic sense, rather than in its core environmental sense

outcomes in this domain can justifiably be considered as ‘outstanding’ and worthy of ‘green flag’ status.

As for the second case study, the evidence assembled in Chapter 9 presents a rather mixed picture. Generally speaking, quality of life indicators show that Cornwall is a very satisfying place to live. The natural environment is generally of good quality, social cohesion is high, crime is relatively low, and health and education outcomes are reasonably well in line with UK and EU averages (Cornwall Council, 2010e). And yet, Cornwall’s standard of living is relatively low in comparison with other parts of the UK, and also with that in much of Western Europe (see section 7d). That said, in the wider global context, Cornwall’s standard of living cannot really be considered as low at all. As for Cornwall’s economy, it is currently in the process of being regenerated and to some extent rebalanced. With its still plentiful deposits of china clay and other minerals (Cornwall Council, 2012c), and its outstanding tourism and leisure offer, the argument may be made that Cornwall’s economy is fundamentally stable and sustainable. However, ‘early-mover’ development of its renewable energy potential could transform it into a world-leading centre for sustainable energy technologies (see section 9i above). Overall, Cornwall’s outcomes for this particular domain are ‘good’ and there are encouraging prospects for further improvement.

Domain Three: civil society and governance

Kerala’s communities benefit from having a vibrant and well-developed civil society sector to support them. The effectiveness of the sector is underpinned by Kerala’s consistently high standards of education and literacy, and by the relatively advanced level of emancipation of its women. It is also partly a function of the unique racial and cultural mix that exists in some of Kerala’s ancient port cities and rural hinterlands. In recent years, the civil society sector in Kerala has been cleverly recruited by the state’s government to spearhead the development of local self-governance within its communities. As Chapter 8 has shown, a significant number of local citizens have been given the opportunity to contribute meaningfully to local decision-making and to governance throughout the state. This is a result of the official steps that have been taken to embed participatory democracy in Kerala. That said, there is still much to be achieved in many Keralan communities in the specific area of local

ecosystems management, particularly where transport, pollution, waste, planning and construction are concerned. Some of the best-managed ecosystems in the state are to be found in the tea plantations in the mountains to the east of Kerala, where agricultural tradition and modern commercial practice are, rather unusually for India, able to make common ecological cause with each other. Overall, Kerala's outcomes for this public policy domain, while somewhat mixed, can be considered as mostly 'good'.

Regarding the second case study, people living in the Cornwall/Scilly sub-region have relatively good opportunities to participate in social and cultural life. Some aspects of the latter, such as theatre and gastronomy, are of particularly high quality, and have a reputation for excellence that goes well beyond the sub-region's borders. Cornwall also has a very high level of volunteering in comparison to most other parts of the UK (Cornwall Council, 2010e; see also section 9i above). However, the range of racial and international diversity within the sub-region's public and cultural life tends to be rather narrow. Thanks to Cornwall Council's recent efforts and those of some of its town councils, there are increasing opportunities for Cornwall's citizens to contribute to decision-making in their area, but most of these are organized from the top down rather than the bottom up. As for the resilience of Cornwall's physical environment, during several successive winters recently its coasts have been battered by storms, flooding and erosion. Cornwall Council has taken the lead in responding to the problems that this pattern of increasingly severe weather has posed. Partly as a result of these experiences, public understanding of the pressures that Cornwall's ecosystems face is relatively high. There are a number of policies in place, or else currently being pursued, that are aimed at putting ecosystems management in Cornwall on an even firmer footing in the future: for example, the draft Cornwall Local Plan (Cornwall Council, 2013e) or the resilience plans being prepared by many local communities (see section 9h above). Cornwall's outcomes in this domain are, like Kerala's, mostly 'good' and they have been improving consistently in recent years.

Domain Four: links with the wider world

Most localities in Kerala, particularly those lying along its extensive coastline, enjoy adequate transport links both with each other, and with some other parts of India. In recent years, new international airports have opened in Kochi,

Trivandrum and Kozhikode, and a fourth in Kannur is just beginning operations (The Hindu, 2015b: 4). Some of the port cities on Kerala's west coast have a distinctly cosmopolitan tradition going back over many thousands of years. This has been built on the region's historic trading links with Europe, the Ottoman Empire and China. Furthermore, Kerala's coastal communities continue to enjoy strong activity links across the Arabian Sea with the Gulf region and with the Middle East in general. These have been reinforced in recent years by the surge in Keralan migrants relocating to the Gulf to seek better-paid employment there. Also significant is Kerala's burgeoning reputation as a winter holiday destination for European visitors. In the year 2012, for example, Kerala's communities hosted over 790,000 foreign visitors (The Hindu, 2013). Since the 1990s, the tourism sector has been actively promoted by Kerala state's government, and tourism is increasingly being seen as a development priority in many of its localities too. Kerala's outcomes in relation to this domain are of consistently high quality, and can certainly be regarded as 'good' overall.

Cornwall also enjoys reasonably strong activity links with communities further afield. This is due to a number of factors, including the continuing outflow of young people who nevertheless still retain strong family ties with Cornwall (see section 9f above); its growing population of 'internal migrants' who have moved down from other parts of Britain to live there; and the large numbers of visitors from the rest of the UK and from Western Europe who come to stay in Cornwall each year. However, Cornwall's transport links to the rest of the UK by road, rail and air are still relatively under-developed; and because of its relatively inaccessible geography, its own internal transport links are often rather slow and easily overwhelmed. A key strategic example of this is the Cornwall/Scilly link which lost its regular and very reliable helicopter passenger service in 2012. As a result, the air link has frequently been out of action in the winter months. These transport pressures continue to be a factor in Cornwall's relative isolation from the rest of the UK⁵⁶. In this particular domain, Cornwall's outcomes are generally no more than 'adequate', and a number of weaknesses still remain to be worked on.

⁵⁶ In this connection, it is interesting to note that public transport is one of the eight programme areas that are currently being worked up as part of Cornwall's devolution deal with central government (see section 8i above). At the time of writing, plans are also in hand to restore regular helicopter passenger flights from Penzance to the Isles of Scilly (The Guardian, 2017a)

Domain Five: autonomy and upward influence

Kerala's communities benefit from the existence of a formal legal framework whose explicit aim is to empower them to formulate their own public spending priorities locally. Crucially, this enlightened framework for local self-government also continues to provide a large proportion of the public funding that is necessary to enable Kerala's communities to achieve their development goals. That said, it is not clear how much upward influence Kerala's rural communities are really able to exercise in practice. This may be partly because of their inherent lack of development, and partly also because of the cumbersome three-tier structure through which most of them have to work. Certainly it could be countered that they already possess a formal channel of upward influence through Kerala's State Development Commission (see section 8h above). However, for most rural communities their involvement in that body is largely irrelevant. They only have a small number of indirectly elected members to represent them on the Commission, and in any case its agenda tends to be highly formalized and geared towards deliberation rather than decision-making. There is little evidence that Kerala's local communities are taking steps to form their own collaborative alliances with other communities at a similar level, either locally or across the rest of India, or even trans-locally beyond India's shores. Despite the impressive rationality of India's local self-governance system, it is not clear to what extent it incentivizes communities at the local level to exercise an effective upward influence on the broader power structures which shape their collective wellbeing. Kerala's outcomes in this domain of public value are thus considered to be no more than 'adequate' overall, but with some inherently 'good' features nonetheless.

As far as Cornwall is concerned, the ability to influence higher levels of government is an aspect of political effectiveness in which there has been noticeable progress in recent years. Cornwall's upward influence has been directed as much at the European level of governance as it has at the UK. As far as the EU is concerned, Cornwall has been a priority for major economic investment since the time of the millennium. This investment has helped Cornwall to develop its higher education and skills offer, and more recently to modernize its broadband infrastructure. European funding is now also helping Cornwall to develop its huge potential as a renewable energy test-bed and

powerhouse. As for its ability to exercise upward influence within the UK, Cornwall was quite evidently fast-tracked for unitary status by the Labour government in 2006–2007, even in the teeth of some very fierce opposition locally and nationally (Chisolm and Leach, 2008; Interview 1, 2009). Less than ten years later, it was once again fast-tracked, this time by a Conservative government as a test-bed for England’s first non-metropolitan devolved authority. If Cornwall is able to take advantage of this opportunity, it could end up being a trailblazer for a distinctively rural form of ‘sub-regional’ governance built on localism principles. Indeed this might turn out to be a model which is very well suited to England’s particular territorial structure. More realistically, however, a bigger test of Cornwall Council’s ability to exercise upward influence will be whether it can succeed in persuading the British government to maintain its valuable EU funding even after the UK eventually leaves the EU (The Independent, 2016). Overall, Cornwall’s recent performance and outcomes within this particular domain have been ‘good’, and in some respects they have been not far off ‘outstanding’.

Domain Six: constitutional recognition

Local communities in India and Kerala clearly now enjoy their own self-governing status within the nation’s constitutional framework. Of course, how local self-governance plays out in practice in India depends on the particular arrangements within each of India’s sub-national states. However, as this thesis has argued, Kerala has gone further than almost any other state in India in safeguarding and promoting the position of its local government sector (see especially section 8h above). Given its context, Kerala’s outcomes in this domain can be rated as ‘outstanding’ and well worthy of ‘green flag’ status.

Constitutional recognition of localities is an area in which the UK’s current political and constitutional arrangements are significantly defective currently. This is in stark contrast to the position in India where the constitutional position of state and local governments is clearly laid down in legislation. The same is true of many other federal states such as Germany and Spain. Despite the legal changes introduced by recent Labour and Coalition governments in the UK to

bolster the general powers of local government⁵⁷, the local state in England still remains far too fragmented and dominated by the centre. In Cornwall, for example, a great deal of effort still has to be expended in co-ordinating local government functions such as planning, economic development and social care, with other more centrally controlled ones such as health; schools, colleges and higher education; energy and the environment; welfare and employment; roads and rail; agriculture and fisheries; and heritage. In addition, local governments in the UK have no formal input into the national legislature as they do, for example, in India with its *Rajya Sabha*, or in Germany with its *Bundesrat*. With this state of affairs in mind, the UK's outcomes within this domain are rated as 'inadequate' and they barely show any signs of improvement at all currently. On that basis, there is clear reason to regard them as worthy of 'red flag' status.

Domain Seven: mutuality and cohesion

The general picture which emerges from the India case study is one in which local communities have to operate, on the one hand within an administrative culture which still works in a very legalistic and bureaucratic way, and on the other within a political culture which is intensely competitive and adversarial in nature. In this context, it is difficult to see many signs of the sorts of collaborative mutuality that might enable local governments to engage in effective partnership working with other public, private and sectoral bodies for the benefit of their local communities. This state of affairs is critical, particularly as far as environmental sustainability and ecological wellbeing are concerned. Local communities are simply not able to tackle an enormous agenda like this on their own. Yet the state and national governments in India often seem too preoccupied with disputes over cultural and economic issues to give environmental sustainability the priority it deserves (Mawdsley, 2004 and 2006). Kerala's outcomes in this domain are mixed, and can generally be considered as no more than 'adequate'.

Mutuality and cohesion are also characteristically weak features of the UK's approach to territorial governance. And yet, within the European Union overall, mutuality and cohesion are both far better developed (see section 9b above).

