

## Belief in Policing

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### Abstract

New forms of social regulation sit on the horizon of recent attempts to address the current 'securitisation' of western police through the mechanism of policing reform. Two such reform projects are considered here: one that seeks to introduce a new mentality of government through which policing becomes oriented towards the prevention of future risks instead of the punishment of past wrongdoing (Johnston and Shearing 2003), the other through an eradication of social pathologies that thwart the proper functioning of a recursively constructed social order (Loader and Walker 2007). Two forms of social regulation accompany those formulations: 'responsibilisation' of the subject; and a fusion of personal identity with social authority – the 'perversion' of the subject. These forms emerge as a consequence of the manner in which both arguments validate their logics of reform, that being a mode of belief – a 'belief of' (Žižek 2001) – through which programmatic projects come to be validated within fields characterised by plurality.

### Introduction

Attempts to address the current trend towards security-oriented forms of policing through the instrument of policing reform (Johnston and Shearing, 2003; Loader and Walker, 2007) contain within their architecture the seeds of new modes of social regulation that are additional to, and invisible in respect of, the regulation associated with existing policing practices. The form which the securitisation of policing has been taking is well rehearsed, as various liberal governments tip the balance between security and justice in favour of security under the rubric of the 'war on terror' (see Brodeur, 2005; Punch, Hoogenboom & Williamson, 2005) and as a burgeoning private security industry makes available to those with sufficient purchasing power a set of protections not necessarily accessible through the state (see Singh, 2005; Loader and Walker, 2007).

What has not yet been addressed are the unanticipated effects on the democratic subject of attempts to found new police reforms within a policing environment whose contours and dynamics are increasing understood in pluralised terms. This pluralisation of the policing domain is also now well rehearsed, with analyses of police practices routinely acknowledging the divergent locations within which policing operates<sup>1</sup>, the diverse models that inform police

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<sup>1</sup> These locations are commonly understood to include the following: *within* the state, as with formal police forces/services; within sites that are *of but not strictly within* the state's Rule of Law, such as secret intelligence agencies (see Brodeur, 2005); private policing that originates from within the capitalist marketplace *beyond* the direct bureaucratic control of the state, (see Grabosky, 1994; Shearing and Stenning, 1986; Braithwaite, 2005; Levi-Faur, 2005; Shearing 2006;); policing that operates *above* the level of state as authorised by UN, IMF and World Bank for the reconstruction of policing capabilities of so-called 'failed states' (see Serafino, 2004; Bayley, 2005; Merlingen and Ostrauskaite, 2005); and policing that occurs in sites *below* the purview of the state, in

management practice<sup>2</sup>, the plurality of policing's operational tropes<sup>3</sup>, the divergence of mentalities that have variously come to inform governance<sup>4</sup>, and more besides. Encapsulating this attention to the plurality that characterises the policing field is the emergence of a critical research agenda that displaces the attention previously given to the manner in which (conservative, capitalist, masculine, etc) interests benefit from police practices to that of the relationship which the singular identity of the *police* has to the pluralised field of *policing* (Loader, 2000, p. 321).

It is not that contributions to the critical police literature are blind to the question of what it means to ground policing reform in an environment that is fractured across diverging locations and logics. The manner in which the issue is approached, however, repeatedly proves to be symptomatic of, rather than in analysis of, the matter. Thus, questions about the foundations upon which policing reforms might be mounted are routinely framed in terms of the status of the State relative to the increasingly pluralised world of policing. That framing is symptomatic of the issue of legitimation rather than in analysis of it insofar as the framework cedes the very question of what it means 'to legitimate' in favour of one in which a set range of answers is always already pre-given: that the phenomenon of legitimation lies either with the State or outside in the community/marketplace. Notwithstanding the clarity with which such positions are stated (that political power is indivisible in nature or, conversely, that it is divisible), neither of them are held without reservation. Reservations are expressed in apparent recognition that the full realisation of the logic in question would produce effects which subvert its very premises: thus, that the perfection of centralised political power would eviscerate the liberty of the sovereign subject or that the full dispersal of political power across the social domain would advantage those groups already able to mobilise that power and thereby render such a dispersal undemocratic.

