Durham Research Online

INTENSIFYING FRAGMENTATION? STATES, PLACES, AND DISSONANT STRUGGLES OVER THE POLITICAL GEOGRAPHIES OF POWER

Gordon MacLeod
Department of Geography
Durham University, UK

Abstract

This paper offers a detailed reading of *The Fragmented State*, authored by Ronan Paddison and published in 1983. This is arguably Paddison's most significant book-length contribution, elaborating and giving shape to many of the concerns that have now become staples of this journal. Carefully working through the chapters of this book, the paper seeks to encapsulate its key moves and insights, while also demonstrating ways in which some key claims prosecuted by Paddison continue to hold a relevance for understanding 'real world' transitions in the institutional and territorial forms assumed by Western states since 1983. Attention is paid to how Paddison deconstructs the dynamics of different national state systems, emphasising varying relations and contestations between central, regional and local administrations. Because the latter have become synonymous with large metropolitan conurbations, the urban dimensions of state 'fragmentation' become highly significant, and it is revealed how Paddison anticipates multiple processes and politics central to the contemporary 'splintering' of urban-political governance in the early stages of the twenty-first century. *The Fragmented State* is not merely an impressive outcrop of past intellectual labour on space and polity, it remains a fresh provocation for all who take seriously the present challenges of state (re)formation.

1. Introduction: Ronan Paddison, political geography and *The Fragmented State*

The untimely death of Ronan Paddison in July 2019 marked an extremely sad moment for those of us who were privileged enough to have benefitted from his warm encouragement, inspiration, and wise counsel in his role as editor of both *Urban Studies* and *Space and Polity*. I must confess, too, that for me this deep sorrow was compounded by shock. For it had seemed only a short time beforehand that Ronan, along with his two guest editors, Mark Boyle and Peter Shirlow, collaborating on what was to become the special issue of *Space and Polity* on 'Brexit Geographies', had provided some characteristically illuminating comments on a draft paper submission that was being developed by myself and my colleague and friend Martin Jones[1]. While this special issue was tragically to prove one of Ronan's final scholarly contributions as an author (Boyle et al, 2018), it is also worth acknowledging how certain themes at the core of what ought to comprise any temperate discussion of Brexit – not least debate over the status of erstwhile constitutional arrangements, alongside probing questions over precisely where legitimate political authority and democratic representation ought best to reside – featured so prominently in his influential monograph, *The Fragmented State: The Political Geography of Power*. It therefore came as an honour to be invited by Chris and Mark to discuss this book as part of the proceedings to the 'Ronan Paddison: A Commemoration of his Academic Life' event held in the Geography Department at Glasgow University on 22nd November 2019. What follows provides an enlarged version of what I presented at that event, underlining the extent to which I regard it as a genuinely landmark contribution to the thinking of 'space and polity'. Further, given the quite particular context in which this paper is written, I will refer to 'Ronan' throughout, rather than more normal academic convention of 'Paddison', but in doing so I intend my remarks as a serious statement about this scholar's fundamental contributions.

The Fragmented State (see **Figure 1**) was published in June 1983: in the midst of what was to become a conspicuously turbulent period in the political economic history of Britain. While

obviously going to press well in advance of the momentous landslide re-election of Mrs Thatcher's government on 9th June 1983, the reader is appositely forewarned of such a likelihood. For a section of Chapter 3 – entitled 'Territorial Integration and 'Disintegration' in the Unitary State' – offers a most prescient analysis of how, in the election four years earlier, support for the Conservative Party across all social classes was becoming ever-more concentrated in the southern English shires and especially the South East region, just as an *anti*-Conservative vote was firmly taking root across much of Wales, Scotland, the rapidly deindustrializing regions of England, and urban Britain more generally (Paddison, 1983, pp.71-76). The territorial implications of this transforming electoral geography – not least in terms of how the Thatcher administrations of 1983 and 1987 were cynically to manipulate a spatially divisive *two-nations* political strategy that nurtured a particular socioeconomic base while simultaneously targeting 'enemies within' (trade unions, metropolitan government, the public sector, even those working in older industries) – were to have profound consequences for the uneven development of the country's economic geography, an associated mapping of inequality, the capacity of local government to respond to such challenges, and indeed the territorial integrity of the United Kingdom itself (Duncan and Goodwin, 1988; Jessop et al, 1988; Lewis and Townsend, 1989; Paddison, 1993). The seven chapters that comprise *The Fragmented State* provide invaluable insights through which to interpret and re-interpret this restructuring.

The publication of *The Fragmented State* (hereafter *TFS*) also coincided with a relatively flourishing context in academic Geography. This much is revealed in the 'Introduction' where Ronan acknowledges notable advances made by political geography "since the dark days of *Geopolitik*", even alluding to "something of a mini-renaissance" (Paddison, 1983, p.vii, p.viii), as a multiplicity of perspectives began to enrich the subfield in conceptual and methodological terms. These included Marxist and Weberian analyses of the state alongside the World

Figure 1: Front cover of *The Fragmented State* (Paddison, 1983).

Systems Theory pioneered by Immanuel Wallerstein, all of which had been influential in the formation a year earlier of a new journal entitled *Political Geography Quarterly*[2] under the editorship of Peter J Taylor (Taylor, 1984). Interestingly, in light of these fresh debates, Ronan uses the 'Introduction' of *TFS* to advocate quite unequivocally that the 'common core' of political geography ought to comprise the study of the state. Indeed, he interprets the state to be "the fulcrum of political life" (Paddison, 1983, p.viii) while insisting that to analyse its form and functioning, in turn, enables researchers to examine critical questions around conflict, consensus and power. His rationale for this focus is deepened in the early stages of Chapter 1, entitled 'Politics, Space, and the State', where he contends that:

> One of the more striking accompaniments of the emergence of the modern industrial state has been the marked increase in the volume and scope of government activity. ... [Indeed,] the state [has become] responsible for the supply of a growing array of services some of which, such as the defence of the national territory, it is argued, are more efficiently provided by the public rather than the private sector. Besides acting as a supplier of public goods, the state acts as a regulator – providing and maintaining the framework within which the market economic system can operate – and as the forum within which competing claims of different interest groups can be resolved (Clark and Dear, 1981). In most of the advanced industrial nations, the state has adopted a role as *social engineer*, aiming to structure society within a desired set of normative goals. This has led the state towards intervention in the socio-economic structure to meet some determined level of *distributive justice*, a role it has seen as necessary to counterbalance the inequalities created by the market system (Paddison, 1983, pp.1-2: added emphases).

It was the *geographical patterning* of these very processes that constituted the intellectual filament of *TFS*[3]: the 'fragmentation' in question – while certainly evoking the potential for societies to experience political and administrative disarray – being much more a theoretical inducement to interpret the state as comprising a diffusion of power between central, most often

nationally-articulated, levels of administration and those located at sub-national levels, notably local, urban, and regional governments. For Ronan, it is only through a deep-seated appreciation and conceptual unpacking of the relationships between those central and sub-central institutions – part of what might be termed the 'territorial structure of the state' (Cox, 1993) – that meaningful insights are provided into how and where, for example, any potential 'growing array' of publicly organized services – including health care, schooling, libraries, buses, and perhaps municipal housing – might appropriately be administered and delivered to citizens as part of any purported political endeavour to enhance *distributive justice*.[4] Crucially, though, it was also about: 1) how political institutions located at different spatial levels of the state engage in a compromise over competing claims, not least the "fiscal implications of service provision in the fragmented state" (Paddison, 1983, p.ix); and, 2) relating in large part to the very legitimacy of such arrangements, how the multiply scaled political institutions themselves might be held to some democratic account by citizens[5].