⁵⁷ Firstly, by granting local authorities the power to the 'promote the economic, social and environmental wellbeing' of their areas (Labour in 2000), and then by vesting them with a 'general power of competence' (The Coalition in 2011)

For many years now, particularly under Conservative-led governments, English local government's powers have gradually been eroded. Its performance has been subjected to ever-tighter controls, and its levels of funding severely reduced (Stoker, 2004; John, 2014). However in recent times, the UK government's traditional neglect of its peripheries has been counterbalanced to some extent by the EU's regional and cohesion policies. In the case of Cornwall for example, EU cohesion policy has acknowledged Cornwall's long period of decline, and has recognized the need for new investment and development within the sub-region. This 'external' intervention into Cornwall's affairs also seems to have brought with it some belated recognition on the UK government's part of Cornwall's aspirations, including its potential to exercise a much greater degree of self-determination in its own right. Indeed, the agreement of Cornwall's ground-breaking devolution deal with central government in 2015 may just have begun to turn the tide on Cornwall's long period of decline⁵⁸. Overall the UK's outcomes in this domain are judged to be 'inadequate' and fully deserving of 'red flag' status. By contrast, those that are being pursued by the EU are seen as 'good' and still improving.

10c. Explaining the main findings from the two case studies and looking ahead to the future

In this section, the thesis formally completes its comparison of the two case study clusters featured in Part III. It does so in two ways. Firstly, by drawing on the evidence presented in Chapters 7, 8 and 9, the thesis re-states some of the main explanatory factors that have helped mould the outcomes observed in each case. Secondly, it sets out possible scenarios and some recommendations for future policy action within the two areas studied.

India/Kerala/Kollam

With regard to India/Kerala/Kollam, the first explanatory factor to note is the very strong social and religious underpinning of political life in the Indian sub-continent, including a tradition of local self-organization which goes back over millennia (Pur, 2007, see also section 8f above; Fukuyama, 2011: 161). A second factor is the robust design of the modern Indian state. Through its

⁵⁸ Cornwall's devolution deal may also have been a way of 'rewarding' Cornwall for electing six out of six Conservative MPs in the 2015 general election. This was the first time in almost 50 years that the Conservative Party had won a 'clean sweep' of all Cornwall's MPs

secular institutions and principles, it just about succeeds in keeping in check the social, racial, religious and cultural tensions which lie below the surface in many parts of the sub-continent (Lijphart, 1996; Sarkar, 2001; Fukuyama, 2013). State institutions are generally able to ensure that the rule of law prevails throughout India; and normally they act swiftly to restore law and order whenever it shows signs of breaking down (Dasgupta, 2001; Tillin, 2015). A third key factor is the way in which India's sub-national states have been granted freedom under the constitution to follow quite different developmental paths. In 1956 this allowed the modern state of Kerala to be formed on what were predominantly linguistic lines (Tillin, 2015).

As for Kerala itself, a further explanatory factor is the ardent desire for sub-national statehood that emerged in the late nineteenth century within the princely states of Travancore and Cochin. This stemmed not just from the possession of a common indigenous language, but also from a deep-seated consensus over the need to promote basic human development across the whole of the Malayali territory (Singh, 2010). Over the years this consensus has received consistent support from across the political spectrum, and most especially from the two main alliances which have held power on an alternating basis in Kerala since the early 1980s. In terms of world politics, it is of some consequence that one of the two political alliances competing for power in Kerala has been led by the Communist Left. Certainly Kerala is the only democratic polity in the world where Communist candidates have been regularly standing in elections since 1957 and winning power through them. This includes the most recent Kerala state elections in May 2016, which the Left Democratic Front (LDF) won with a substantial majority. For a time, the prospect of Far Left rule in Kerala seemed to alarm the Indian state. Between 1959 and 1980, it intervened several times to impose President's rule in Kerala (see section 8e above). Its interventions invariably coincided with periods when the LDF was in government (Government of Kerala, 2017). Today, however, though Kerala remains very distinct culturally and politically from the rest of India, it is thoroughly integrated with the Indian state and with the wider Asian and Middle Eastern world. The international reputation that Kerala has gained for its social and political achievements and for its cultural and tourism offer is now firmly established (Tharoor, 2007: 266–281).

A final explanatory factor to note in relation to the Indian case is the powerful influence of Mahatma Gandhi's visionary localist thinking (Gandhi, 2008 [1941]: 165). This was forged during the turbulent period leading up to India's achievement of independence from British colonial rule in 1947. Though Gandhi's localist vision for the newly independent state of India was not adopted during his lifetime, it did eventually pass into India's constitution in 1993. It is now embodied in the third institutional tier of India's federal democracy. However, at a sub-national level there are some Indian states, particularly Kerala, which have done far more to realise the democratic potential of the 1993 localism reforms than others.

With regard to future developments in India/Kerala/Kollam, it is important to draw a distinction between those which are thought likely to materialize as a result of current developments, and those which legislators and policy makers are recommended to consider as future policy priorities. Both types of development are highlighted in the paragraphs below.

One of the most certain of future developments is that India's population will continue to grow steadily for a period of time yet. With China's population now having peaked, by mid-century India will almost certainly become the most populous country in the world. At that point its population level is expected to stabilize, and then gradually to begin falling again (Drèze and Sen, 2002: 191). One implication of India's surging demographic growth is that for a very long time to come, it is likely to be one of the world's strongest markets for consumer goods and for technological innovations in sectors such as agriculture and renewable energy generation. It is also likely to provide a testing ground for new types of intervention in the fields of nutrition, healthcare, education and skills. In terms of international diplomacy, after many years of relative isolation from world affairs, India has recently joined both the G20 and the BRICS group of nations. With this in mind, it is possible to envisage India becoming an even more influential player on the world stage in future, maybe as a permanent member one day of UN Security Council. Almost uniquely amongst the world's largest states, India has many of the credentials needed to play the role of internationally respected honest broker.

Despite its enormous potential as a future world power, India also has a significant Achilles heel in the shape of its desperately low levels of human

development (Drèze and Sen, 2014) and the steady degradation of many of its natural environments (Drèze and Sen, 2002: 227). India's greatest problem in this respect is its consistently poor record of policy delivery. More often than not, this is down to the highly adversarial nature of Indian politics and to the rigidity of its centralized bureaucracy (Fukuyama, 2013). With regard to the latter, it is to the credit of Narendra Modi's current government that it has embarked on a programme to bring about radical changes in India's bureaucratic culture, for example by proposing to replace the existing state planning commission with a new National Institution for Transforming India (or NITI) (Virmani, 2015). This proposal seems to indicate the Indian government's intention to create a more flexible 'governance' culture in future, and to overhaul the administrative machinery inherited from the British Raj. Under the 'new public management' approach proposed by Modi's cabinet, India's government would seek to operate much more as an 'enabler' than as a 'provider of first and last resort'. The cultural shift foreshadowed in these proposals may have a profound effect on Indian public life over the next few years.

Tracing this more flexible notion of governance through to the local level, one measure that would certainly help to improve the present rigidity within the Indian system would be a legal provision granting local governments a 'general power of competence'. This would be similar to that which has recently been granted to local councils in England under the Localism Act 2011. In principle it would empower panchayats and municipalities to take any action that individual citizens are allowed to take, so long as it is lawful. Obviously this would mean some changes to the allocation of competences and powers set out in Schedules 7 and 73/74 of India's constitution (see section 8e above). Maybe this could be achieved by incorporating some additions into the current schedule of shared competences. In terms of its potential impact, such a measure could certainly help to give local Panchayats more licence to pursue bottom-up solutions to the many governance issues which they encounter in their communities.

Also in the spirit of the Modi government's reform agenda mentioned above, would be further measures to break up the power which the highly centralized Indian Administrative Service (IAS) still exerts over state and local governments. Over the past three years, Modi's government has already been

taking some steps in this direction, for example by consulting recently on a proposal to allow citizens, for the first time ever in the history of the Indian state, the right to file prosecutions against corrupt officials (The Economic Times, 2016; see also section 8d above). In Kerala, there have been some tensions in the past between the new generation of locally elected Panchayat councillors and IAS officials. Some of these officials have been re-assigned to serve local councils exclusively, but there has been a degree of professional resistance to this change, especially since IAS posts often carry high status within India's local communities (Venugopal and Yilmaz, 2009: 323). In a country as large and diverse as India, the localization of professional and administrative support to communities needs to go much further if local elected representatives are to be able to exercise genuine political agency. This is one area where electronic communications may be expected to have an increasingly significant impact in future (Sassen 2006: 366; see also section 4i above).

A further reform that would help address the problem of cross-cutting responsibilities at the local level in India (Krishnan, 2007; see also section 8i above) is for national or state government to introduce legislation imposing 'a duty to co-operate' on all relevant bodies. This would mirror a similar duty imposed on a wide range of public bodies under the planning provisions of the UK's Localism Act 2011. If such a measure were introduced and effectively implemented, it could be expected to have a positive impact in particular on India's efforts to protect the natural environment and to tackle climate change.

Another factor that slows down effective decision-making at the local level in many parts of India is the cumbersome three-tier structure of local government that exists in rural areas. Interestingly, the three-tier structure does not apply in India's municipalities and cities. Under the 1993 constitutional amendment, municipalities and cities now have exclusive governance powers within their areas, although for administrative purposes they do still come under the jurisdiction of the district in which they are located. It is to be remembered that during the years leading up to the 1993 local self-government legislation, there was a genuine debate over the relative merits of two- and three-tier government in India's rural areas. However, in 1993 India's legislators decided in favour of a three-tier system. This certainly allows for greater scrutiny of local decision-making and for closer financial oversight of the measures being proposed by

local governments. But it also slows down decision-making and opens it up to bureaucratic meddling and corruption. In this connection, it is interesting to note that in the latest round of local government reforms enacted in Kerala just before the Autumn 2015 municipal and panchayat elections, the number of village panchayats was reduced from 978 to 941 and the number of unitary municipalities and corporations increased at the same time from 65 to 93 (Kerala State Election Commission (KSEC), 2017). With urban populations growing rapidly in both Kerala and across the rest of India, there is every likelihood that this shift towards municipal governance will become more pronounced in future.

As a corollary to this gradual re-scaling of local governance structures in certain parts of India, it is also important to be alert to other re-scaling trends, particularly at the micro level. In Kerala, for example, the state electoral commission already recognizes the existence of some 21,900 electoral wards across the state (KSEC, 2017). These are listed as official sub-divisions of existing municipalities and panchayats. In addition to acting as the basic territorial unit for elections, Kerala's wards now also function as one of the two main organizing levels for the *Kudumbashree* programme. As explained in section 8h above, *Kudumbashree* is a women's-led, family wellbeing and support initiative. At the time of writing, this state-sponsored social movement has succeeded in establishing local societies in nearly 20,000 (or 95%) of Kerala's electoral wards. Even more importantly from a localism point of view, *Kudumbashree* also has micro-level neighbourhood groups registered in 258,000 local communities across Kerala. These are all bottom-up local initiatives, nurtured and supported in mutualistic spirit by Kerala's state government (Kudumbashree, 2017).

Regrettably, there is insufficient space in this thesis to present *Kudumbashree*'s work or achievements in the degree of detail that it undoubtedly merits. However, what can be said with some certainty is that, more than any other political initiative in modern India, *Kudumbashree* probably comes closest to embodying the village-level ideal type set out in Mahatma Gandhi's Constructive Programme (Gandhi, 2008 [1941]: 165). *Kudumbashree* has gradually been expanding in Kerala over the course of the past 20 years and it

offers a model of micro-level citizen activity that could also be highly effective in other contexts.

EU/UK/England/Cornwall

With regard to Cornwall/England/UK/EU, Cornwall's unique identity has been profoundly shaped by its Celtic heritage and by the peripheral position it occupies in relation to England and the rest of the UK. Within England, Cornwall has been more inclined than most areas to challenge the orthodoxies of the British Political Tradition in recent years (Deacon et al., 2003). Interestingly, since the millennium, Cornwall's profile has been raised significantly by the EU's recognition of its acute need for economic development, and by the award of substantial sums of European cohesion funding. This has given some impetus to Cornwall's aspirations for greater self-governance. These aspirations have now been recognized by all the UK's main political parties (Werran, 2015). A specific indication of this is the fact that Cornwall was given government approval to establish a new unitary council in 2009. Not only is Cornwall Council now one of the largest local councils in the UK, in both financial and territorial terms, but it has also been created in accordance with a distinct new multi-level design. This is with the aim of aligning strategic capacity at the sub-regional level with local community engagement, within a single political organization.