Such moments of reservation prove to be profound with respect to the proposed policing reforms discussed here. They indicate within the reform discourses the presence of indeterminate spaces. These spaces enable the reform projects to stand askew to the totalising impulses of whichever logic they advance as the correct rationality for reform, enabling those

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neighbourhood-watch initiatives, cultural authorities, and vigilante-type collectives (see Foon, 2006; Walden, 2006).

<sup>2</sup> These include the control/command of bureaucracy, the contractualism sequestered from the principle of marketplace-based exchange relations, and the negotiations-based platform of networked relations (see Fleming and Rhodes, 2005).

<sup>3</sup> Involved here are the various tropes of crime control, community-policing, intelligence-lead policing, order-maintenance policing, risk-oriented policing, reassurance policing, and so on.

<sup>4</sup> These include the infliction of pain, the calculation and management of risk, the reduction of harm, and the restoration of fractured social relations (see Johnston and Shearing, 2003).

logics to argue for their preferred principle in a manner which acknowledges that the socio-political sustainability of those logics depends upon their continual underdevelopment in practice. This practice of standing askew to totalising impulses raises a question as to how those principles for reform might be validated, particularly as the holistically-oriented standards by which such validation might conventionally be secured (of consistency, reliability, comprehensiveness, and so on) are re-designated as positions within the field of dialogue rather than organising tropes sitting beyond discussion. It is to those indeterminate discursive spaces within the reform projects that we now turn, to the alternative means of validation (of their underlying principles) which those spaces sponsor, and to the regulatory effects upon the democratic subject of those emergent means of validation.

### **The spectacle of indeterminate spaces**

Indeterminate spaces within political discourse signal a haunting of current political vision by previous ruptures to the social fabric that have resisted symbolisation. Jameson's renowned Freudian term for this haunting is 'the return of the repressed' (see Freud, 1919/1957), of the emergence of unanchored disturbances within texts that threatens their coherence. Indicating the reflexive nature of the indeterminacy that characterises the phenomenon of haunting is the manner in which such haunting aims 'not only at removing a particular object from consciousness [the initial repressed rupture], but also and above all, at doing away with the traces of the removal as well, at repressing the very memory of the intent to impress' (Jameson, 1975, p. 4). The uncanny-like moments at which such attempts to repress a rupture fail and a buried object surfaces within a discourse 'marks the spot where something painful is buried [that being the rupture], it invites to reawaken all the anguished hesitation, the struggle of the subject to avert his or her eyes from the thought with which brutal arms insists on confronting him' (p. 4). Through the act of 'restoring to the surface of the text the repressed and buried reality of this fundamental history' critique achieves its most thorough-going effect, producing unsettling insight into the machinations of that which seeks to be expressed, the 'political unconscious' of historical narrative (Jameson, 1981, p. 20).

The emergence of such an indeterminate space within the concept of police follows in the wake of Thomas Hobbes' liberal political vision of a singular power that is capable of ordering social life. The singularity and coherence of his imagined political power – Leviathan – was achieved through an occlusion of the rupture that appears to have constituted the beingness of the human condition prior to modernity, a gap between the biological and cultural dimensions of the subject (Žižek, 2002). Hobbes' 'famous fiction' regarding the means through which the human subject overcomes that rupture so as to obtain coherent political identity,

through which it gains a sense of having moved ‘from a natural into a civil state’ (p. 205), is the doctrine of social contract.

Central to the issue of policing has been the emergence of a prohibition within the doctrine of social contract that forbids the very mode of subjectivity – an unauthorised, self-determining performativity – which must be assumed to exist in order for the inauguration of legally constituted social order to have been possible in the first place. The subjectivity in question is a state of wholly undetermined agency, of a capacity for unbounded action whose conditions of possibility lie not with the structures into which it is born but ‘within itself’. Its existence independent of social order identifies performativity as being the very source of ordering. Unlike the doctrine of social contract – which depends upon the logics of agency and political structure for its existence – this element of subjectivity functions *ex nihilo*, in ‘the abyss of absolute freedom’ (p. 206). Its ability to inaugurate meaning exceeds the agentive power by which it will be subsequently named, that is, the logic of contract. As a consequence, this form of agency possesses a breadth of address that surpasses that of the law. In the terms of legal reason, however, a subject-position that has no need of legal judgment is a subject that sits outside social life: it has no rational-legal form and must be prohibited.