2. Territorial and institutional forms of *The Fragmented State*

All of which raises a number of key questions that percolate through the early pages of *TFS*. Perhaps the primary one concerns precisely how states might be arranged territorially? Which then invites discussion over the appropriate balance of power and responsibility between central, local and regional levels of governments. And what is the likelihood that such a balance of territorial arrangements might enable some degree of distributive justice for citizens (Pahl, 1975)? Moreover, how could this differ between states across the world and why? And recalling the 'community power' debate that had proceeded to shape so much urban political analysis in the USA (Hunter, 1953; Dahl, 1961), *who* actually governs and at which level (Paddison, 1983: 3-6); and, by extension, over and through which spaces (spatial units and maybe also specific spatial nodes from which governance might diffuse)? Deliberations like these raise the spectre of what the political sociologist Bob Jessop (1982) simultaneously was analysing as the 'institutional form of the state': not least the capacity to locate precisely which actors and organizations gain access to and influence the crucial institutions of government and administration; and whether, in turn, the state itself, through the enactment of particular strategic projects, might be operating clandestinely to favour certain interest groups while disregarding others. To simplify, then, *TFS* pitches its tent on the ground where territorial and institutional forms of the state intersect, sometimes readily, other times contradictorily or even conflictually. *TFS* thus emerged at a time when such thorny issues had undoubtedly become highly politicized in the United Kingdom, perhaps nowhere more so than in the discourse and practice of local government. In analysing such matters, Ronan draws on, among others, the conceptual innovations of prevailing Marxian scholarship, including Claus Offe (1975) and Manuel Castells (1977), alongside Cockburn's (1977) research on the local state in Lambeth, London, and Saunders's (1979) theorizations on urban politics in England, all helping to disclose embryonic discontent with the early reign of Thatcherism; not least in how central government was aiming to shrink financial support to local governments while also interfering in the *autonomy* afforded to those local states in terms of how and indeed where within their jurisdictions they might plan to spend these finances (Duncan and Goodwin, 1988).

These were also early moments in what was to become a thorny dialogue over how we might appropriately conceptualize such local autonomy: something which at certain times during the 1980s veered towards an enormously fractious polemic about the theoretical status of *locality* (Paddison, 1983, p.20)[6]. Dovetailing this controversy was a dispute over the conceptual value of *space* as an independent variable in shaping territorial arrangements. Among those eschewing its theoretical status was the aforementioned urban sociologist, Peter Saunders. Saunders reasoned that in order to understand differences in, for example, the quality of schools between Brixton and Chelsea in London or in the level of health care between Protestant and Catholic areas of Belfast, it is vital that such *place* variations are understood in terms of the respective class, race and religious differences associated with inhabitants rather than as properties or attributes of the spaces themselves. That premise drew Saunders to conclude that

it is class, race and religion rather than space which "constitute the keys to theoretical analysis" (Saunders, 1980, p.iv). Nonetheless, and while blending his characteristic geniality with a conceptual lucidity that foreshadowed those subsequent often intractable debates (Massey et al, 1984; Gregory and Urry, 1985), in *TFS* Ronan sees matters otherwise:

> ... territorially based political conflict becomes more salient where spatial divisions coincide with class or ethnic divisions. This is apparent at both regional and local levels when there are demands for autonomy by regional ethnic groups or conflict over resource allocation between local jurisdictions. In this sense, space is a contributory factor: quite apart from the fact that such processes are taking place in space, it is because these class or ethnic differences are identifiable with distinct areas that space becomes an integral part of the explanation (Paddison, 1983, p.22).

Attuned to the respective constitutive properties of these social and spatial relationships, Ronan offers further clarity about how, rather than somehow interpreting *localities* or *regions* themselves endeavouring to attain added powers of administration or leveraging financial support from central state levels, a premise that would invite the spectre of *spatial fetishism* (Soja, 1989), it is, of course politicians and other front-stage players who seek to *represent* these spatial units: for it is they who do the 'acting' and who operate as 'agents' on behalf of such territories (Paddison, 1983, p.22; also Cox and Mair, 1988; Cox, 1993).

Such a principle, which avoids any simplistic attribution of spatial units with 'agency' such as that which characterised Ratzelian political geography, becomes indispensable for Ronan when analysing different territorial expressions of the state, most notably between unitary (highly-centrally administered) and federal (locally-regionally devolved administrative) states as presented in Chapter 2, entitled 'Territory and Power'. In looking to place a dot along any given 'decentralization-centralization' continuum, a unitary state could conceivably be organized along entirely centralized lines, especially in the case of city-states and very small countries. However, as Ronan underlines, in practical *political* administration as opposed to formal *constitutional* proclamation, it tends to be the case that ostensibly unitary states, including those in northern Europe such as Sweden, Ireland, and France, experience *some* degree of authority and responsibility being devolved to local administrations, albeit the latter functioning within a relative hierarchy of power directed from central institutions. Perhaps this is hardly surprising given how the origins of local multi-purpose representative government can be traced to medieval Europe (consider here the cases of Venice and Florence) while the nineteenth century also witnessed a wave of resurgence, not least in response to demands for services and participation from rapidly expanding urban populations (Paddison, 1983, pp.30-31).

Federal states are formally constituted territorially as comprising at least two distinct layers of government. Classically, this features a central administration – often named the *Federal* government – sharing power and a qualified *sovereignty* with regional-level *states* as to be found in the cases of the USA, Australia, and Germany[7], or *provinces* in Canada and *cantons* in Switzerland. Throughout Chapter 4, entitled 'Federalism: Regional Diversity within National Union', Ronan immerses the reader in an astonishingly impressive detailed analysis of how each of these political arrangements are contextualized in historical claims to local or regional autonomy, sometimes with the spectre of colonial relations. And yet, given how "federalism offers an institutional mode that balances the centrifugal and centripetal forces within the state" (Paddison, 1983, p.97), as a mode of territorial government it has significant capacity to avert prospective divisions between a political and economically dominant core and a dominated or colonized periphery. Indeed, Ronan identifies how in practice this 'territorial pluralism' was evident in the way that Canada's federalism has served to enhance at least relatively the cultural and political distinctiveness of Quebec province; not least in the way that the Federal capital, Ottawa – located in the relatively powerful province of Ontario, which itself hosts Canada's premier city of Toronto – transferred some key powers over health and welfare policy to Quebec, all crucially matched with supportive funding (Paddison, 1983, p.134). Ronan's consideration of centripetal and centrifugal forces within the state could also be deployed to compare and

contrast how, since the 1980s, under a Federal regime Germany's regional economic geography has remained moderately balanced, while under a centralized unitary regime the United Kingdom economy has become increasingly lop-sided by the hyper-dominance of London (Paddison, 1983, pp.136-37; Massey, 2007; Martin et al, 2016). In sum, although always wary of over-generalisations, Ronan suggests here that a measure of fragmentation – which absolutely need not imply *in*coherence or even some kind of anarchy with respect to politics, policy and planning – may actually be more successful, over time, in fostering a more equal and more justly distributed society and associated political economy. The implications for current deliberations about the 'Brexit geographies' of the United Kingdom are legion.

Examples like these of course recall a question raised earlier about how key responsibilities might be divided among different levels of government. Traditionally, functions like defence and national security, foreign affairs, and macroeconomic policy have tended to be reserved for central government: indeed, this has tended to be the case in both unitary and federal states. Yet for other functions, there is considerable variation within and between these two territorial forms such that identifying distinct trends is far from straightforward (Leemans, 1970). Not least is this respect, the case arises of countries that are formally of unitary status but which experience a *de facto* variant of devolution, itself often asymmetric whereby powers are granted only to certain regions. Drawing on the ground-breaking work of Elazar (1975), Ronan refers to these as 'compound unitary' states, of which there are two types. One is associated with countries that permit relatively small communities to preserve their cultural identity while retaining political, economic, and military ties to a more powerful nation-state; an example being where Madeira and Azores were permitted relative autonomy in Portugal after the fall of Salazar's dictatorship (Stevens, 1977; Paddison, 1983, pp.31-32). The other type of 'compound unitary' form relates to those which contain regional level territories – sometimes perhaps garnished with a national consciousness – which have been bestowed certain legislative powers or responsibilities that in conventional unitary states would ordinarily be deemed the prerogative of central government:

> Regional devolution of this type is often only granted to parts of the state and in particular, where it is more generally associated with multi-national states, to ethnically distinct minority homelands. Examples are found in both the developing world (Sudan, Burma) as well as the developed world (Italy, Spain). Insofar as regionally recognized units such as Sicily, Wales, or Scotland are as 'indestructible' (Duchacek, 1970) as Queensland or Alberta, this 'quasi-federal' devolution does reflect qualities similar to federally organized countries (Paddison, 1983, p.31).