As for England and the UK, despite growing recognition of the need for greater devolution within England itself, the British state still remains firmly in the grip of the British Political Tradition (Blunkett and Richards, 2011). This 'imperialist' mindset is deeply rooted within the British government's psyche, despite the creation in recent years of devolved government in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. This is partly as a result of the dominance which England's electors continue to exercise over the UK's constitutional settlement. It can be argued that the BPT is not just about the long-standing culture of top-down governance within the UK itself, it has also been evident in the British government's instinctive ambivalence towards many aspects of Britain's EU membership since 1973 (Morphet, 2013). Ultimately, this ambivalence seems to have paved the way for 2016's English-led vote in favour of Britain leaving the EU. Coming on top of the Scottish Independence Referendum in 2014, the Brexit vote has clearly deepened the sense of political and constitutional unease that exists within the UK.

In the meantime, the EU continues to move forward with the innovative and complex task of building a unique post-federal polity embracing 28⁵⁹ (or 14%) of the world's 195 sovereign states. Patiently constructed over the course of the past 60 years, the EU is currently under massive strain. Recently, its very future has appeared at times to be hanging in the balance. Despite this, the 'leaderless model' of governance pioneered by the EU has contributed significantly to the advancement of public value outcomes in policy areas such as climate change, environmental protection, mutuality and cohesion (Nicolaidis, 2001; Fairbrass and Jordan, 2004; Jordan et al., 2011; CEC, 2011). As far as local and sub-national governance are concerned, the EU has been posing a low-level, but serious, challenge to the governments of some its member states: particularly those which, like the UK, have a culture of top-down governing from the centre. Over the past 30 years, the EU has steadily advanced its federalist-inspired agenda of subsidiarity, mutuality and cohesion. It has also promoted a distinctively regional and sub-regional approach to economic development. In its own low-key way, this has helped to incubate the current turn towards localism in both the UK and further afield (Morphet, 2013).

With regard to future developments in the EU/UK/England/Cornwall, there is no doubt that for the time being they will be dominated at all levels by the consequences of the British referendum result of 23 June 2016. At the EU level, the Brexit result will help to sharpen the debate between far-right political ideologies on the one hand, and those which are committed to conventional liberal democracy on the other. In many ways, this provides an urgent new context in which publics across the EU can debate the legitimacy of the European project. Even in Britain, the EU is no longer a topic that is of interest just to elites and to political 'anoraks'. Out of this debate, a number of different scenarios may emerge. Amongst the most likely is the development of a more flexible, 'multi-speed' Europe. Some aspects of the EU's current arrangements, e.g. banking, financial regulation and the common currency clearly demand even closer integration than exists currently. The European Parliament may also start to play an even more central role in European affairs, with much more pan-European co-operation developing across political parties of all colours. It is unlikely that all the EU's member states will wish to sign up to closer integration

⁵⁹ Almost certain now to be 27 without Britain

in the areas just mentioned. With this in mind, it is possible that a more strongly defined inner and outer core of European nations may begin to take shape around key policy areas such as trade, financial regulation, defence, agriculture, climate change and environmental protection.

Of particular interest in this scenario is how any future EU core reaches out to individual citizens and to local and regional governments in the states which lie beyond it, particularly for example in a (soon-to-be) former member state like Britain. The Luxembourg MEP Charles Goerens has recently proposed the idea of optional associate citizenship of the EU for British citizens, in the event that the UK does eventually leave the EU as planned (EurAktiv.com, 2017). Associate EU citizenship could be offered to individual citizens in exchange for a formal declaration of solidarity with EU values and for a suitable annual payment. In the event of a UK withdrawal, the possibility of an associate EU membership could also conceivably be opened up to the UK's cities and sub-regional governments. It would be interesting to see how such an inclusive stance might be framed, and whether it would receive a significant response from communities across the UK. That said, individual cities and elected local governments across Britain are, with the support of their electors, almost certain to continue participating in EU events and fora, like for example the Eurocities network annual conference (Eurocities, 2016).

At the UK level, the EU referendum vote and the subsequent approach of the UK government under Prime Minister Theresa May both seem to be bringing the UK closer towards a possible break-up than it has even been before. The Scottish government is now committed to calling a second independence referendum in the light of the UK government's high-handed treatment of the Brexit issue. Meanwhile the Irish question seems poised to raise its head once more, with the recent sharp rise in sectarian tensions inside the Northern Ireland power-sharing Executive, and potentially too, over the complex issues raised by Northern Ireland's land border with the Irish Republic. Meanwhile, the UK Supreme Court is now heavily involved in clarifying the relative powers and legal entitlements of citizens; devolved governments; the UK Parliament; and of even the UK government itself. In many ways, the UK's constitutional settlement is being tested to its very limits currently. Each successive challenge seems to confirm the point that the UK's constitutional arrangements in their existing form

are less than ever fit for purpose, and that a full-blown crisis of UK governance may not be all that far away.

Meanwhile at the England level, it is becoming clear that the momentum that had previously been building up in 2014–2016 behind the devolution agenda under former Chancellor George Osborne has now stalled (Jameson, 2016). Individual devolution initiatives which have already got off the ground, such as those involving Greater Manchester, West Yorkshire, Merseyside and Cornwall, are still likely to continue working their way through the system, but now rather more slowly no doubt than before. However, within England's local government sector, attention is now shifting to the looming crisis in health and social care, and also to the radical reforms of local government finance planned for 2019–20. Either one of these issues would be capable on its own of overwhelming local authority finances in many parts of England (The Guardian, 2017b). They may well end up making some decisive reform of local government structures in England inevitable.

One point that can be made about all three of the clusters of uncertainty outlined above – at the EU, UK and English levels – is that they will require good-quality institutional design solutions if they are to be satisfactorily resolved. In each instance, the solutions proposed will need to take account of the multi-level nature of the issues to be addressed, and of the articulations that are needed to ensure that the different levels of scalar governance mesh together effectively with each other. As far as sub-national governance in England is concerned, the case of Cornwall Council outlined in Chapter 9 offers a worthwhile template for what a future pattern of sub-national governance across England might look like eventually. A pattern of some 40–45 sub-regional city/rural regions, with significantly devolved powers, might be sufficiently embedded within English history and culture for citizens to feel that they can identify with it at an emotive level (Carter, 2010). Such a pattern would also be institutionally robust, since it would combine sub-regional strategy with mutualistic, two-way engagement involving local communities at the most local P1 and P2 levels.

10d. What is the wider significance of these findings?

In this section and the next, the thesis returns to the broader research questions that were outlined at the start of the thesis (see section 1b above). These

questions concern localism's overall value as a concept and as a principle for the design of political systems.

In this particular section the second of the three research questions set out in section 1b is addressed, namely: ***how useful and important a concept is localism?*** Two particular aspects of that question were identified as being of special interest for this thesis. Firstly, from an analytical point of view, how can the idea of localism be applied convincingly to other political settings, beyond those in Europe and North America? Secondly, given the current state of world affairs, does localism have any normative purchase? Assuming this could be demonstrated, what might the basis of localism's normative purchase actually be?

With regard to the first of these two aspects, the cluster-based case study of India/Kerala/Kollam set out in Chapter 8 has shown that a localism perspective, set firmly within an MLG theoretical approach, is capable of producing some important insights about the history and politics of India. This is evident in the way in which the case study traces the 'golden thread' linking India's traditional social and political structures, firstly with Mahatma Gandhi's unique vision of a post-independence India; secondly, with the Indian government's groundbreaking constitutional amendments of the 1990s; and finally with Kerala's unique implementation of India's modern constitutional reforms. Even though the term 'localism' itself is hardly ever used in the academic literature on Indian politics, it is well suited to highlighting some key findings about the way in which intergovernmental relations are conducted on the sub-continent.

Of course it could be countered that India is uniquely well suited to the kind of localism focus that is being argued for in this study. A multi-level analysis such as the one presented in Part III might not work so well in international contexts where there has been a history of autocratic or centralized rule, as for example in China or Russia, or in some parts of Africa and the Middle East. However, as Anjali Bohlken has argued recently, sovereign states across the world are evolving rapidly in response to global and technological challenges. Even many autocratic regimes are now finding it necessary to decentralize powers and responsibilities (Bohlken, 2016; see also section 4f above). On the basis of the Indian case study set out in Chapter 8, there is every reason to expect that a similar type of analysis, based on a single or comparative, multi-level cluster

approach, and focusing specifically on top-down/bottom-up dynamics, could yield worthwhile insights for political science. Certainly, there is a sound case for developing this approach further as part of future research activity.

With regard to the value of localism as a normative concept, it is necessary to acknowledge that, throughout the thesis so far, there has been a clear *parti pris* in favour of localism's positive qualities as a political doctrine. That is despite the acknowledgement that many forms of potentially 'bad' localism can also exist, as outlined briefly in section 6b above. As far as this thesis is concerned, the defining feature of the contemporary 'turn' to localism is the emphasis that it places on bottom-up political participation and policy action. The intrinsically positive value of bottom-up localism rests on two important grounds. The first is that the local is invariably the setting in which the real-world effects of policy actions that have been decided further up the chain of political command actually work themselves out in practice (Bailey and Pill, 2013; see also section 3c above). This is particularly critical at a time when environmental sustainability has risen to the top of the political and public value agendas. Thus a commitment to localism in political analysis is also a commitment to be held accountable by real-world, objective outcomes in local communities. Secondly, and just as importantly from a normative point of view, bottom-up localism can be seen as an essential adjunct to the public goods of democracy and accountability. Here the argument is that democracy and accountability for individual citizens are automatically strengthened when they are aligned with the collective dimension of democracy for localities and communities. Thus a key conclusion to be drawn from this thesis is that the notion of democracy itself needs to be extended to embrace not just the rights of individual citizens, and of groups or classes of citizens, but the 'place-based' rights of local neighbourhoods and communities as well.

One of the challenges for political analysis is to understand the precise way in which differing approaches to localism and decentralisation are blended together in particular empirical situations. As Evans et al. point out, in actual settings it is the mix between top-down and bottom-up approaches to localism that matters most (Evans et al., 2013b: 614; see also section 3e above). In this connection a particular scenario to be wary of is that where governments deploy the rhetoric of localism and citizen empowerment as a way of justifying top-

down, centralizing reforms. Sometimes the intention behind such reforms is to establish even tighter control over local communities than existed previously. Both Lawrence Pratchett (2004) and John Fenwick et al. (2010: 17) have made this point in relation to New Labour's local government modernization agenda in England in the early 2000s. The co-governance strategic partnerships established by Labour at local level were criticised for acting as 'meta-bureaucracies', quietly intent on implementing UK government policy through local elites (see section 9e above). Similarly, Michael Buser (2013: 17) has argued that the contestatory processes that were built into the Coalition government's localism reforms are aimed not so much at strengthening local democracy, but at providing a 'framework for opposition', thereby effectively inciting citizens to turn against their own local governments. A bottom-up perspective on localism provides a normative basis on which pathologies such as these can be identified and criticized.

10e. Implications for the design of political systems

This section addresses the third research question set out in section 1b, namely: *how can localism make a useful contribution to institutional and system design?* This thesis has argued consistently is that it is not just the design of individual institutions or polities, which is of interest here, but also that of multi-level political systems in extended sub-continental settings.