A paradox thereby enters liberal political community as law finds itself ‘*forbid[ding]* something which is already in itself posited as *impossible*’ (p. 204, original emphasis), a capacity for performativity that is structurally impossible within the terms given by the logic of social contract. Kant, as Žižek observes, understood this point well with his insight that ‘we *cannot* penetrate the obscure origins of power because we *should not* do so’, insofar as, in the act of doing so, ‘we put ourselves *outside* its domain and so automatically subvert its legitimacy’ (Žižek, 1989, p. 164, original emphasis).

This apparently surplus act of forbidding a condition that has already been deemed impossible indicates a key dynamic of the political unconscious: ‘the doing away with the traces of removal’ of the rupture that inaugurates performativity (Jameson, 1975, p. 4). Moreover, the surplus nature of this action is, according to Slovenian social philosopher Alenka Zupančič, characteristic of the modernism which hosts the various key concepts of liberal social order, of social contract, law, police, and so on (Zupančič, 2006). More specifically, the surplus character of the prohibition involved results from the critiques of materialism that followed in the wake of Kant’s idealism: Kant’s perception that the object-in-itself cannot determine knowledge about it saw within western thought the emergence of an approach towards the act of knowing that holds the possibility of circumventing the impossible requirement that objects-in-themselves, in their muteness, validate knowledge-claims constructed about them. It is a mode in which the knowing subject believes ‘of’ the object that interests them, rather than – as

with religious faith – believing ‘in’ that object (Žižek, 2001, pp. 109-110). Secular rationalism thereby works through a kind of ‘symbolic faith’.

The notion of a belief that is ‘of’ reality rather than ‘in’ it suggests an altered kind of object of knowledge, one whose composition enlarges beyond that of the simple thing-in-itself. It points to an object whose presence must be actively staged within the symbolic order rather than passively represented by language. Such staging occurs, Žižek suggests, through the materialization in discourse of ‘spectral apparitions’ of that objectivity, spectral images which are subsequently denied full presence in the process of representation (Žižek, 1994, p. 21). Such vestiges from the domain of objects that are never fully symbolised enable the subject to sustain the conviction that their objects of knowledge possess an exogenous objectivity while relieved of the impossible demand to conclusively verify (or falsify) its form via the act of representation.<sup>5</sup>

For Žižek, this emphasis on the status of the object doesn’t completely indicate the central characteristic of this ‘symbolic’ genre of belief, however. The difference between symbolic belief and the faith of a religious ‘belief in’ involves not the status of the object but that of the subject:

in the case of the imaginary “belief in,” belief is always displaced (it is never me who, in the first person singular, is ready to assume belief, there is always the need for the fiction of a “subject supposed to believe”), while in the case of the symbolic faith, the commitment in the first person singular is performatively assumed (Žižek, 2001, p. 110).

Within symbolic faith no other exists who can mediate the process of one’s own knowing. In the absence of one-supposed-to-believe, onto whom one’s otherwise insufficient act of believing can be projected (the one secure in their salvation, the priest, the prophet, and so on), the symbolic belief of secular knowledge involves the construction of points of indeterminacy within text whose impossible content – of spectral apparitions that are simultaneously staged and prohibited – renders them amenable to experience only through a performative act of belief ‘of’ the objects towards which those points gesture.

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<sup>5</sup> Two forms of prohibition that stage objectivity as spectral apparition have become commonplace in contemporary thought. The first involves the joining of incompatible terms, frequently through the use of ‘and’ (see Žižek, 1994, pp 23-25), but not necessarily so. We can think here of ‘democratic’ and ‘policing’. The practice involves the qualification of a signifier by a second which provides the ‘concrete content’ for its operation but whose role in doing so is occluded by the ideological sway of the initial signifier: the objectivity of the coercion that is intrinsic to policing remains available to thought while being denied full installation in consciousness by the concept of democracy. A second practice of prohibition occurs through the placement of referents ‘under erasure’ (for Jacques Derrida, *sous rapture*) so as to indicate their deficiencies as sites of representation. To this end, the act of placing a signifier in parentheses or of striking it out in conjunction with its articulation tempers the objectivity of that which the articulation of the word implies. In Democracy, for example, we see that which signals the possibility of a particular form of political community while having indicated to us its current non-presence.