Perhaps of particular note here is the case of Scotland, the country where Ronan spent his working life and in doing so contributing enormously to its educational and civic society. Scotland in the early 1980s could be interpreted perhaps most plausibly as a territory characterized by some delicate balance between 'peripheral nationalism' and 'regional nationalism'. Maybe the discovery of North Sea Oil in 1970 had worked in the eyes of some to potentially 'de-peripheralize' its economic status vis-à-vis the economic geography of Britain following a period that is widely depicted as representing incremental industrial decline (Dickson et el, 1980; Devine, 2012). It was also to foster electoral support for the avowedly separatist Scottish National Party (SNP) throughout the 1970s, although without ever reaching a sizeable majority to challenge the London-based political order centred in Westminster (Paddison, 1983). However, the Thatcherite decade was to precipitate a more confrontational politics, as central government explicitly eschewed support for Scotland's remaining industrial sectors, while simultaneously choosing the nation as a 'test-bed' for some deeply unpopular policies, most notoriously water privatization and the Poll Tax: all of which, as Ronan was to contend in a timely intervention a decade after *TFS*, revealed the "fragility of the relationship between Scotland and the British state" (Paddison, 1993, p.167). To be sure, Scotland was only one among many regions across the United Kingdom that had witnessed a decimation of its industrial base alongside a rise in mass unemployment and an ensuing erosion of the local and regional social fabric (Hudson, 1989; Lewis and Townsend, 1989), but the callous political

approach of Thatcherism was further viewed to be an erosion of Scotland's administrative autonomy alongside a diminution of social welfare commitments discretely cultivated during the twentieth century (Paddison, 1993; Paterson, 1994).

Nonetheless, those other United Kingdom regions lacked the intricate institutional fabric that Scotland had accrued since its 1707 Union with England (here just recalling the *asymmetrical devolution* characterising the 'compound unitary' state of the UK). And by the time that Mrs Thatcher had delivered the now infamous 'Sermon on the Mount' on 21st May 1988 – where, in addressing the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, she chose to hector her audience about the need to better appreciate the principles of the free market as advocated by her own favourite 'Scot', Adam Smith – notable institutions across Scotland's society had begun to collectivise in outright opposition. At the heart of this was the Campaign for a Scottish Assembly, which less than two months after Thatcher's speech, published *A Claim of Right for Scotland* (Marr, 1995; Devine, 2012). When the 1992 General Election returned yet another Conservative government for which Scotland's electorate had displayed little support, the *Claim of Right* became championed by a *Scottish Constitutional Convention*, whose mix of cross-party political backing alongside that from civic organizations including churches, trade unions, women's groups, and some key business interests went some way to pave the way for the establishment of a Scottish Parliament (MacLeod, 1998a; 1998b). The Parliament itself in Holyrood, Edinburgh, was opened in 1999, only two years after New Labour had surged to power in the United Kingdom General Election of 1997.

What followed can, perhaps in retrospect, be characterized as a decade of relative political harmony where Labour governments in Westminster operated with coalition governments in Holyrood. However, any purported consensus was shattered in 2010 with the election of the Conservative-Liberal Democrat 'Coalition' government. And in the last decade a succession of Conservative-led administrations have waged a brutalizing strategy of protracted austerity, cutting welfare and drastically reducing support to local government (Meegan et al, 2014; O'Hara, 2014), before then subjecting the whole of the United Kingdom to Brexit: all at a time when Scotland – both at Westminster and Holyrood – has turned increasingly toward support for a resurgent SNP vehemently opposed to austerity and Brexit (Paddison and Rae, 2017; Boyle et al, 2018; O'Toole, 2018). Perhaps it was the potential for such a politically rancorous set of arrangements that Ronan had in mind when forewarning of how "devolution gives peripheral nationalism a lever by which separatism becomes possible" (Paddison, 1983, p.93). If the story here is indeed one of a fragmenting (British) state, then it is one that can undoubtedly be enriched by re-reading Ronan's work in *TFS* and elsewhere.

3. Urbanising Political Geographies, Politicising Urban Geographies

The final section turns the focus more directly towards Ronan's expertise as a scholar working so productively *between* political and urban geographies, something also underlined in the opening paper by Philo (2020) alongside other contributions to this SI. In part this cross-fertilisation in Ronan's work is signalled in *TFS* where attention to local scales of government and governance necessarily leads him to examine how a burgeoning population, in the UK, the US and elsewhere, was increasingly congregating in expanding metropolitan areas with their own institutionally-formalised and territorially-designated spheres of administrative control. To discuss the political geographies of 'the fragmented state' is also thereby to take seriously such metropolitan administrations[8], entailing an appreciation of the relations between central governments and city authorities, while also being attentive to the prospect of intervening 'regional' levels of authority, particularly in federal states; something Ronan readily acknowledged given his keen interest in US urbanization (see Cox, 2010). Sometimes this can translate into a politics precisely *about* the administration of a city, perhaps inciting aspirations to reconfigure that very territorial shape of administration as in the case of newly formed communities in suburban districts aspiring to resist annexation by the 'big city' government and instead to incorporate as an independent city: a process that fosters new institutional-territorial

divisions within a given metropolitan area, in turn altering its electoral geography and the spatial composition of its tax base (see 3.2 below). In some senses such a shift replicates at an urban scale the unitary-fragmentary (centralization-decentralization) dynamics examined by *TFS* at the national scale. If the focus arising here might plausibly be termed an 'urban political geography' or perhaps better an 'urbanizing of political geographies', what also comes into view on occasion in *TFS* is a 'politicizing of urban geographies', which arises when different interests groups, communities, minorities and more become embroiled in often highly politicized – contested, disputed, dissonant, bellicose – struggles over the particular mix of services, provision, facilities, infrastructure, and forms of representations being 'distributed' across the spaces of the city. If such an orientation may be less prevalent in *TFS*, Ronan does have quite a lot to say about the politics of city-wide services such as education; but it might also be contended that these are the very processes which increasingly grabbed his attention and focus in later work on the politics of public spaces and communities and artworks, as clearly apparent from several other contributions to this SI.

3.1 Servicing cities through the fragmented state

Chapter 5 of *TFS* – 'Local Services and the Fragmented State' – turns attention towards a more explicit analysis of 'lower' levels of sub-state government such as local, county, and urban jurisdictions. Ronan is keen to underline the significance of local service provision for the political geographer. For he reasons that "[I]n a simple descriptive sense" (Paddison, 1983, p.145), it is important to examine patterns of territorial variation in the provision of amenities and what Kevin Cox (1979) termed 'the spatial patterning of welfare'. The volume and range of services being delivered locally could conceivably vary depending upon the institutional and territorial form of the state, unitary or federal. It also varies in accordance with the demarcated sharing of functions between different levels of government: generally, local authorities do tend to be responsible for ones like the maintenance of law and order, fire, planning, property and environmental amenity, education and public enlightenment, culture and recreation, and certain welfare functions (Paddison, 1983, pp.147-49)[9]. Of course, in principle any variation in the level of service *within* a particular country might be deemed unjust. Yet in practice there may be quite compelling justification on the grounds of need and demand whereby two citizens located in neighbouring jurisdictions are in receipt of quite variable levels of goods and services. It is in this sense not least that, as Ronan underlines:

> Governments, and what they do, are instrumental in influencing life-chances; indeed their role is potentially crucial insofar as the public sector can become a useful vehicle to compensate for the inequalities created by dependence on the market-place economy (Paddison, 1983, p.146).

As alluded to earlier, such moments of compensation depend upon political commitments which customarily involve different levels of the fragmented state compromising over the detail of what is to be delivered. Crucially, though, the very act of territorially dividing the state invariably demarcates sub-areas with divergent needs and preferences as well as quite varying fiscal potential *vis-a-vis* tax-raising capacities, the effect of which is that localities can come to endure:

> ... a mismatch between fiscal resources and fiscal needs, the product of superimposing jurisdictional networks on the regional and local surfaces of economic inequality brought about by the spatial division of labour (Paddison, 1983, p.165).