The question is important because there do not seem to be all that many previous instances of localism having been used explicitly as a guiding principle for the design of national states or of local governments, let alone of sub-continental systems in general. The most closely related equivalent is the design of large modern federal states such as the United States, Canada, Australia, India and Germany. In more recent times, regional and provincial structures have also been established in many countries around the world, for example in China, Brazil, Mexico, Indonesia and across Europe (Hooghe and Marks, 2003; Ward et al., 2010; Bohlken, 2016). In this context, India's 73rd and 74th constitutional amendments of 1993 are probably the most comprehensive example of a state and sub-continental governance reform that genuinely seeks to transfer powers to local communities. For this reason it has been selected as one of two case studies for this thesis. Similarly, but on a far less prominent scale, the local governance reforms proposed for England by the UK's Labour

government in 2006 were at least partly justified on the basis of an explicit localist rationale (DCLG, 2006a).

Given the rather sketchy history of previous localism reforms across the world, this thesis has argued in Chapter 6 above that specifying the public value outcomes which are to be achieved at a locality level is a useful way of articulating what the ultimate purposes of any newly designed political institution or system ought to be. This is an approach which could in principle drive all design activity in the future. A further important point, and one which was also argued in Chapter 6, is that the design of modern political institutions needs to be sensitive to the reality of the social, ecological and organizational systems that constitute the 'raw materials' of the design process. Thus, an essential element of effective political design is ensuring that key social relationships and political articulations are taken properly into account. The micro, meso and macro elements of a design proposal all need to be pulling in the same direction and to be reinforcing one another. In this connection it is worth drawing attention once again to the two 'system-wide' elements of the design framework for an effective localism (i.e. 'constitutional status' and 'cohesion and mutuality') set out in section 6c above.

One specific implication of the 'system-wide' dimension of institutional design is the need to take into account the unprecedented degree to which local communities are now able to exercise agency in their own right (Cox and Mair, 1991; Sassen, 2006; Barber 2013; see also section 4i above). Under existing policies, there is both ample opportunity and sometimes even official encouragement for localities to reach out and work collaboratively with other similar localities beyond their borders. Sometimes this may be for self-interest and solidarity purposes, as in the case of the local and national associations formed by bodies of a similar type (e.g. associations of town and parish councils in England). Or it may be to make connections on an international and global scale with communities that have similar characteristics and concerns, as in the case of the EU's Grundtvig and Leonardo programmes, or the steady growth of the global Transition Network. This potential for trans-local organizing across P1, P2 and P3-type communities needs to be taken fully into account in any contemporary design exercises and it needs to be reflected in the proposals which emerge from them.

This takes the thesis into the territory of specific principles and proposals for political action.

10f. Some principles and proposals

At the level of principle, it could be argued that the ultimate aim of all political governance, and specifically of government, is to maximise collective public value for citizens. There will always be debate about which specific outcomes constitute public value different political and social contexts. But in most contexts, the core elements of public value are likely to include: peace and economic prosperity; individual and group freedoms; health and wellbeing; environmental and other forms of sustainability; and democracy and accountability. One of the main tests of a society's success in achieving public value outcomes should be the extent to which this range of public goods can be shown to apply in individual local communities; and the extent to which there are effective mechanisms in place to ensure not only that the internal and external cohesion of such communities is maintained, but also they are able to participate formally in wider decision-making processes.

Of specific interest in this respect is domain 6 of the design framework (i.e. constitutional recognition) set out in sections 6c and 10b above. This clearly implies that it is desirable for local areas and local governments to have a recognized constitutional status within the wider political systems of which they are part. It also harks back to the key point made in the previous section about the need for democracy to be extended to include the place-based rights of local neighbourhoods and communities. As noted in section 10b above, this principle is already recognized to some extent in India and Germany. In both of these countries, the upper chamber of the national parliament is constituted on the basis of representation from their respective sub-national states. This is an important principle and it has the potential to be more widely applied in many countries across the world. For example in the UK, the membership of a reformed upper chamber of Parliament could be drawn (at least partly) from all principal local authorities across the UK. Such representatives could either be elected directly by citizens, or else they could be indirectly elected by local councillors in the areas which they represent. Similarly, local councils across the UK could also have their own formal advisory assemblies made up of representatives of town and parish councils drawn from across their areas.

Perhaps such assemblies could be formally tasked with performing some elements of the scrutiny function in local authorities.

Also of interest in connection with system design is domain 7 (i.e. mutuality and cohesion) of the framework set out in sections 6c and 10b above. As previous chapters have argued, this domain is very much concerned with the principles that should govern the design and operation of political systems as a whole. Thus, the principle of mutuality requires that each level of government is effective not just in its own right, but that is also able to foster the legitimacy and capacity of all the other levels that it has to work with (Landy and Teles, 2001: 414). This in turn leads to the principle of cohesion and the need for governments to ensure that all localities in the territories for which they are responsible receive the public support they need in order that their citizens can enjoy a similar quality of life to those in more favoured areas. This is a key element of the notion of ‘democracy for neighbourhoods’ that was outlined in the previous section 10d above. As this chapter has argued (see section 10c above), Cornwall’s need for economic stimulus and support was recognized by the EU’s cohesion policies several years before it began being taken seriously by the UK government. Similarly, Cornwall Council has worked hard since its formation in 2009 to develop mutualistic ways of working with its 213 town and parish councils. Mutuality and cohesion should certainly be recognized as core principles in any new British constitution that may be adopted in future years.

This leads to the final point in this section about the need for UK-wide constitutional convention to address the pressures that have been building on the UK’s current political settlement, including now the likely prospect of Britain leaving the EU in March 2019. As noted in Chapter 9, after the Scottish Independence referendum in September 2014, there were calls by opposition parties in the UK and by the former House of Commons Political and Constitutional Reform Select Committee for the British government to establish a UK-wide constitutional convention. This body would have been tasked with considering the future structure of the United Kingdom and its constituent territories, and with making recommendations as to how the UK might be governed at different levels. It would have formulated proposals for the Westminster Parliament and for the UK’s three devolved administrations to consider. One of the key issues addressed in the Select Committee’s report

were the options for devolution within England. This would clearly be a major theme for any future constitutional convention to address (UK Parliament, 2015: paras. 60–79). Given the strains that are being piled on the UK's constitutional settlement by the EU Referendum outcome, the arguments for establishing a convention with wide-ranging terms of reference have become even more pressing than they were in 2014. With the UK now set to leave the EU, there is also a case for many of the powers that are due to be repatriated from Europe to be devolved directly to local government. Even the current Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, Sajid Javid, has been hinting publicly that this could be a possibility (Municipal Journal, 2017: 4).

10g. Suggestions for further research

Based on the scenarios, principles and proposals outlined above, and with the academic imperatives of relevance and impact also in mind (Flinders, 2013), this chapter concludes with five specific suggestions for further research. They range across several of the areas touched upon in this thesis. Four of them are propositions for empirical research and the fifth is primarily theoretical.

Given the final point of the previous section, an urgent research priority currently is to explore the impact of the UK's expected departure from the EU in 2019. This will have major knock-on effects for the structure and organization of British government, both at the national and local levels. In late 2016, the UK's Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) issued a call for research proposals on the impact of Brexit in the UK and Europe. The ESRC's call suggested a number of research angles, including the legal implications of Brexit and the transfer of competencies from the EU to the UK; and the economic impact of Brexit on particular sectors and regions, including cities, rural areas and devolved administrations (UK in a Changing Europe, 2016). Certainly it can be argued that the issue has national, regional and local ramifications, and it is also one which the University of Exeter, with its established reputation for research in the organization and structure of British government (Exeter University, 2017), is keen to be involved in addressing. With this in mind, Exeter's Politics Department recently linked up with the University of Manchester to submit a wide-ranging proposal in response to the ESRC's call. The Manchester/Exeter proposal covers citizen perceptions of

Brexit at a regional and local level, and the transfer of specific competencies in the policy areas of economic development and environmental protection.

A second topic on which there is also scope for further research is place-based policy. This is a concept that is used extensively by politicians and officials at all levels of government currently, particularly in the context of subsidiarity and of localism reforms. Yet it does not have an extensive body of knowledge to back it up within the political science literature. Future research in this area could usefully concentrate on what the concept of place-based policy means in practice, and whether it is being implemented effectively within the UK and across Europe. Clearly, it is a research topic that would be well suited to a comparative case study approach. In this context, it is useful to bear in mind one of the key findings of the Cornwall case study set out earlier in this thesis: i.e. the difficulty of meshing the remaining core of local government powers in social care, education support, planning, roads, fire and rescue and waste disposal with the much more extensive range of local powers now being exercised either directly by central government departments, or by arm's-length bodies sponsored by government (see especially section 9i above). In the English context, the two latter types of organization are now effectively in control of most aspects of local policy responsibility, including health and police functions, as well as employment support, further and higher education, environment, transport, agriculture and heritage. However, the notion of place-based policy implies not only substantive integration in the way in which this wide range of policy areas is governed, but also a far greater degree of local control over them. Thus localism provides a critical perspective on how place-based policy might properly be expected to operate in practice.

Related to this research area is a perennial need for studies into how effective bottom-up localism works in different parts of the world. Such studies could usefully focus on the micro-level of social and political organization. As such they might be expected to contribute significantly to the deepening democracy literature. In the past the latter has included several high-profile studies of the local self-governance reforms in Kerala (e.g. Fung and Olin Wright, 2003; Fischer, 2009). Any further research along these lines could usefully foreground Kerala's highly impressive *Kudumbashree* initiative. This is an excellent exemplar of what can be achieved through government support for

developments at the very local, P1 level. Additionally, it might be instructive to compare the impact of Kerala's *Kudumbashree* movement with that achieved in recent years by the UK's neighbourhood planning legislation.

Allied to this is the range of research possibilities presented by the phenomenon of trans-local organizing amongst localities. One of the most significant contributions to this topic in recent times has been Benjamin Barber's book *If Mayors Ruled the World* (Barber, 2013). Barber's work is focused specifically on the upward impact of cities. As such it represents a coherent localist challenge to a world order based increasingly on the nexus of powerful nation states and footloose global capital. Barber's ground-breaking arguments could be developed further through studies of trans-local organizing particularly on the part of small and medium-sized communities. For example, the Transition Network, with its emphasis on localization and environmental sustainability (Hopkins, 2011), could be a highly suitable subject for study in this context. However first-hand contacts with Transition in recent years have met with a certain degree of suspicion, as well as a resistance to anything that might be regarded as 'extractive research'.

Finally, at the most theoretical end of the research spectrum, there is the potential for far more detailed study of what Ann Cvetkovic and Douglas Kellner have called the 'articulations' that link global and local systems together (Cvetkovic and Kellner, 1997: 13; see also section 4d above). This idea can be extended to cover the articulatory forces that underpin complex governance systems of all kinds. In principle such articulations can take many different forms, some of them quite intangible and elusive. These might include: principles, laws and systems of rights; financial and trading flows; communications, transport and travel networks; and, lastly, institutions, organizations and associations of all kinds (Giddens, 1984; Rosenau, 2003). A more fine-grained understanding of how articulatory factors such as these operate in the world currently could be immensely powerful. It could also help to generate ideas as to how key articulations can be designed in such a way that they are able to produce more effective governance at varying scalar levels.

Taken together, the research suggestions outlined above may help to point the way towards a 'new science of design' for the governance of places and communities.

10h. Taking final stock: localism and the design of political systems

This study presents a sustained analysis of localism, which is one of the most significant and rapidly growing concepts in contemporary political discourse. The thesis addresses localism from a range of different perspectives: conceptual, analytical, normative, empirical and comparative. It notes that the term 'localism' places a special value on the local dimension of politics and organization. Within the academic literature, it is possible to discern three distinct localism dynamics: top-down, bottom-up and mutualistic (Hildreth, 2011). In most contexts, these three 'ideal types' are to be found in some sort of combination with each other. It is the precise mix between them which matters most (Evans et al., 2013b).