The performative nature of symbolic faith is indifferent to social order and, as such, can be both a potential catalyst of social transformation and a magnet for new modes of social regulation. Such is the case with the points of indeterminacy within policing reform projects that seek to intervene with the securitisation of policing. Shorn of hope in firm foundations upon which these reforms might be grounded – of a fully indivisible State or a perfectly functioning civil space – the projects come to be established in ways that promote a ‘belief of’ themselves. The indeterminacy which they then necessarily entertain in the process of doing so must be contained at the very point of its installation, however, if the ordering logic of policing is to prevail over that of some kind unscripted social transformation. In the process of releasing the democratic subject from the assault on rights that accompany the construction of the ‘security society’, the programmes of policing reform discussed below thereby impose upon the autonomy of the democratic subject finely-grained modes of regulation that have as their effect the subjectivisation of the undetermined performativity assumed of that subject.

### **In the name of the democratic subject**

Two reform projects that take as their target the hegemony which security enjoys within policing are Les Johnston’s and Clifford Shearing’s *Governing Security: Explorations in policing and justice* (2003) and Ian Loader’s and Neil Walker’s *Civilizing Security* (2007). Their salience for us comes not from the academic eminence of these authors. Nor does it lie with the specific principles which underpin their respective reform programmes – a new *mentality of governance* and recognition of *the recursive nature of social order*. Rather, their significance lies at the level of textual strategy, with the specific manner in which belief operates within both projects to establish the validity of their respective underlying principles and, furthermore, of the manner in which that particular mode of belief installs new forms of subjectivisation.

The first text – that of *Governing Security* – takes for its lead into the governance of security the two normative ends that policing inherits from the doctrine of social contract, security and justice. It initially notes that they are incompatible with one another. That incommensurability can be ‘reconciled’, however, through mediation by various constellations of ideas – mentalities of governance (p. 151) – that have historically gathered around nodal points within legal philosophy: guilt/punishment, risk/management, harm/restoration, and so on. Mentalities provide the conceptual grist for governance insofar as they make ‘order and disorder thinkable’ (p. 8).

Propelling the text is a concern that the retributive mentality, through which the meaning of criminal justice has come to be calculated in western jurisdictions, does not

equitably disperse security and justice throughout society. In response, Johnston and Shearing propose a new mentality for the calculation of responses to crime – ‘nodal governance’ – that couples a future-oriented concern around security (risk) with a sense of justice as a locally-defined moral good. This new mentality comprises the key referent for the policing reforms they envisage.

As a form of referent, mentalities do not exist ‘in-themselves’, meaning that they can never be believed ‘in’. The existence of a mentality, Johnston and Shearing observe, can only be inferred through sets of actions (pp. 29-30). Mentalities reflect attempts to get things done, existing thereafter as a latent presence within those practices, and remaining in existence only so long as the consequences of those practices match intended results. Moreover, histories of policing, such as Johnston and Shearing’s own text, demonstrate that the ‘technological and institutional conditions’ within which mentalities function are routinely ‘undercut by a variety of political factors’ (p. 139) such that their empirical manifestation is only ever partial at best. Notwithstanding the ease with which the authors thus speak of mentalities, their object of interest – and underlying principle for their programme of reform – only ever has virtual form.

The text’s broadly constructivist methodology affords a certain ease with this conclusion. Its constructivism begs the question, however, of how commitment is achieved to a referent that, tautologically, only comes into being in the context of actions which assume its existence.

The text achieves its belief of nodal governance by entertaining the one element of subjectivity that is capable of apprehending objects in such a manner, the unauthorised and self-determining condition of performativity which can productively occupy indeterminate spaces like that of the tautology. Moreover, the text does so in a manner that prevents the full disclosure of this element to itself. Let me explain. The performativity concerned exists beyond the effects of subjectivisation. It is a mode of being that enables a subject to feel aggrieved about the unjust effects of discourses in a manner that does not rely upon the legitimating effects of yet another discourse to found that response. This is indeed a general mode of subjectivity in whose service critical constructivist texts routinely appear to function (Soper, 1990, pp. 146-60. See also Jameson, 1994/2000, p. 384), that is, a subject who can stand outside prevailing ideological injunctions and who can, from that undetermined position, distil the meaning of a notion like justice. Such a subject-position is structurally impossible, however, within the constructivism of *Governing Security*, according to which there can exist no subjectivity that is not discursively constructed.