This 'fiscal mismatch' can potentially serve as a political lightening rod when the poorer jurisdictions with weaker fiscal capacity are also those in greater need of additional spending on services and infrastructure. Such scenarios typically precipitate the deployment of *fiscal equalization* programmes, largely via grants provided by the central state to local authorities. Ronan offers an instructive example of the Rate Support Grant (RSG) in Britain. At the time of writing *TFS*, a local property tax – rates – based on the rental (as opposed to the capital) value of a property accounted for the greater proportion of locally raised revenue, often reaching up

to 60 or 70 per cent. Nonetheless, given how the space economy of Britain was being radically restructured – leading many regions in the North and West to be confronting devastating industrial decline – the fiscal map of the country saw notable variations in rateable value between local authorities, not least as a consequence of the varied mixes of residential and non-residential land-uses and income groups between the jurisdictions (Paddison, 1983, p.166). The upshot of such uneven development was that by 1979-80, the RSG – offered as a 'block grant' and thereby not earmarked for specific programmes and in essence offering some local autonomy to authorities – was providing 61 per cent of total expenditure on a whole range of services from education to health to parks and recreation, but not including housing, transport and police which were met by 'categorical grants'[10]. All of which reveals how Britain's local areas were so heavily dependent upon fiscal transfers from centre.

Nevertheless, any consensus that had come to prevail over these fiscal arrangements was severely dislocated in the early 1980s as the Conservative government replaced the RSG with an alternative which was designed with punitive intent to curtail the spending capabilities of local authorities. As Ronan signifies:

> Such changes have heightened centre-local conflict – local governments resent the alleged erosion of their autonomy, particularly the high-spending Labour-controlled authorities that, anyway, are opposed to the national government's spending cuts policies. In Scotland this has already led to direct conflict between the centre and the Labour-controlled Lothian region, [leading to...] the eventual reduction of the local budget in line with the centre's assessment (Paddison, 1983, pp.154-55).

Ronan's analysis here portends how the mid-1980s was to witness an acrimonious struggle waged between a central government very much now identified with Mrs Thatcher and a Greater London Council (GLC) led by the high profile left-wing Mayor, Ken Livingstone. Certain policies developed by the GLC such as a 'restructuring for labour', which was designed to preserve London's manufacturing and a 'fares fair' commitment to ensure that public transport in the city be affordable to all, were certainly popular among many Londoners; but they diverged manifestly from the Thatcherite strategy to develop London as a financial centre and induce a privatisation of public services (Duncan and Goodwin, 1988; Jessop et al, 1988; Cochrane, 1993). Central-local discord intensified over the future direction of London before the hugely controversial decision was taken by Mrs Thatcher to abolish the GLC alongside the other metropolitan councils in England's major cities (Paddison, 1986). From the perspective of the central state, it appeared to be the case that local government had shifted from being an indispensable *agent* entrusted to deliver services to local areas to an intensely mistrusted *object* of political regulation (Duncan and Goodwin, 1988; Goodwin et al, 1993). And with "considerable emphasis [now being] laid on the need to reduce public spending, by both central and local government" (Paddison, 1983, p.179), it revealed the fragility of local autonomy when confronting a central state adversary. Across the Atlantic, Mrs Thatcher's ally, President Reagan, was taking similar aim at the Federal orchestrated intergovernmental aid to cities, with nine programs of special importance to urban governments being cut by 47 per cent between 1980 and 1987 just as federal assistance was shifting away from distressed urban areas to those with 'opportunity' (Judd and Swanstrom, 2006). Ronan encapsulated the moment judiciously in his claim that "how services are financed by local government, therefore [was becoming] intertwined with the larger fiscal crises of the state" (Paddison, 1983, p.147): the political geography of service provision had just become deeply politicized.

In chapter 6 of *TFS* – 'Cities, Services, and Political Fragmentation' – Ronan begins with the two-pronged claim that with many countries seeing higher levels of urbanization,[11] so "the government of cities has proved to be one of the more difficult, but also one of the more pressing, problems of the contemporary state" (Paddison, 1983, p.183). Not least in that an urbanized population sees citizens becoming more dependent upon one another and indeed more affected by the actions of each other if only as a consequence of the higher population densities. Ronan encourages the reader to consider two essential elements of urban politics:

"the importance of governmental intervention and the idea of the city functioning as a large resource system" (Paddison, 1983, p.183). This inevitably posed questions pertaining to the quantity and range of services any particular city authority might deliver – which, as we have seen, are customarily agreed in dialogue with other levels of the state – alongside the question of where exactly those said services might be distributed across the urban area. While local citizens might view it beneficial for certain services like schools, theatres, and shops to be close to their homes, others like a noisy pub, a drug treatment centre, or a new highway may not be so welcome. In analysing how these political geographies come to be decided, Ronan synthesises a most impressive menu of academic perspectives, including those at the heart of the afore-mentioned US community power debate (Hunter, 1953; Dahl, 1961), Harrigan's (1976) work on functional fiefdoms, Williams's (1971) early move on political ecology, and Castells's (1977) departure from orthodox Marxism whereupon he views cities be increasingly the primary site where struggles are waged over 'collective consumption' rather than over production and work (Paddison, 1983, pp.186-87: see also **Figure 2**).

Insert Figure 2 here...

Source: Paddison, 183, pp.186-87

Later Ronan summons Pahl's (1975) influential work revealing the non-trivial discretionary power of urban managers in England's localities vis-à-vis elected councillors and officials (like planners and housing offers), as well as in relation to private sector actors like developers, insurance companies, and building societies. He also invokes Lipsky's (1976) insights into 'street-level bureaucrats' like teachers, social workers, police, and environmental enforcement officers who deal exclusively with the public in terms of service delivery and what we might term social regulation but who can often work with relative independence. In assessing these perspectives, Ronan perceptively contends that, just as such bureaucratic discretion might be shaped by progressive principles, it could also be slanted with prejudices towards certain classes and people of colour while also actively stigmatising neighbourhoods,[12] thereby potentially expediting a range of discriminary and unjust geographies in housing allocation and many services including education and policing (Paddison, 1983, pp.201-02; Rex and Moore, 1967; Gottdiener, 1987). Nevertheless, some communities draw on their collective energy and inspiration to question what they perceive as unjust practices of allocation and distribution. Ronan offers the fascinating example of the Green Ban movement[13] in Australia during the 1970s, which involved an alliance of local resident groups and trade unions – something akin to Castells's (1977) idea of a 'new social movement' – thwarting certain building projects deemed harmful to the community. This represented an ad hoc grass-roots form of activism by the 'less powerful' whose objective was less about influencing where a public facility might be located, so much as preventing commercial development within areas which the movement considered sensitive and in need of conservation. Ronan analyses a notable example of this early politicizing of urban ecology thus:

> Residential development had been granted for an area of Hunter's Hill, a high status suburb of Sydney, known as Kelly's Bush, which was one of the few remaining areas of natural bushland within the city. A local resident action group acted in concert with the Building Labour Federation to stop the development, the unions saying that if development was not halted they would impose a ban on all of the developer's other projects within the city. Such pressure proved extremely effective in halting unwanted developments, though the results of the protests were arguably more distributive that they were redistributive (Paddison, 1983, pp.190-91; also Paddison 1978)[14].