For analytical purposes, the thesis ties localism in closely with the idea of multi-level governance. Localism is only fully meaningful when analysed as part of a polycentric framing of political reality. With this in mind, the thesis focuses on localism in the context of whole political systems. A key distinction is drawn between old and new localism. The former is essentially about established local and sub-national government, whereas new localism is about the room for manoeuvre which many localities are now able to exploit in national, international and global terms. Aided by developments in digital technology, localities are becoming increasingly adept at exploiting the new governance spaces that have opened up for them. This may either be through their exerting direct upward influence on sovereign states, or else through their bypassing national governments altogether and pursuing their political objectives through trans-local communication and organization (Sassen, 2006; Barber, 2013)

The thesis also addresses localism in connection with the ultimate ends of politics. It does this by linking localism systematically to the normative concept of public value (PV). PV can be understood as the maximization of good governance outcomes for citizens, places and communities. Some of the most important governance outcomes are to be found in the fundamental PV domains of environmental sustainability; human wellbeing; and democracy and accountability. Each of these domains has its own distinct local dimensions. In addition, the thesis highlights two other 'organizational' domains of PV: territorial cohesion and intergovernmental mutuality. Though not normally associated with public value thinking, these two domains are especially relevant for multi-level

systems of government. Both are critical in that they accord a significant role for local and sub-national governance within the governing process.

The thesis indicates in precise terms how localist thinking can be built into the evaluation and design of political systems. This is by specifying a core range of public value outcomes which most citizens should expect to be able to enjoy locally, if their political arrangements are well designed and are functioning as they should. Expressed in the form of descriptors, the outcomes framework proposed in this thesis can be used analytically to assess existing governance arrangements from a localism perspective; or it can be deployed creatively to guide the design of new institutions and political systems.

The design framework for an effective localism is used as template to evaluate a comparative case study of localism and multi-level governance in two contemporary, sub-continental political clusters. One of these is located in the Global South and one in the Global North. There is a degree of methodological novelty involved in presenting multi-level case studies in this clustered fashion. Furthermore, both case studies are assessed and evaluated alongside each other using the localism outcomes framework elaborated earlier in the thesis.

The thesis concludes by emphasizing the value of bottom-up localism as an analytical concept, and as a key element in both good governance and normative public value. In particular, the thesis makes the point that democracy and accountability for the individual citizen are significantly enhanced when they are aligned with collective-level democracy for localities and communities. The thesis also sets out some specific principles and governance proposals, particularly around the possibilities for enhancing the constitutional status of localities and of local and sub-national governments, and for embedding the ideas of cohesion and mutuality at all levels of governance practice.

Finally, the thesis makes several suggestions for further research, including place-based policy, trans-local organizing and system articulation. These may help to point the way towards a new science of design for the governance of places and communities, as well as towards a new political doctrine of humane and progressive localism.

Annex 1: Primary interviews carried out in relation to Cornwall Council (2009–2017)

List of Primary Interviews

1. 18 August 2009 – former leader of Cornwall County Council – Bude, Cornwall – 95 mins
2. 25 August 2009 – senior civil servant, former Government Office of the South West (GOSW) – Plymouth – 71 mins
3. 17 June 2010 – Area Localism Manager, Cornwall Council – Liskeard, Cornwall – 83 mins
4. 17 June 2010 – Cornwall Councillor (Independent Group) – Truro, Cornwall – 85 mins
5. 21 June 2010 – Cornwall Councillor (Liberal Democrat Group) – Bodmin, Cornwall – 53 mins
6. 23 June 2010 – Area Localism Manager, Cornwall Council – Truro – 71 mins
7. 6 July 2010 – Senior Customer Services Manager, Cornwall Council – Truro – 60 mins
8. 6 April 2011 – Two senior Localism Managers, Cornwall Council – Truro – 55 mins
9. 2 May 2012 – Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Localism and Devolution and 2 senior Localism Officers – Truro – 56 mins
10. 8 June 2012 – Green Cornwall Officer, Cornwall Council – Truro – 69 mins
11. 23 April 2013 – Senior Localism Managers, Cornwall Council – 72 mins – Liskeard
12. 25 March 2014 – Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Localism and Devolution, Chair of Localism and Devolution Portfolio Advisory Committee, Senior Localism Manager – Truro – 64 mins
13. 12 August 2014 – Chair of Wadebridge Renewal Energy Network – Wadebridge, Cornwall – 73 mins
14. 5 March 2015 – Senior Localism Manager, Cornwall Council – Truro – 77 mins
15. 29 April 2015 – Future Economy Lead, Cornwall Council – Truro – 79 mins
16. 23 June 2015 – Town Clerk – Falmouth, Cornwall – 83 mins

17. 16 March 2016 – Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Localism and Devolution, Senior Localism Manager, Cornwall Council – Bodmin – 72 mins

18. 21 March 2017 – Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Localism and Devolution, Senior Localism Manager, Cornwall Council – Bodmin – 80 mins

Analysis of Interview Participants

A. Former council leader – Interview 1

B. Senior civil servant – Interview 2

C. Area localism manager – Interviews 3, 8, 9 11

D. Cornwall Councillor (Independent Group) – Interview 4

E. Cornwall Councillor (Lib Dem Group) – Interview 5

F. Senior localism manager – Interviews 6, 8, 9, 11, 12, 14, 17, 18

G. Senior customer services manager – Interview 7

H. Council portfolio holder (Independent Group) – Interview 9

I. Green Cornwall Officer/Future Economy Lead – Interviews 10, 15

J. Council portfolio holder (Lib Dem Group) – Interviews 12, 17, 18

K. Chair of Localism Scrutiny Committee (Independent Group) – Interview 12

I. Chair of locally based renewable energy network – Interview 13

J. Town Clerk – Interview 16

Annex 2: Interview questionnaires used in the fieldwork interviews

Interview 1 – 18 August 2009 in Bude

Key areas of questioning

1. In your former role as County Councillor...

- How did the bid for unitary status come about – what were you and your political group aiming to achieve through it?
- What issues arose during the submission and approval phase (Oct '06 to Dec '07)?
- What issues arose during the implementation phase (Dec '07 to June '09)?
- What reactions did the unitary proposal receive from: a) other political parties; b) key stakeholders at national, regional and county level; c) members of the public?
- What thoughts do you have on current developments concerning Cornwall Council?
- Overall, what would you say has been achieved through the unitary bid?

2. As a resident of Cornwall...

- How long have you lived in the county?
- How do you find living and working here?
- What's your experience (and view) of council services in Cornwall?
- Do you think you and other residents get good value for money from local services?
- How might life in the county be improved? What threats do we face to our quality of life?
- What do you think about the new community networks? Will you be contributing in some way to your local one(s)?
- What do you think about the idea of greater independence for Cornwall?

Interview 2 – 25 August 2009 in Plymouth

Key areas of questioning:

- What's the role of the Government Office of the South West?
- What's your role within the organization?
- What was/is your specific involvement the creation of the new unitary council in Cornwall?
- What were the key steps in the submission, approval and implementation of Cornwall's bid?
- What challenges does Cornwall face in establishing the new Council and how effectively is it meeting them?
- Your experience as a resident of Cornwall (if relevant).

Interview 3 – 17 June 2010 in Liskeard

Core questions

1. How is the Localism Service organized in East Cornwall?
2. What is the range of the Service's work in the area?
3. What sort of issues come up in the area and how effectively are they resolved?
4. How is the Service working with Town and Parish Councils, both in the East area and across Cornwall?
5. How effectively are agencies and sectors beyond the Council linking in to the Community Networks?
6. How aware is the general public of the work of the Community Networks?
7. How is the Council's localism work being monitored and evaluated?
8. How do you assess the success of the Council's localism work so far?
9. What priorities/challenges need to be addressed in the future?

Interview 4 – 17 June 2010 in Truro

Core questions

1. Describe your current role on Cornwall Council.
2. How does your group on Cornwall Council go about its work on a day-to-day basis?
3. Are you a member of a town or parish council, or any other governance body in Cornwall?
4. As a member previously of both District and County Councils in Cornwall, what if anything is different about being a councillor with the new Cornwall Council?
5. Apart from the obvious ones, what are the main differences between the former two-tier system and the new one?
6. What impact, if any, do you think the change to the new council has had on the individuals and communities you serve?
7. How do you think the Council's new localism agenda is shaping up?
8. What do you see as the main strengths and weaknesses of the new council so far?
9. What's your view on the idea of greater independence for Cornwall?

Interview 5 – 21 June, 2010 in Bodmin

Core questions

1. Describe your current role on Cornwall Council.
2. How does your group on Cornwall Council go about its work on a day-to-day basis?
3. Are you a member of a town or parish council, or any other governance body in Cornwall?
4. As a member previously of both District and County Councils in Cornwall, what if anything is different about being a councillor on the new Cornwall Council?
5. What impact, if any, do you think the change to the new council has had on the individuals and communities you serve?
6. How do you think the Council's new localism agenda is developing?
7. How effectively do you think the Council is performing its strategic, 'place-shaping' role?
8. What's your view on the idea of greater independence for Cornwall?
9. What do you see as the main strengths and weaknesses of the new council so far?

Interview 6 – 23 June 2010 in Truro

Core questions

1. How has Cornwall's localism service developed since the time of the unitary bid?
2. What is the current staffing complement and budget for the service?
3. What is the range of the Service's work in the Mid-Cornwall area? What sort of issues come up in the area and how effectively are they resolved?
4. How effectively is the Service working with the voluntary and community sector in both the Mid area and across Cornwall as a whole?
5. How effectively are agencies and sectors beyond the Council linking in to the Community Networks?
6. How aware is the general public of the work of the Community Networks?
7. How is the Council's localism work being monitored and evaluated?
8. How do you assess the success of the Council's localism work so far?
9. What priorities/challenges need to be addressed in the future?

Interview 7 – 6 July 2010 in Truro

Core questions

1. What functions is your part of the organization responsible for?
2. How has Cornwall's approach to customer service developed over the period of reorganization?
3. What sorts of customer service issues are you having to deal with at the moment?
4. How is customer service linked to the Council's main service functions?
5. How is customer service linked to the Council's localism agenda?
6. How does customer service contribute to the Council's strategic priorities?
7. What is the staffing and budget of the customer service team?
8. How is the effectiveness of the customer service function being evaluated on an ongoing basis?
9. What medium and longer term developments is the council working towards in the CS area?

Interview 8 – 6 April 2011 in Truro

Core areas of questioning

1. Any quick feedback/comments about last year's dissertation and its analysis of the Council's work?

2. Re. the Localism Service and its work, what are the key developments since last year especially in relation to:

- Budget and size of the team, and also its structure, management and deployment?
- Community Network areas and panels?
- Work with the Council's main service directorates?
- Joint working with town and parish councils?
- Local support for Cornwall Councillors?
- Specific projects (e.g. Newquay Safe)?
- Links to the Council's overall vision and strategy?
- The reputation of the team and its work, both within Cornwall and beyond?

3. How are the following developments likely to impact on the Council's work:

- The Localism Bill, especially the sections on community empowerment, planning and housing?
- Other Coalition policies (especially in relation to schools, health, police, economic development)?
- The Big Society?

4. What other 'big picture' developments do you foresee in Cornwall during the next few years?

5. How would you evaluate the success of unitary reorganization in Cornwall after two years?

Interview 9 – 2 May 2012 in Truro

Key areas of questioning

1. Re policy and strategy, what's the current position regarding:
 - Devolution of powers/responsibilities to town and parish councils?
 - Specific developments in response to Localism Act changes (e.g. community planning powers/right to build; right to bid)?
 - Other government initiatives: community budgets/Portas pilots?
 - Sustainability matters such as community renewable energy projects/Transition initiatives?
 - Network area plans and how they feed into County's strategic planning process?
2. Re the Localism Service and its work, what are the key developments since last year especially in relation to:
 - Budget and size of the team, and also its structure, management and deployment?
 - Community Network areas and panels?
 - Work with the Council's main service directorates?
 - Specific projects (e.g. Newquay Safe)?
 - Organizational location of the Localism function?
 - The reputation of the team and its work, both within Cornwall and beyond?
3. How are the following developments impacting on the area as a whole and on individual communities:
 - Coalition policies especially in relation to economic development, health, schools, police?
 - The Big Society, including support for the third sector and the training of community organizers?
4. What other 'big picture' developments do you foresee in Cornwall during the next few years?
5. How would you evaluate the success of unitary reorganization in Cornwall after three years?
6. Any ideas/recommendations for follow-up research at both local and strategic level?