3.2   Metropolitan fragmentation across the US landscape

9

Evidence of state fragmentation is perhaps most powerfully revealed in a brilliant section of *TFS* which examines 'the impact of metropolitan fragmentation' in the US. Here, Ronan noted how historically the trend across the US landscape inclined towards ever-increasing splintering, largely in parallel with the growth of the metropolitan population, such that the number of jurisdictions increases with the size of American Standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas (SMSA). By 1972 the US had 264 SMSAs and a total of 22,185 local governments: 42 per cent of these were multi-purpose jurisdictions – counties, municipalities, and towns – with the majority of the rest comprising single-purpose governments including school districts and so-called special districts which were becoming increasingly prominent in delivering a range of services such as fire protection, utilities, sewerage, housing and urban renewal, school buildings, and parks and recreation. The prescience of Ronan's contention about increasing fragmentation is only reinforced by statistics from 2012 revealing a US total of 392 SMSAs[15] and 89,004 local governments[16]. Notably this featured 37,203 special districts: a subdivision which Ronan had discerned to be inducing a 'balkanization of the city', while their proliferation in recent years has aroused significant concerns about how their increasingly stealth-like 'corporate' approach to development can lead to 'political circumvention' often evading citizen participation and representative democracy (Kirkpatrick and Smith, 2011; MacLeod, 2011; Judd and Hinze, 2019)[17]. As signalled by Ronan, the way in which this plethora of agencies operates through a deployment of territories which overlay jurisdictions already occupied by multi-purpose governments can foster 'territorial confusion' over boundaries; yet of equal importance was how these units have separate taxing powers (Paddison, 1983, p.202).

Jurisdictional fragmentation is generally more pronounced in the older SMSAs of the North East (except New England) and the North Central regions than the newer cities of the South. And Ronan noted how in 1972 it was the Chicago metropolitan area that was identified to be the most governmentally fragmented, with 1,172 units of government. Nearly five decades on, and the Chicago SMSA remains at the peak of the 'fragmentation index'[18] with 1,550 units, followed by Pittsburgh, St. Louis, New York and Philadelphia (Hendrick and Shi, 2015). Of course such jurisdictional fragmentation itself obviously demands some explanation. Again Ronan offers terrific insight when revealing how, up until the end of the nineteenth century, the industrial cities of the North and East had actually been quite successful in expanding their territorial boundaries by annexing their growing populations who in turn welcomed a growing number of services provided by city government. But this trend was being somewhat arrested by the early-twentieth century, primarily as a consequence of how:

> ... the emergence of the large, socially heterogeneous, machine-controlled urban governments, divided along class lines, in which the machine gained its greater support from lower-income groups, led to growing anti-urban feeling among the "middle-class on the periphery [who] concluded that the only way to save themselves from domination by the core was to separate their neighborhoods from the inner city" (Danielson, 1972: 149) (Paddison, 1983, p.203).

The political-geographical tide of metropolitan development appeared to be turning, as across much of the US many suburban communities with burgeoning middle- and higher-income households began to question the logic of being governed by a seemingly distant municipal authority and equally to be paying higher taxes to service the needs of a big city with 'big city problems' (Peck, 2011). It was precisely these 'anti-urban' sensibilities that nurtured the motivation for many suburbs to incorporate as independent jurisdictions – which, as Ronan underlines, were often actively supported by State-level governments that themselves had become hostile to the larger cities – and which in turn precipitated the extraordinary political fragmentation that has since come to characterize the American metropolitan landscape (Paddison, 1983, pp.202-212; cf. Fishman, 1990; Dreier et al, 2001; Cox, 2010).

In *TFS* Ronan is nevertheless deeply concerned too about the ensuing consequences of such governmental fragmentation and how it was reconfiguring fiscal capacity, local taxes, services, and questions of equity and spatial welfare[19]. He presents the so-called 'exploitation thesis'[20]

developed by Hawley (1951), who contended that those living in central cities were paying for a range of services which were being used by suburban commuters who were not contributing to the cost. While Ronan casts doubt on the extent to which this situation might be conceived as entirely a one-way exploitative relationship – particularly given how commuting has the capacity to raise the central city tax base – he is in little doubt that the growing separation of the central city from the suburbs, and indeed of one suburb from another, has intensified fiscal mismatches, particularly in terms of how central city and low-income older suburbs can realistically meet their high service demands. Such trends leave many urban governments confronting a fiscal crisis – a fiscal crisis of the urban state, if we may (cf. Castells, 1977) – while thereby aggravating progressive endeavours to redistribute resources in support of low income, working class, and minority communities, including those introduced as part of Lyndon B Johnson's 'Great Society' Programme (Phillips-Fein, 2017). Indeed, for Ronan:

> The political fragmentation of city and suburbia along class and ethnic lines is the primary means by which the system of urban stratification is maintained. Suburban incorporation ensures the protection of class interests: just as the patterning of residential areas into homogeneous class and ethnic zones is a means of maintaining 'life-style values', so suburban incorporation, particularly through the zoning power that local jurisdictions enjoy, is a means of cementing this socio-spatial arrangement. The tax-base question is very important within this equation; a basic goal of each jurisdiction is the minimization of its tax rate, which leads to attempts to zone in and out uses that have positive and negative fiscal externalities respectively (Cox, 1978). However, the competition is inherently an unequal one, because of the tax and other advantages of the wealthier jurisdictions and their zoning behaviour, so that the stratification is perpetuated (Paddison, 1983, p.211).

Again, though, Ronan offers extraordinary foresight in his claim that, just as the metropolis was expanding, differences between suburban jurisdictions were becoming equally as prevalent as those between suburbs and the central and inner city. In outlining how the suburbs per se "have become differentiated into rich and poor jurisdictions, and how the ability of middle- and upper-income municipalities to zone out public housing and other 'undesirable' uses" (Paddison, 1983, p.208; and see Hamel and Keil, 2015; Keil, 2018), Ronan is paving the way for understanding the socio-political geography of the twenty-first century metropolis as an increasingly 'splintering', 'patchwork', or 'fracturing' landscape (Graham and Marvin, 2001; Florida, 2017; Judd and Hinze, 2019). It is one that sees communities confronting intensifying poverty in older and under-served suburbs juxtaposed alongside those whose 'barbed wire mentality' (Paddison, 1983: 213) leaves them insulated from 'the big city' by fences and walls, while also being in receipt of tailored privately delivered services, all organized by homeowner associations, a privatized mode of governmental jurisdiction (McKenzie, 2006; Knox, 2008; Peck, 2011; McGirr, 2012).

Amid this discussion Ronan also references St Louis as a city where disparities between jurisdictions are 'more emphatic'. It also registered as the third most fragmented SMSA in the recent 'fragmentation index' assessment, and in some key respects St Louis remains an exemplar of what Ronan illuminated about metropolitan fragmentation. And yet St Louis has also been experiencing changes that were more difficult to predict. It came to global public attention following the fatal shooting on 9th August, 2014, of Michael Brown, an 18 year-old African American man by a white police officer in Ferguson, an independent suburban jurisdiction within the SMSA of Lt Louis. This incident was followed by protests, far from unusual given the circumstances of police violence mixed with racial prejudice. But what made it distinctive was that this unrest flared up in a suburb, not the inner city where one tends to associate a mix of police brutality followed by civil disobedience (Dreier and Swanstrom, 2014). The thing is that over the last two decades, as the central and inner city of Lt Louis has undergone notable gentrification, many poorer communities have been gradually edged out of the central and near-inner city – now premium space that is desired, valued, fashionable, and crucially, once again profitable (Smith, 1996) – and displaced to outer suburbs and suburban cities like Ferguson. Ferguson itself has become a 'majority Black suburb'[21] but one whose political leadership and police force are overwhelmingly white (Cowen and Lewis, 2016): a

deplorable mismatch in its political and civic representation. But, as Dreier and Swanstrom further contend, these suburbs are not poor by accident, explaining how Greater St. Louis now stands as one of the most racially and economically segregated areas in the country, following a long history of discrimination by developers, banks, landlords, and local governments. They go on to contend that present-day Ferguson is "too small and too poor to address the [...] racial and economic disparities" (Dreier and Swantsrom, 2014: no pagination): an abject failure of the 'small-state' so beloved of many Americans. Here it is perhaps worth noting that, when drawing on a paper from 1967 entitled "Fiscal Imbalance in the American Federal System: Volume 2" published by the Advisory Committee on Intergovernmental Relations (ACIR, 1967), Ronan expressed apprehension about the long-term fiscal capacities of small-scale suburban jurisdictions (Paddison, 1983, p.208). It is likely he would be continuing to rail against the governmental fragmentation that endures in present-day US metropolitan areas and which underserves so many poorer people in poorer jurisdictions.

4. Final thoughts: fragmented state, dismembered state

The conclusion to this tribute is being written at a time when the capacity for national states to govern with principled authority and with requisite responsibility for their citizens has been placed under the spotlight in a way not witnessed for many a decade, as countries across the world endeavour to manage the catastrophic and tragic impacts of Coronavirus, Covid-19. This deadly virus is widely assumed to have its origins in the city of Wuhan – with a population of 11 million and located in Central China's Hubei province – manifesting in late 2019 before then spreading rapidly across many countries during the early months of 2020. At the time of writing it is difficult to assess the full implications, which may last years. But it is not to over-estimate things to acknowledge that everyday life has altered unrecognisably. While this is clearly not the appropriate place to be developing a discussion about what these changes entail, I raise this point because national states are involved directly in shaping this new everyday life in various ways that would have been unimaginable only months earlier. The intensified monitoring by states under Covid-19 is reciprocated by citizens, who on a daily basis evaluate their governments in terms of how they are managing the impacts of the virus, notably with regard to rates of infection from Covid-19, and deaths recorded as a consequence of Covid-19, and more recently the number of tests being carried out in each country[22]. As the differences between countries become more widely circulated, questions are being raised about how and why some countries have significantly lower rates than others, and also about whether the territorial form of the state and the "diffusion of power between national and sub-national governments" (Paddison, 1983, p.ix) are playing key roles in this respect.

In assessing the trends emerging thus far, it seems that China itself was relatively adept in containing the spread of the virus beyond Wuhan, while nearby South Korea, a centralized unitary state with a population approaching 52 million, is emerging as something of a model. Within Europe there have been relatively low death rates in proportion to those for infection recorded in Austria and Germany, with significantly high rates in Italy, Spain, the UK, and France. Some might point to the particular form of federal decentralisation in Germany, and how it appears to enable 'concerted local intelligence' to be followed swiftly by local action. It meant that health staff in the state of Bavaria were able to track and trace the specific salt shaker located in a factory canteen that had contributed to spreading Covid-19 throughout the building, thereby permitting the Bavarian regional government to implement policies to contain the virus (Hall, 2020). Crucial here, then, might be how Ronan envisaged federalism as "facilitating the voice of separate regional interests within an overarching political union [or perhaps too] federalism as an exercise in territorial pluralism" (Paddison, 1983, p.100), which has enabled Germany among other countries to respond with rapid testing and tracing of those infected. But in Germany – and South Korea – it has been the daily *rates of testing* which have been significant alongside the capacity to contact and trace those with the virus: and there is no easy way to say this, but in the relatively good times – let alone a situation of global emergency –

local "services need to be paid for... and [here] we need to consider the fiscal implications of service provision in the fragmented state" (Paddison, 1983, p. ix).

Germany can be contrasted with another high-profile state organized on federal political terms. At the time of writing, the US has the highest rate of deaths and infections,[23] and news of this scenario is heightened by President Trump's own visibility. Yet throughout February and deep into March he appeared reluctant to acknowledge the virus as a problem for the US, taking 'no responsibility' for fighting it, leaving state governors and local administrations to prepare. But then, on realising the precarious condition of the US economy and that he might be deemed its saviour, he suddenly claimed 'total authority': in effect to "supersede decisions made by the states and suggesting that governors who wanted to lift lockdowns at their own pace rather than his direction were committing 'mutiny'" (Gawthorpe, 2020, p.X). Such bluster certainly sits uncomfortably with the claim that "federalism is a constitutional expression of the amalgamation of political territories into a larger unit without coercion" (Paddison, 1983, p.ix). But the President has routinely been under scrutiny from Governors across the US, with the impressively articulate and compassionate Democrat governor of New York State, Andrew Cuomo, politely requesting that the President listen to the concerns of citizens while offering federal assistance. New York City's Democrat Mayor Bill de Blasio has also campaigned for increased federal funding for US cities, criticising the $1.4 billion stimulus package that New York City had received given how the US airline industry had been awarded £58 billion (Helmore, 2020). Gawthorpe (2020) contends that in principle federalism offers "a logical way for the United States to respond to epidemics", with states having primary responsibility for the health of their citizens, about whom they have the best information. But for federalism to respond effectively the federal government and President ought to offer some leadership in coordinating a national response, and not resort to deviously offloading responsibility and blame while routinely name-calling any state governors or city mayors who voice concerns about the health and safety of their citizens. Gawthorpe ventures further to contend that indeed federalism can be added to the ever-growing list of American institutions at the core of the Constitution which Trump has callously disregarded.

Finally, I turn to the UK, where Ronan lived, although we know that he lived and worked for most of his life Glasgow, Scotland. The UK state offers a pivotal focus for *TFS*, with issues of central-local relations remaining at its core. It is fascinating to consider what exactly Ronan would be making of the current situation in Britain. It certainly comes across in many pages how Ronan believed in the scope for local governments to make a difference to the lives of citizens, while also encouraging a relational perspective that eschews a culturally-diminishing localism and the 'localist trap'.[24] The Covid-19 crisis in the UK has certainly placed local government in the thick of the response. Indeed, many are recognising anew the role played by on-the-ground officials and employees; and, increasingly via community hubs, local authority employees are providing food and shelter to people at risk while assisting local businesses to stay afloat (Hall, 2020; Toynbee, 2020). But Councils are also exasperated: officials, employees and politicians. Having for years been on the sharp end of austerity vis-à-vis savage cuts to funding, they are now expected to deliver without financial support, echoing the case of the US. More than this, though, their local knowledge – and their 'publicness' in terms of funding and accountability – are being overlooked by a Conservative-run central state that has chosen to centralise and outsource the process of Covid-19 testing (Hall, 2020): effectively carrying over the habits betrayed by Thatcherism back in the 1980s, when the social care of elderly people was forcibly subjected to the vagaries of the market: a long-term catastrophe the effect of which is leaving employees and patients in this sector lacking the infrastructure to address the spread of the virus.

In looking to take all this into consideration, in the case of the UK *The Fragmented State* that Ronan analysed is on balance probably increasingly fragmented at each spatial level: with the longer-term implications of the 1990s devolution package plus a decade of austerity and the territorial fall-out of Brexit weighing heavily on any remaining 'compound unitary' status and a beleaguered local government committed to delivering services facing scarce funding and beset

by a 'parsimonious devolution of power' (Paddison, 1983, p.142). Some of these consequences are encapsulated incisively in Toynbee and Walker's (2017) analysis of the UK as a 'dismembered state': one increasingly shorn of social and physical protections for citizens, and which – in the wake of outsourcing, deregulation, privatization – has been so 'confusingly branded' as to instil bewilderment over which organization in which locality might be responsible for what service (also Meek, 2015). Nonetheless, immersing oneself in Ronan's defining contribution, *The Fragmented State*, will go some way towards better understanding the currently dismembered variant.

Acknowledgements

Disclosure statement

Notes on contributors
Gordon MacLeod researches and teaches urban and regional studies in the Department of Geography at Durham University.

ORCID
Gordon MacLeod http://orcid.org/0000-0002-1505-2511

References

Beauregard, R. (2006) *When America Became Suburban* (Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press)

Boyle, M., Paddison, R. & Shirlow, P. (eds.) (2018) Brexit geographies: special issue, *Space & Polity*, 22 (No.2), 97-286.

Castells, M. (1977) *The Urban Question* (London, Edward Arnold)

Clark, G. and Dear, M. (1981) "The state in capitalism and the capitalist state", in M. J. Dear and A. J. Scott (editors) *Urbanization and Urban Planning in Capitalist Societies* (London, Meuthen)

Clark, G. and Dear, M. (1984) *State Apparatus: Structures and Language of Legitimacy*. (Winchester, MA: Allen & Unwin).

Cochrane, A. (1993) *Whatever Happened to Local Government?* (Buckingham: Open University Press).

Cockburn, C. (1977) *The Local State: Management of Cities and People*. (London: Pluto Press).