Interview 10 – 8 June 2012 in Truro

Questions and areas for discussion

1. Your role and the work of your team. How it fits into the Council's wider organization. Size and budget for the team
2. Green Cornwall strategy: strategic and local elements. Where the strategy came from and how priorities were decided
3. UK and EU policy background. How government monitors Cornwall's work in this area
4. Funding streams and incentives
5. Range of partners involved, including higher education and research
6. Local schemes: current and developing picture. Front runners and disseminating good practice
7. Issues and difficulties with community schemes. Planning and funding issues. Disagreements and debates over the right approach
8. Relations with Town and Parish Councils. Links with the Transition Network
9. Cornwall's position in relation to other LA areas in the UK
10. Likely future developments?
11. Advice re further contacts and research

Interview 11 – 22 April 2013 in Liskeard

Key areas of questioning

1. Update on current range of work and governance issues:
 - Devolution of responsibilities/assets to town and parish councils, incl. public conveniences, TICs, car parking
 - Impact 2011 Localism Act provisions, incl. Community Plans/Assets
 - Green Cornwall agenda
 - Small-scale economic development
 - Portas Pilots and other town-centre initiatives
 - Specific projects, e.g. Newquay Safe
 - Community Networks/Panels
 - Localism Executive Board
 - Localism staffing, budgets, position within Council
2. Overall assessment of localism work in Cornwall since 2009
3. Future challenges, including the next stage of the Council's Governance Review

Interview 13 – 12 August, 2014 in Wadebridge

Key questions for discussion

1. What kind of organization is WREN?
2. How much support does WREN have from within the local community?
3. Where does WREN fit in to local governance/economic scene?
4. How does WREN work with town and parish councils in its area and with Cornwall Council?
5. What impact is WREN having: (a) locally; (b) within Cornwall; (c) more widely?
6. What are the prospects for a local energy grid in Cornwall?
7. What is your view of the government's community energy strategy and what impact do you think it's having?
8. What is your long-term vision for WREN and for community/local energy more generally?

Interview 14 – 5 March 2015 in Truro

Key areas for discussion

1. What is the revised budget and structure of the Localism Service following the recent budget reductions for 2015/16 and beyond? How do you expect the existing range and coverage of the Service's work to be affected?
2. What is the current state of organizational and political support in Cornwall for localism as a policy approach and for the Localism Service's work in particular?
3. How has the Council's localism work been developing over the past year in relation to:
 - Area Networks and Panels
 - Town and Parish Councils
 - Work with the voluntary and community sector
 - Other Council Directorates
 - Other public sector bodies within Cornwall?
4. What is the state of play with the following workstreams:
 - Devolution
 - Neighbourhood Plans and Development Orders
 - Town centre management and BIDs
 - Resilience plans
 - Assets of community value
 - Community energy/Transition
 - Other?
5. How effective is the governance of the Council's localism functions in relation to:
 - Recent Portfolio changes
 - Policy Advisory Committee
 - Devolution Management Group
 - Localism summit?
6. What is the reputation of the Council's localism work in relation to:
 - DCLG and other parts of central government

- Other local authorities/regions in the UK
- Internationally?

7. How do you assess the development of Council's localism work in relation to:

- The period of the 2010–2015 Coalition government
- The halfway point of the 2013–2017 Cornwall Council Administration?

Interview 15 – 29 April 2015 in Truro

Key questions and areas for discussion

1. Current organizational arrangements and budget for Cornwall's Green Cornwall (GC) work
2. Overview of recent and current work programmes, including major priorities
3. Green Cornwall Strategy and SEAP – progress towards targets/outcomes
4. EU funding programme, 2014–2020
5. Response to government funding programmes and strategies
6. Regulation and infrastructure issues in Cornwall
7. Involvement of key sectors and partners in Cornwall
8. Community energy developments, including links with town and parish councils, community networks and Transition
9. Governance of Green Cornwall programme, including the current political climate
10. What's been achieved since the GC programme was established?
11. Likely developments over the next 5–10 years

Interview 16 – 23 June 2015 in Falmouth

Questions/areas for discussion

1. History/background to Falmouth Town Council (FTC)
2. What is the Town Council's role/purpose and to what extent has this been changing in recent years?
3. What is your background and career history, and your role at FTC?
4. What staffing and assets does the Town Council have, and what are the main services it is responsible for?
5. What is the profile of the current group of town Councillors?
6. How does FTC view Cornwall Council's devolution and localism agenda? How effectively is it being implemented?
7. How has the Town Council responded to the following national localism initiatives/legislation:
 - Assets of Community Value
 - Neighbourhood Planning/Town Framework
 - BIDs/Town Centre Management
 - Emergency Planning?
 - Community Energy/Heat Networks?
8. How does FTC engage with the Falmouth/Penryn Community Network Panel? What is the value (if any) of this body?
9. How (if at all) does FTC engage with public sector agencies like the LEP, the Police, the health sector, schools/colleges/universities, Job Centre Plus, the Environment Agency, Natural England/MMO, Customs and Excise, others?
10. What is FTC's view of the Case for Cornwall and of devolution in England more generally?
11. What is FTC's longer term strategy and vision for its area? How does it see Falmouth's position in the wider world?

Interview 17 – 14 March 2016 in Bodmin

Key areas for discussion

1. Organization and resourcing of Cornwall's Localism Service
 - New CLO support arrangements since spring 2015: effectiveness; workload; main issues encountered
 - Cross-council/ wider partnership working
 - Budget and resources
2. Major issues over past year
 - Devolution to TPCs and VCS: developing range of services; packages; local capacity; public support; patterns of communication; governance structure
 - Community Network Panels: current progress; patterns of communication; greater resources and powers; pilot schemes
3. Ongoing programmes/areas of work:
 - Training partnership; town centre management; neighbourhood plans; resilience planning; assets of community value; support for local events management
 - New/developing areas of work?
4. Localism in strategic perspective:
 - Organizational development/localism as a transformational programme for the Council
 - Investment fund for local communities?
 - Localism, Devolution and the Case for Cornwall
5. Where next for localism in Cornwall? – looking ahead to the next Council administration

Interview 18 – 21 March 2017 in Bodmin

Key areas for discussion

1. Recent organizational developments within Cornwall Council and the Localism Service/Team
2. Review of key localism workstreams within Cornwall currently
3. Bigger picture developments within the Council and at a national level affecting localism work in Cornwall
4. Localism achievements in 2013–2017 and since 2009, including Cornwall's contribution to the national scene
5. Localism in the May 2017 election
6. Looking ahead beyond May 2017.

Annex 3: Ethics Approval Information (including draft consent form)

Proposal for consideration by SSIS Ethics Committee (submitted May 2014)

Name: Riccardo (Rick) Harmes

Department: College of Social Sciences and International Studies (Politics)

Students only

I am a PhD Student

Name of Supervisor: **Professor Andrew Massey**

“My first or second supervisor has seen a copy of the final version of this ethics application and agrees to submission in its current form.” **YES**

Date approved: **25 April 2014**

Please give details of method of approval (EG approved by email or supervision meeting) and attach approval email or other evidence: **by e-mail**

Have you attended any ethics training? If so please give date: **Autumn 2009, as part of my MRes Politics degree studies at Exeter**

UoE email address: rlph201@...

Project title: ‘Localism and the Polycentric World Order: New Directions for the Governance of Places and Communities?’

Start and finish dates (duration for which permission is required): May 2014 to October 2016 (i.e. this is remaining period of my existing part-time MPhil/PhD research project which I started in October 2010)

You should request approval for the entire period of your research activity. The start date should be at least one month from the date submitted. If your application is urgent you should request *‘interim approval by Chair’s action’*; you should give the date by which decision is needed and give the reason for the request in your covering email. Students should use the anticipated date of completion as the end date. Please note that retrospective ethical approval will never be given.

SYNOPSIS OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT

Note: (As a guide - 750 words)

The research project explores two ideas that are salient in politics at the current time: 'localism' and environmental 'sustainability'.

I start by examining localism and tracing its recent rise to prominence. I explore its connections to the notions of 'governance' and 'democracy'. This wider, three-way relationship is analysed by reference to the concepts of place, space, territory and scale. The main ontological assumption is that we are part of a 'polycentric world order', where organisational and political scale are constantly being constructed, eroded and reconstituted in different ways.

This first part of the study addresses a number of fundamental questions, including:

- Are there clear global trends in the way that governance scale is developing?**
- How do the results of changing global scale play out, especially in neighbourhoods and communities?**
- Can universal principles be devised for an effective governance of place and scale? and**
- What implications might such principles have for the all-important task of institutional design?**

In addition to exploring these questions at a theoretical level, the study also addresses them empirically. For this I use the policy lens of environmental sustainability. The specific strand of environmental policy addressed here is that which links climate change to the need for carbon reduction and then to the development of renewable energy technologies. The main point of reference is the neighbourhood level of place and governance. How is this level currently being addressed by government and society in the UK, both in terms of the overall powers and responsibilities that localities enjoy and also in relation to the specific issue of community energy?

These empirical questions are illustrated in a comparative study comprising two individual case studies drawn from the UK and India. The main UK case study looks at the Cornwall sub-region of South West England. Cornwall is particularly interesting in that it is a newly established council which has both localism and sustainability designed into its strategic vision and organisational arrangements. The subsidiary Indian case study will be the state of Kerala in South West India. In the past 15 years, Kerala has received considerable attention and also acclaim from scholars for its systematic approach to bottom-up governance, development and sustainability. For each of the case study areas, the research questions I pose are:

- 1) What significant changes are taking place with regard to local self-governance and sustainability?**
- 2) What impact are these changes having on the areas concerned?**

Finally, for the research project as a whole, I pose the further question:

- 3) What is the wider significance of these changes and their impacts, particularly for the task of future institutional design?**

In this way the research aims to provide both an analytical picture of current

developments in the global North and South, as well as some normative reflections for legislators and policy makers.

RESEARCH METHODS

- 1. Reading/study of academic books, journals, national and local government documentation, organisational websites and information, press and media reports/features.**
- 2. Formal and informal interviews with local politicians and officials, policy experts, practitioners, community representatives. Consent for formal interviews will be requested in the appropriate way. Potential participants will be notified and briefed in advance regarding the overall nature of the research and the specific topics to be explored as part of the interview process. They will be asked to give their formal consent to participating in an interview. This will normally be in the form of an e-mail. All interviews will be semi-structured and participants will be informed at least 24 hours in advance of the core questions to be discussed at each interview.**
- 3. Attendance/observation of proceedings at public meetings, conferences, events and seminars. Some of these sessions will be recorded or partly recorded with the prior permission either of the event organisers or of the chair. Notes will be made subsequently of the more significant points observed.**

THE VOLUNTARY NATURE OF PARTICIPATION

Note: You should include a brief outline on how participants will be recruited and whether written consent is obtained. If written consent is not obtained, this should be justified. The submission should include the consent form.

Initial contact with formal interview participants will be carried out in principle by means of an individually worded e-mail containing details of the topic and nature of the research, as well as of the duration and subject matter of the interview questions. It will be made clear that participants can withdraw from participation in the research at any time. Contacts concerning second and subsequent interviews with the same individual will highlight any previous correspondence that has taken place. Some participants for formal interview are also likely to be recruited through existing organisational contacts/recommendations. With regard to participant observation at conferences/events, permission for this will always be sought in advance either from the meeting organisers or from the chair.