Cooke, P. (1987) Individuals, localities and postmodernism *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 5 367-76

Cooke, P. (ed) (1989) *Localities: The Changing Face of Urban Britain* (London, Routledge)

Cowen, D. and Lewis, N. (2016) Anti-blackness and urban geopolitical economy: Reflections on Ferguson and the Suburbanization of the 'internal colony' *Society and Space* online

Cox, K. (1978) "Local interests and urban political processes in market societies", in K Cox (ed) *Urbanization and Conflict in Market Societies*. (London, Meuthen) 94-108

Cox, K. (1979) *Location and Public Problems: A Political Geography of the Contemporary World* (Oxford, Basil Blackwell).

Cox, K. (1993) The local and the global in the new urban politics: a critical view. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 11 433-48

Cox, K. (2010) The Problem of Metropolitan Governance and the Politics of Scale *Regional Studies* 44: 2 215-227

Cox, K, and Mair, A. (1988) Locality and community in the politics of local economic development *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 78 307-325

Dahl, R. (1961) *Who Governs? Democracy and Power in an American City* (New Haven, CT: Yale)

Danielson, M. (1972) "Differentiation, segregation, and political fragmentation in the American metropolis", in the Commission on Population Growth and the American Future, Research Report 4, Washington DC, US Government Printing Office, 143-76

Devine, T. (2012) *The Scottish Nation: A Modern History* (London, Penguin)

Dickson, T., Brown, J., Burgess, K., Clarke, T., Foster, J.m Smith, P. and Thompson, W. (1980) *Scottish Capitalism: Class, State and Nation from before the Union to the Present* (London, Lawrence and Wishart)

Dreier, P., Mollenkopf, J. and Swanstrom, T. (2001) *Place Matters: Metropolitics for the Twenty-First Century* (Kansas University Press, Kansas)

Dreier, P. and Swanstrom, T. (2014) Suburban ghettos like Ferguson are ticking time bombs: The protests there might be the first in a wave of suburban riots *Washington Post*, August 21

Duncan, S. (1989) "What is locality?" In R Peet and N Thrift (editors) *New Models in Geography Volume 2* (London, Unwin Hyman) pp.221-52

Duncan, S. and Goodwin, M. (1988) *The Local State and Uneven Development* (Polity, Cambridge)

Elazar, D. J. (1975) Urbanism and federalism: twin revolutionaries of the modern era *Publius* 5:2 15-39

Fishman, R. (1990) Metropolis unbound: the new city of the twentieth century *Flux*, spring, 43-55

Florida, R. (2017) *The New Urban Crisis* (Oneworld publications)

Gawthorpe, A. (2020) Federalism has become another casualty of Trump and the coronavirus *The Guardian* 18 April

Goldstein, M. (2014) Another Shadow in Ferguson as Outside Firms Buy and Rent out Distressed Homes. *The New York Times*, 3 September.

Goodwin, M., Duncan, S. and Halford, S. (1993) Regulation theory, the local state, and the transition of urban politics' *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 11 67-88

Gottdiener, M. (1987) *The Decline of Urban Politics: Political Theory and the Crisis of the Local State* (Sage, Newbury Park)

Graham, S. and Marvin, S. (2001) *Splintering Urbanism: Networked Infrastructures, Technological Mobilities and the Urban Condition* (Oxford, Blackwell)

Gregory, D. and Urry, J. (eds) (1985) *Social Relations and Spatial Structures* (London, Macmillan).

Hall, D. (2020) Snubbing local expertise in favour of private Covid-19 tracing is a disaster *The Guardian* 5 May

Hamel, P. and Keil, R. (editors) (2015) *Suburban Governance: A Global View* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press)

Harrigan, J. (1976) *Political Change in the Metropolis* (Boston, Little Brown and Co)

Harvey, D. (1973) *Social Justice and the City* (Oxford, Blackwell)

Harvey, D. (1987) Three myths in search of a reality in urban studies *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 5 367-76

Harvie, C. (1994) *The Rise of Regional Europe*. (London, Routledge).

Helmore, E. (2020) New York mayor De Blasio asks if Trump is telling city to 'drop dead' over Covid-19 *The Guardian* 19 April

Hendrick, R. and Shi, Y. (2015) Macro-Level Determinants of Local Government Interaction: How Metropolitan Regions in the United States Compare *Urban Affairs Review* 51(3) 414–438

Hudson, R. (1989) *Wrecking a region: State policies, party politics, and regional change in the north east*. (London, Pion).

Hunter, F. (1953) *Community Power Structure: A Study of Decision Makers* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press)

ACIR (1967) *Fiscal Balance in the American Federal System* Volume 2. Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations. Washington, Government Printing Office

Iveson, K. (2014) Building a City For "The People": The Politics of Alliance-Building in the Sydney Green Ban Movement *Antipode* 46: 992–1013

Jessop, B. (1982) *The Capitalist State: Marxist Theories and Method*. (Oxford, Blackwell)

Jessop, B., Bonnett, K., Bromley, S., & Ling, T. (1988). *Thatcherism: A tale of two nations* (Cambridge, UK: Polity).

Judd, D. and Swanstrom, T. (2006) *City Politics: The Political Economy of Urban America* sixth edition (New York, Pearson Longman)

Judd, D. and Hinze, A. (2019) *City Politics: The Political Economy of Urban America* Tenth edition (New York, Routledge)

Karaliotas, L. (2020) Public spaces and the post-political *Space and Polity* 24 this issue

Keil, R. (2018) *Suburban Planet* (Cambridge MA, Polity)

Kirkpatrick, L. O. and Smith, M. P. (2011) The infrastructural limits to growth: Rethinking the urban growth machine in times of fiscal crisis *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 35:3 477-503

Knox, P. (2008) *Metroburbia, USA* (New Jersey: Rutgers University Press).

Leemans, A. F. (1970) *Changing Patterns of Local Government* (The Hague, IULA)

Lewis, J., and Townsend, A. (editors) (1989). *The North-South Divide*. (London: Paul Chapman).

Lipsky, M. (1976) "Towards a theory of street-level bureaucuracy", in W. D. Hawley et al (editors) *Theoretical Perspectives on Urban Politics*. (Englewood Cliffs, NJ, Prentice Hall) pp. 100-45

MacLeod, G. (1998a) In what sense a region? Place hybridity and institutional formation in (post-)modern Scotland *Political Geography* 17 633-63

MacLeod, G. (1998b) Ideas, spaces, and 'sovereigntyscapes': dramatising Scotland's production of a new 'institutional fix' *Space and Polity* 2:2 207-33

MacLeod, G. (2011) Urban politics reconsidered: growth machine to post-democratic city? *Urban Studies* 48 2629-60

Marr, A. (1995) *The Battle for Scotland*. (London: Penguin).

Martin, R., Pike, A., Tyler, P., & Gardiner, B. (2016). Spatially rebalancing the UK economy: Towards a New policy model? *Regional Studies*, 50(2), 342–357.

Massey, D., Allen, J. and Anderson, J. (eds) (1984) *Geography Matters!: A Reader* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press)

Massey, D. 2007. *World City*. (Cambridge: Polity).

McGirr, L. (2012) "The New Suburban Poverty" *New York Times* 19 March

McKenzie, E. (2006) "The dynamics of privatopia: private residential governance in the USA", in G Glaze, C Webster and K Frantz (editors) *Private Cities* (London, Routledge)

Meegan, R., Kennett, P., Jones, G. and Croft, J. (2014) Global economic crisis, austerity and neoliberal urban governance in England *Cambridge Journal of Regions, Economy and Society* 2014, 7, 137–153

Meek, J. 2015. *Private Island: Why Britain Belongs to Someone Else*. London: Verso.

O'Hara, M. (2014) *Austerity Bites: A Journey to the Sharp End of Cuts in the UK* (Bristol, Policy Press)

O'Toole, F. (2018) *Heroic Failure: Brexit an the Politics of Pain* (London, Zeus)

Paddison, R. (1978) The Green Ban Movement: a case study of an urban social movement. Unpublished Discussion Paper

Paddison, R. (1983) *The Fragmented State: The Political Geography of Power* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell)

Paddison, R. (1986) Some thoughts on the passing of the GLC. *Drumlin*, Issue 1985-1986, 28-29.

Paddison, R. (1993) Scotland, the other and the British state, *Political Geography*, 12, 165-168.

Paddison, R. (2009) 'Some reflections on the limitations to public participation in the post-political city, *L'Espace Politique*, 8,1-15.

Paddison, R., & Rae, N. (2017). Brexit and Scotland: Towards a political geography perspective *Social Space*, 13, 1–18.

Pahl, R. (1975) *Whose City?* (2nd edition: Penguin)

Paterson, L. (1994) *The Autonomy of Modern Scotland*. (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press)

Peck, J. (2011) Neoliberal suburbanism: frontier space *Urban Geography* 32:6 884–919

Phillips-Fein, K. (2017) *Fear City: New York's Fiscal Crisis and the Rise of Austerity Politics* (New York, Picador)

Purcell, M. (2006) Urban democracy and the local trap *Urban Studies* 43 1921–1941

Rex, J. and Moore, R. (1967) *Race, Community, and Conflict* (Oxford, Oxford University Press)

Rothstein, R. (2014) *The Making of Ferguson: Public Policies at the Root of Its Troubles.* (Washington D.C.: Economic Policy Institute).

Saunders, P. (1979) *Urban Politics: A Sociological Interpretation* (London, Hutchison)

Saunders, P. (1980) "The problem of space in urban sociology/politics'. Paper given at the PSA Work Group on UK Politics, 5th Annual Conference, Cardiff, 16-19 September.

Smith, D. M. (1977) *Human Geography: a Welfare Approach* (London, Edward Arnold)

Smith, N. (1996) *The New Urban Frontier: Gentrification and the Revanchist City* (London, Routledge)

Soja, E. (1989) *Postmodern Geographies* (London, Verso)

Soja, E. (2010) *Seeking Spatial Justice* (Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press)

Stanyer, J. (1976) *Understanding Local Government.* (Glasgow, Fontana/Collins)

Stevens, R. M. (1977) Asymmetrical federalism: the federal principle and the survival of the small republic *Publius* 7:4 177-203

Taylor, P. (1984) *Political Geography: World Economy, Nation-State, Locality* (Longman, Harlow, Essex)

Toynbee, P. (2020) The war on coronavirus should be led by councils. But this government hates them *The Guardian* 28 April

Toynbee, P. and Walker, D. (2017) *Dismembered: How the Attack on The State Harms Us All.* (London, Guardian Books).

Williams, O. and Adrian, C. (1963) *Four Cities: A Study of Comparative Policy Making.* (Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press)

Endnotes

[1] In actual fact, eleven months had elapsed since Ronan and colleagues had provided their insightful comments.

[2] Renamed *Political Geography* in 1992.

[3] In making this argument, Ronan is also citing approvingly some of the pioneering work on the capitalist state that had been only recently been developed by geographers like Gordon Clark and Michael Dear (also Clark and Dear, 1984).

[4] Perhaps add an endnote to the effect that Ronan recognised there to be other state forms - other than the 'modern industrial state' of his quote - where 'redistributive justice' would not be a remotely entertained input/motivation for state activity? Arguably too, such a motivation is one to which certain modern states only ever pay 'lip service', it not being the real heart of the commitments of the state elite?

[5] Ronan never lost sight of the importance of the politics of service provision: indeed arguably it was precisely this focus on the relationship between endeavours by the Glasgow local state to 'manage' expectations of distributive justice while also de-amplifying protest about this very management alongside the erosion of the public spaces of Glasgow that has enabled his paper on the 'post-political city' to remain one of the standout papers thus far in the debate (Paddison, 2009; Karaliotas, 2020).

[6] The initial prompting of this was the *Changing Urban and Regional System* initiative funded by the UK Economic and Social Research Council which ran from 1984-88. While the research provided some significant findings (e.g. Cooke, 1989), these became enveloped by an often acrimonious set of discussions over methodology and theory (see Duncan, 1989), while also offering some foresight into how postmodernism became entangled with debates in urban studies (Harvey, 1987; Cooke, 1987). Re-reading the early stages of TFS prompts me to contemplate how so well-placed Ronan was to offer something constructive to this debate.

[7] Some of Germany's sixteen regional-level governments assert the title Länder (meaning literally land countries). Amid much talk in the 1990s of a Europe of the Regions, a notable debate surfaced about

the extent to which these Federal arrangements served well in shaping powerful regional-state level economies (Harvie, 1994).

8 While at various stages in TFS, Ronan signals the growing urbanization of the population, in the period since, this has escalated considerably.

9 In these pages, Ronan offers an adroit synthesis of key works by Williams and Adrian (1963), Stanyer (1976), Cockburn (1977), (Castells (1977), and Saunders(1979).

10 In contrast to the Block grant, these are tied to particular spending programmes and coming with conditions determined by central government (Paddison, 1983: 168).

11 Ronan qualifies this a little by signaling that rates of urbanization in the 'developing' countries is happening at a faster rate than in the industrial 'developed' ones, where 'counter-urbanization' has also been a key trend. But the overall argument is accurate and much of what proceeds in the chapter appreciates the complexity of such 'counter-urban' arguments, not least in that many such spaces have since the 1980s been overwhelmed by various forms of urbanization, suburbanization, and post-suburbanization (Keil, 2018).

12 A classic case is offered in the 'redlining' of certain neighbourhoods in US cities during much of the period of 'urban renewal', a process that saw banks and lending institutions reluctant to offer mortgage loans often on the grounds of race (Smith, 1996).

13 See Iveson (2014) for a recent retrospective on this.

14 One might surmise that Ronan's interest in this insurgent movement surfaced during a sabbatical in 1976-77 at the University of New England, Armidale, in New South Wales, where he became involved in establishing a new Planning Course (Philo, 2020)

15 The US Office of Management and Budget (OMB) defines a SMSA as one or more adjacent counties or county equivalents that have at least one urban core of 50,000 population. The figure of 392 also includes 8 for Puerto Rico:
https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Bulletin-20-01.pdf

16 https://www.census.gov/newsroom/releases/archives/governments/cb12-161.html

17 Given Ronan's masterful excursion into some key instances of post-politicising in Glasgow (Paddison, 2009; Karaliotas, 2020), it is easy to envisage him being avidly interested in examining how special districts raise the spectre of a de-politicisation of metropolitan areas.

18 This is measured relatively taking into consideration population and land area (Hendrick and Shi, 2015).

19 At certain stages in chapters 5 and 6 of *TFS*, there are signs that Ronan might have been searching to develop a critical political geography of urban justice, especially with regard to ensuring citizens a fair distribution of services and welfare. To be sure by the time of its publication, Marxian analysis had already been having a profound influence, and David Harvey's (1973) *Social Justice and the City* appears, as does the more reformist 'welfare geography' of David Smith (1977). But there is also a sense that Ronan might have been aiming to articulate something akin to that of the *spatiality of justice* which Ed Soja (Soja, 2010) arrived at sometime later in his ever tenacious endeavours to uncover the geography of Los Angeles, itself often depicted to be the most iconic 'fragmented metropolis' of recent decades. Mark Boyle has offered some helpful prompts on these reflections.

20 There are resonances here with Beauregard's (2006) more recent thesis detailing how suburban jurisdictions impose a form of 'parasitic urbanization' in relation to central cities.

21 From a population that was 85% white in 1980, Ferguson had become 69% Black by 2010 (Goldstein, 2014). And more generally, as Rothstein (2014) identifies, "Whereas 20th century segregation took the form of Black central cities surrounded by white suburbs, 21st century segregation is in transition—to whiter central cities with adjoining Black suburbs."

[22] It is not anticipated that a vaccine which could be applied on a mass basis across the world will be available much before the latter stages of 2020, this being on the optimistic side.

[23] The highest in aggregate but the seventh highest per 100,000 population, although date for this is fast-moving and contested.

[24] Ronan offered some discussion about the uncritical decentralization of authority to local power bases and the limits to democracy of a localism (Paddison, 1983, pp.52-53), to some extent presaging the idea of what Purcell (2006) terms 'localist trap': the uncritical assumption that because it is 'closest to the people', the local represents the most significant governmental level for enhancing democracy.