THE INFORMED NATURE OF PARTICIPATION

Note: Give a description of how participants will be informed of the nature of the project and whether they will be given an information sheet. If no information sheet is given, it should be justified. The submission should include the information sheet.

Information sheets will be provided for all prospective interview participants. Participants will be given the opportunity to clarify issues concerning the research with me personally both before, and at any stage during the research process

ASSESSMENT OF POSSIBLE HARM

Note: Assessment of any possible harm that research may cause participants (e.g. psychological distress or repercussions of legal, political and economic nature). Any information sheet should clearly state any possible disadvantages participating in the study may have. You should also consider **your own** safety.

All formal interviews will focus on official matters and no aspects of the participants' private lives will feature in them. Those participating in recorded interviews are likely to be asked to give their opinions, assessments and judgements on specific policy matters. However, they will not be pressed to go beyond what they feel comfortable in saying. Given the potential for reputational harm arising from comments made in interview, interview participants will be offered the option of anonymity

I anticipate no problems regarding my own safety in connection with research undertaken either in the UK or in India. While working in India I expect to make use of the University's insurance scheme and to ensure that my supervisor both has a copy of my interview schedule and receives regular updates concerning the progress of my fieldwork.

DATA PROTECTION AND STORAGE

Note: You should include:

- i) An account of how the anonymity of the participants will be protected
- ii) How the security of the data will be guaranteed
- iii) If and how the material will be anonymised
- iv) What will happen to the material at the end of the project (if retained advice where and how long for).

In principle, there will be a presumption in favour of identification, particularly in so far as elected politicians are concerned. This will be explained to all participants in the information sheet to be circulated at the point of arranging and setting up each interview. For officials, conference presenters and community reps, identification will generally take place in the reference section at the end of the thesis rather than within the main text itself. Where anonymity is expressly chosen by participants, their views will be reported using a generic and appropriate role descriptor.

All sound files and typed notes will be stored on my personal computer hard drive at home, with back-up copies kept on a second computer at home and on a portable device also kept at home. They will also be uploaded to the University's U-drive

In principle, all research material collected will be retained permanently in anonymous form as part of my private electronic records

DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Note: You should include

- i) an indication of how the participants are informed of any commercial or other interests involved in the project

- ii) who funds the research
- iii) how and for what purposes the results will be used
- iv) how and where the results will be published.

There are no commercial or organisational interests involved in this research project. It is entirely self-funded, apart from the small annual research allowance that Exeter University provides for postgraduate researchers.

The results are expected to be used for publication in an appropriate research journal either shortly before, or else after the research is completed in 2015/16

USER ENGAGEMENT AND FEEDBACK

Note: Include an indication of whether and how the participants and users of the research will be consulted when designing, executing and reporting on the study. The submission should state, for example, if participants are given the opportunity to review their own interview transcript and omit statements at this stage.

Yes, as a matter of standard procedure formal interview participants are offered the opportunity to:

- **See an outline of the main areas of questioning at least 24 hours in advance of the interview**
- **Read, comment on, supplement and correct the initial notes of the interview, and to retain a copy of the sound file recording**
- **See any research findings and conference papers written on the basis of evidence/opinions collected in the course of the interviews.**

ETHICAL REQUIREMENTS OF COUNTRY IN WHICH RESEARCH IS TO BE CONDUCTED (if not UK)

An Indian case study is to be included in this research project. Much of the research for this will be carried out using existing published sources. However, it is also possible that some elements of the research may be conducted either in direct correspondence with Indian sources, and/or within India itself.

From my enquiries so far, I am not aware of any of any specific ethical requirements for research in India that differ significantly from those in the UK. However, I am aware of some of the general considerations that apply to social science research ethics in developing countries including: possibility of making inappropriate cultural assumptions about the country in question; need to explain the purposes of the research particularly carefully and to be clear on how it might benefit the overseas communities that are the focus of the research; and finally also the danger of 'research tourism'. These issues are set out comprehensively in an ESRC Discussion Paper on social science research ethics in developing countries and contexts compiled in April 2004.

When submitting your proposal to the Committee please also include the following:

- ~ Consent form (+ translation, if research is to be conducted with non-English speakers)

- ~ Information sheet (+ translation, if research is to be conducted with non-English speakers). **For ease, please append these here rather than submitting as separate documents.**

1. Localism and Sustainability Research Project – Background Information Sheet for Prospective Interview Participants

Introduction

This Exeter University research project explores how ideas about local decision-making and sustainable development are transforming political governance. The research is being conducted from a UK/ European standpoint, but aims at broader cultural significance too. The final research thesis will include theoretical discussion, policy analysis, case study descriptions and some recommendations for legislators and policy makers concerning the design of institutions and governance processes.

The project is particularly concerned with governance at the micro level of neighbourhoods and communities. In this context, the project is interested not so much in how local communities are affected by global and national developments, but in the factors that enable some communities to act as effective agents in their own right. This phenomenon is known in the academic literature as polycentricity.

One policy area where polycentricity is most clearly in evidence is environmental sustainability, and in particular the related issue of climate change. Climate change brings with it a need to reduce emissions of carbon dioxide and other harmful gases into the earth's atmosphere. This in turn implies a need to expand the supply of energy from renewable sources such as wind, solar and hydro.

One of the main features of energy derived from these sources is its 'distributed' nature. Renewable energies do not need to be generated by burning of fossil fuels which have been extracted at some cost from beneath the earth's surface. The extraction and the burning of fossil fuels are industrial processes which require a centralised, command-and-control approach. On the other hand, renewable energies can be generated in a wide range of local contexts. Many people argue that this way of generating energy can be just as effective as large-scale energy production, particularly when supported by an intelligent grid infrastructure.

With this in mind, the policy focus of the research is on the specific issue of local energy development and what effect this is having on the resilience and self-confidence of communities. The research will also explore how community energy is currently interacting with other drivers of localism in order to influence overall patterns of governance across the world.

The Case Studies

The above issues are illustrated by means of two comparative case studies, one drawn from the UK and the other from India. The main UK case study looks at the Cornwall sub-region of South West England. Cornwall is interesting in that it is a fairly recently established council with localism and sustainability designed into its strategic vision

and organisational arrangements. The contrasting Indian case study focuses on the state of Kerala in South West India. In the past 15 years, Kerala has received considerable attention from scholars on account of its systematic approach to bottom-up governance, development and sustainability. For each of the above two case study areas, the research questions I pose are:

- 1) What significant changes are taking place with regard to local self-governance and sustainability?
- 2) What impact are these changes having on the areas concerned?

Evidence for each of the case studies will be gathered from local, regional and national materials; from attendance and participation at local meetings; and from semi-structured interviews with individuals. The project is expected to report on the recent experiences of two or more individual communities within each of the case-study territories of Cornwall/Kerala, and to relate the findings to the broader ideas that are part of this research.

Participating in this research project

As part of the evidence-gathering for this project, I have been carrying out a number of semi-structured, recorded interviews with selected participants. So far these have been mainly with elected politicians, and officials and experts from local government and other statutory bodies. I now want also to carry out a number of interviews with leaders and representatives of communities which are currently involved in local energy generation in Cornwall.

I am keen to find out about how different kinds of schemes are working, for example schemes that are being managed entirely for the benefit of the local community, and those which involve partnership with a commercial company. I'm interested to explore the key factors which have helped schemes to get off the ground and the reasons for communities choosing one type of scheme over another. I'm also keen to find out about the processes involved in getting community support for a particular scheme; what problems and barriers have been encountered; and what support communities have had from local government and other outside bodies.

Interviews may be carried out either in your own home or else in another suitable venue either within the local community, or else further afield. The venue we choose should be comfortable, well lit and reasonably free from surrounding noise. Normally speaking, interviews are expected to last for about an hour but may take slightly longer in some cases depending on the nature of the topic being discussed.

The interview itself will be 'semi-structured', which means that there will be a basic core of about eight to ten questions. A list of these will be sent to participants at least 24 hours before the interview. My approach is to use each of the core questions as a way of introducing a particular aspect of the overall topic area, and then to develop the discussion of that particular aspect through further questions and responses. The content of the interview will remain confidential and will not be shared or discussed with anybody else participating in the research. My request, however, is that you would agree to be identified by name in the eventual research report. However if you

prefer your name not to be mentioned, your comments will be presented anonymously.

Each interview will be recorded, and after the interview the recorded version will be used by me to prepare a detailed note of all the main topics covered. In most cases, I would expect to be able to send you a draft copy of the note together with the sound file of the interview, within two weeks. I will ask you to comment on, amend, and/or add to the text before it is finalised. If you wish, you will be able to save and store the sound file yourself for future reference. Subsequently, I will notify you when the research is completed and will provide you with an on-line link to the completed research thesis. While the research project is 'live', you can ask to withdraw your contribution from it at any time

Both the sound file and the note of the interview will be remain confidential and will be stored permanently in my personal research files at home. While in my possession, your data will be subject to the normal safeguards of UK data protection legislation. During that time I will also be happy to respond to any retrospective queries you may have about the research.

My research project is being supervised by Andrew Massey, Professor of Politics at Exeter University. If you have any queries about the research, you are also very welcome to get in touch with him at any point. His contact details are as follows:

Professor Andrew Massey
Social Sciences and International Studies
University of Exeter
Amory Building
Rennes Drive
Exeter
EX4 4RS
Tel: 01392 722042
E-mail: A.Massey@exeter.ac.uk

If you are happy for to take part in an interview on this basis please sign the consent form below.

Rick Harmes
Postgraduate Researcher
College of Social Sciences and International Studies
University of Exeter

E-mail: rlph201@exeter.ac.uk

2. Localism and Sustainability Research Project – Consent form for research participants to complete

Name:

Address:

On the basis of the information set out above, I agree to take part in the Exeter University Research Project entitled '*Localism and the Polycentric World Order: New Directions for the Governance of Places and Communities*' and led by Exeter postgraduate research student Rick Harmes:

Signed:

Date:

GLOSSARY OF SPECIALIST TERMS USED IN THE THESIS

1. *Localism (first used in Ch.1); Localization (first used in Ch.3)*

Localism is defined in section 4j of this thesis as ‘a perspective which champions the micro and the sub-national dimensions of social organization and politics’.

Localization is the term used by Transition founder Rob Hopkins to express the idea of communities taking back greater control over fundamental economic processes such as food production and energy generation. Hopkins draws a distinction between localization and what he sees as top-down political localism.

2. *Ontology and Epistemology (Ch.3)*

Ontology is the philosophical study of the basic elements of being and their relationship to each other.

Epistemology is about discourse. It looks at the nature of human knowledge and how beliefs about the nature of the world are expressed and justified.

3. *Analytical and Normative (Ch.1); Critical Theory (Ch.6)*

An analytical approach involves careful, systematic study of phenomena. It aims at descriptive or interpretive understanding.

By contrast, a normative approach is one which expresses value judgments about the phenomena it deals with.

Critical theory is a normative social theory developed in the 1930s by the Frankfurt school. It looks critically at society and aims to change it radically.

4. *Polycentrism (Ch.3); Time-Space Distanciation (Ch.4); Fraggmentation (Ch.4); Scalar Structuration (Ch.4); Articulation (Ch.4); Assemblage (Ch.9)*

Polycentrism (or polycentricity) refers to a state of affairs in which there are many different centres of power, leadership or influence, rather than just one.

Time-space distanciation (TSD) is a term used by the British sociologist Anthony Giddens to describe the stretching of social systems, particularly in the modern era. TSD enables people and organizations which are separated in space and/or time to interact on a regular basis.

The oxymoronic term 'fragmegration' (fusing the contradictory notions of fragmentation and integration) was coined by the American international relations scholar James Rosenau (1924–2011). He used the term to describe the conflicting dynamics which, he argued, were a defining feature of contemporary world politics.

Scalar structuration is an expression used amongst others by the American urban theorist Neil Brenner. It describes the processes whereby organizations and institutions are created across different geographical scales, and the relationships of power that develop between them.

Articulation is a term used amongst others by the academic writers Ann Cvetkovic and Douglas Kellner. In their writing it refers to the mechanisms which connect global and local systems with each other.

Assemblage is an academic term that was made prominent in the 1980s by the French philosophers Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari. It describes a loosely bound group of social actors and/or social phenomena, which come together for a period, and which have a distinct identity during that time.

5. *Place (Ch.1); Typology of Place (Ch.4)*

A place is defined in section 4b as a specific geographical location with a recognizable identity. If inhabited, a place will generally also have a built component, a community of residents or users, and a social structure of some kind. It may even have some site-specific element of political leadership and/or governance.

Chapter 4 presents the following typology of place:

- Single place: by which is meant a simple, identifiable, bounded community such as a neighbourhood or village. This type is designated formulaically in the thesis as P1;
- Aggregated places: such as towns or cities, which are made up of a number of individually identifiable, but geographically contiguous, neighbourhood-type (or P1) communities. This type is designated as P2; and
- Extended places: such as districts or regions which are made up of a number of separate, bounded P1- and P2-type communities, often of varying size, spread across a wider bounded territory. This type is designated formulaically in the thesis as P3.

6. *Spatial fix (Ch.4); Re-spatialization (Ch.9); Sub-continental (Ch.1); Sub-regional (Ch.3)*

Spatial fix is a term coined by the British political geographer David Harvey as a way of describing the workings of modern capitalism. In this thesis, the term is used to refer to the development of the modern sovereign state, with its distinctive institutional and territorial template.

Re-spatialization is an academic term used to describe any fundamental change in the way in which a particular sector or activity is organized or understood from a geographical point of view. Such a change may entail a shift towards a more extended, or a more local scale of operation.

With this in mind, the two case studies presented in the thesis both focus on sub-continental political entities rather than on whole continents. This level of analysis is particularly well suited to a multi-level governance (MLG) account of localism in action.

Similarly, at the local level, the thesis focuses on the sub-regional rather than the regional scale of analysis. Again, this level of analysis is considered particularly well suited to drawing out MLG insights from a locally based account of political reforms.

7. *Governance (Ch.1); Multi-Level Governance (Ch.3); Meta-governance (Ch.3); Governance Space (Ch.3)*

Governance is defined in Chapter 3 as the co-ordination of public purposes within a particular territory or jurisdiction. It has a strong social dimension, as well as an institutional one.

Multi-level governance (MLG) is a more complex version of governance. It looks at how political power is wielded across different territorial levels and by different types of political and social actor. A key feature of MLG is its assumption that all types and levels of jurisdiction have completely equal status in theoretical terms.

Meta-governance is a term which is closely associated with the British state theorist Bob Jessop, among others. It is a concept that is used mostly in connection with modern statecraft. It refers to the strategic measures taken by states to shape governance processes and outcomes within their overall

spheres of influence. It is sometimes described, rather gnomically, as the ‘governance of governance’.

Governance space (GS) is a term used by some scholars to describe the engagement between governments and those they govern. GS is particularly concerned with how such engagement is structured in terms of the power relations between the parties concerned. In this thesis, the term is also used to refer to the room for manoeuvre which local governments have to pursue their own particular priorities.

8. *Intergovernmental relations (Ch.4); intergovernmental mutuality (Ch.2); territorial cohesion (Ch.2); peripherality (Ch.7)*

The term intergovernmental relations (IGR) refers to the range of ways in which the different levels of government relate to each other in complex political systems.

Intergovernmental mutuality is a term coined in this thesis (and partly borrowed from the political scientists Marc Landy and Steven M Teles) to describe a highly collaborative approach to IGR, in which each level of government sees it as its obligation to foster the legitimacy and capacity of all the others.

Territorial cohesion is a major policy principle of the European Union. It aims to ensure that all the regions and sub-regions of the EU enjoy similar opportunities and a comparable quality of life. It is the basis for the EU’s allocation of development and social funding.

Peripherality is an academic term derived from world systems theory as set out in the 1970s by the American sociologist Immanuel Wallerstein. It describes the position of countries and regions which are located furthest away from the main centres of activity within the capitalist economy. In the UK context, the term has been used to explain the relative economic disadvantage of fringe areas like Cornwall.

9. *Federalism (Ch.3); post-federalism (Ch.4); subsidiarity (Ch.3); devolution (Ch.9); double devolution (Ch.9); The British Political Tradition (Ch.7)*

Federalism is a shared form of government, found usually at the level of the sovereign state. It combines elements of central and devolved government

within a single political system. Its distinctive feature is the relationship of parity it assumes between the different levels of government.

Post-federalism is a rather elusive concept which refers to any fundamental transformation of a federalist political system. In this thesis it is used to describe recent developments within the EU, particularly the cross-national, territorial flexibilities that have been developing in connection with the EU's regional agenda.

Subsidiarity is a fundamental principle of EU law established by the 1992 Maastricht Treaty. Its origins lie within the Roman Catholic Church. It stipulates that the EU may only act in circumstances where the action of individual member states is not sufficient on its own to deal with an issue. Within the EU, the principle of subsidiarity is generally understood to cover local government as well.

Devolution is the statutory delegation of powers by the government of a sovereign state to governments at the sub-national level. Devolution is currently very high on the political agenda in England and Cornwall.

Double devolution is an extension of the idea of devolution, and has been used particularly in the context of English governance. It was first popularized in 2006 by the former Labour politician David Miliband when he was local government minister. It refers to a policy of simultaneous devolution from state to sub-national government, and from sub-national to local/neighbourhood government.

The British Political Tradition (or BPT) is a concept particularly associated with the British political scientist W H Greenleaf (1927–2008) whose major, three-volume historical study of British politics published in 1980s carried that overall title. The concept is still widely employed in current scholarship concerning British and English politics. In this thesis the concept denotes to a top-down style of governing that has been characteristic of UK governments over a long period of time.

10. Civil Society (Ch.3); Community Leadership (Ch.9); Co-governance (Ch.9)

Civil society is a broad term to describe all groupings and bodies that are formed on the basis of free association. It includes bodies which are active in

the private sphere, as well as many others which operate at the local level. Though its origins go back to ancient times, the concept of civil society has been developed significantly during the twentieth century and up to the present day.

Community leadership is a term that has been widely used in recent years in relation to local government modernization in the UK. It aims to promote new thinking about the role of councils and elected councillors. It sees the role of councils as helping communities to identify and deal with the problems which their areas face; and that of councillors, as effectively communicating the work that councils do.

Co-governance is another term used in connection with local government modernization in the UK. It refers to the role of the Strategic Local partnerships that were created for each local authority area under the Local Government Act, 2000. These partnerships included representation from a wide range of local bodies and sectoral interests.

11. Public Value (Ch.1); Outcomes (Ch.3); Outcomes Framework (Ch.1)

Public value (PV) is a term for describing all that which adds value to the public sphere, whether in terms of actions, policies or events. The term was coined in 1995 by Harvard professor Mark H Moore. Moore saw PV as being the equivalent of shareholder value in the public sector. Subsequent scholarship has suggested that PV can be created in many different policy fields and by many different types of agents, including individuals and private businesses.

Outcomes are the final product of a policy initiative or programme. Good governance suggests that policy outcomes should be clearly specified in advance, and that they should also be measured and evaluated after the event in order to determine how successful a particular policy has been. However, in many instances, policy initiatives can also lead to unintended outcomes.

In Chapter 6 the thesis sets out a framework of policy outcomes covering seven fundamental domains of public value. The focus of the framework is on outcomes either at, or directly affecting, the local level. The framework can be used in two ways: either to evaluate existing political arrangements from a localist perspective, or else to guide the design of new political systems along localist lines.

12. Sustainability (Ch.1); Resilience (Ch.3); Transition (Ch.3)

Sustainability is a broad term with many different applications (e.g. environmental, financial, economic, institutional). In this thesis the focus is mainly on sustainability in its environmental sense. Two core elements of environmental sustainability are: firstly, its overriding concern with the health of the ecological systems that support human life; and secondly, its emphasis on decision-making for the longer term.

Like sustainability, resilience is a concept that has developed a wide range of sectoral applications in recent years. It denotes the ability of social systems and organizations to ‘retain function’ in the face of huge external pressures or of an environmental or other external shock. Like sustainability, it implies thinking about systems from a longer-term point of view, but it also implies improving connectivity between all the different elements of a system.

Transition is the shortened name for the Transition Network, an international social movement founded in the Devon town of Totnes in 2005. Transition’s overall aim is to promote sustainable development both within and through communities. The core ideas driving Transition are the need to adapt to climate change, and to respond effectively to the prospect of peak oil.

13. Wellbeing (Ch.1); Human Development (Ch.1); the Relational State (Ch.5); Co-Production (Ch.5); Kudumbashree (Ch.9)

In this thesis the term wellbeing is used collectively to refer to a range of factors concerned with the health, education, happiness and flourishing of individuals. It is one of the fundamental domains of public value.

Human development is broadly equivalent to wellbeing. It is the term used by the United Nations to describe its humanitarian programmes and interventions around the world. With its Human Development Index (HDI), the UN has developed a range of precise measures for various aspects of wellbeing/human development. An updated version of the HDI is published each year in the UN’s Human Development Report.

The relational state is a new vision for the state which has been developed in recent years by thinkers on the Left of British politics. Its main thrusts are improving the state’s relationship with citizens, and encouraging ways of involving the public more effectively in the day-to-day business of government.

Co-production is a concept which is closely connected to the relational state. It is a way of providing public services in close collaboration with service users and/or with communities themselves.

Kudumbashree is a Malayalam word meaning 'family prosperity'. The social movement named after it is a state-wide, community-based, poverty alleviation initiative aimed at empowering women's agency. The *Kudumbashree* initiative is officially sponsored and supported by the Indian state of Kerala.

14. Associative Democracy (AD) (Ch.3)

AD is a vision for social and political governance based on the principles of associationalism. The latter stresses the importance of voluntarism, citizenship and mutuality, as opposed to the rigidities of top-down state control or of communist-style collectivism. An eloquent exposition of how associative democracy might be made to work in the UK can be found in Paul Hirst's book of the same name published in 1994.

15. Institutional Design (Ch.1); Unitary government (Ch.7); Grama Panchayat (Ch.7); Panchayati Raj (Ch.8)

In this thesis, the term institutional design is used in relation to political institutions in particular. The significance of the concept is the scope that it provides to apply rational thought processes and normative principles of public value to the problems of political organization and decision-making. This thesis extends the idea of institutional design to cover not just institutions and polities, but also wider sub-continental political systems.

Unitary government is a design for government that emphasizes a single line of political and administrative responsibility for all major areas of policy. For many years, it has been a particular bone of contention in English local government. This is because some areas of England are governed by unitary councils, while others have local policy responsibilities shared across two different types of council. As a result of this, many scholars have argued that the rationale for England's current pattern of local governance is difficult to discern.

A Gram(a) Panchayat is the most local level of elected council provided for in the Indian constitution. There are more than 240,000 of them currently in rural India, each serving a population of some 30,000 citizens on average.

Panchayati Raj is the name for the overall system of local governance in India's rural areas. It was given formal status by the major constitutional reforms of 1993. The Panchayati Raj system consists of three hierarchical levels of Panchayat. Grama (or village) is the most local of the three; samiti (or block) is the intermediate level; and zilla (or district) stands at the apex of the system.

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