That said, the text hosts a spectral apparition of that very mode of subjectivity. It appears in conjunction with a requirement repeated throughout the text that those advocating

any mentality must reflect upon and accept responsibility for the normative implications of doing so. Johnston and Shearing suggest that the condition of ethical subjectivity implied by this is not, however, a simple product of discourse. Rather, it implies the involvement here of something akin to the brute physicality of Foucault's *individuum*. In contrast to mentalities, which are articulated from within subject-positions, normative implications have to be physically 'borne' (Johnston and Shearing, 2003, p. 138): 'All those who contribute to [the development of a mentality] have to *bear* the normative implications of their contributions' (p. 13. Emphasis added). Given the unpalatable nature of this point if pushed to its logical conclusions, that the ethical self is 'of nature' rather than 'of culture' (and thus ungovernable), the text thereby prevents full instalment of this purely performative being within itself by framing that performativity in ethical terms, by highlighting the notion of individual responsibility for the calculation of normative implications.

A particular characteristic of the prohibition which is involved here becomes evident at this point. The form which prohibition takes is always shaped by the context within which it occurs. In the case of *Governing Security* that context is the decentred political environment which, the authors assert, frames contemporary policing reform (pp. 30-36).<sup>6</sup> Keeping with its adoption of a decentred interpretation of socio-political power, the text's demand for ethical responsibility gives no directives for this task. Moreover, the concepts of security and justice prove to be of little help in determining the meaning of the ethical, for what the process of ethical reflection must itself resolve is the very meaning of those concepts. Devoid of content, the demand for ethical responsibility comes to take the form of a 'symbolic injunction that relies only on its own act of enunciation' (Žižek, 2001, p. 120). In the absence of any discernable logic that might provide normative principles through which the subject can address that demand, such an injunction has the potential to project the command inwards upon the subject. What is external to the subject thereby has the capacity to be interpreted by the individual as 'originating in their "nature"' (p. 120), with the demand being experienced as a personal act of choice. The imposition of ethical introspection thereby annuls the potentially productive indeterminacy of performativity which the authors assume to be the basis of ethical judgment insofar as it frames the contours of subjects' ethical decisions in wholly liberal terms, as an artefact of personal choice. It 'responsibilises' the subject.

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<sup>6</sup> Reflecting this 'post-regulationist' line of argument, the state is no longer in a position to exercise full governance over policing, insofar as it is now 'both *regulator* [of domestic affairs] and *regulated*' by transnational bodies (Johnston and Shearing, 2003, p. 35). Moreover, policing exists as much through the marketplace and localised community relations as it does the state. To this end, the best prospects for the governance of security lie in a situation 'whereby the state checks community and market failure and the community/market check state failure' (p. 36).

*Governing Security* offers some hope that it can traverse this injunction which it risks imposing upon its audience. The key lies in the status which ‘the future’ takes within the mentality. As noted, nodal governance seeks to join a future-oriented approach to security (risk) with a conception of justice that is grounded within locally-held views of moral good. This orientation toward the future emerged, the text notes, in the context of a two-year programme headed by one of the authors in the poor South African township of Zwelethemba. The project sought to build ‘local capacity policing’ that would draw upon indigenous abilities and knowledge (Johnston and Shearing, 2003, p. 151). Commendably, the project was also able to attract and disperse funding in ways that, in part at least, addressed the community’s poverty. Significantly, the focus on ‘future’ emerged from the participants rather than the researchers: locked within their situation by poverty, the townspeople perceived their greatest need to be the creation of a liveable shared future rather than the redressing of past wrongs (p. 152). The future thereby became the location of both security and justice, galvanising the townsfolk’s thinking around the problem of crime.

To this end the community’s context – of limited socio-economic mobility coupled with hope for a peaceful future – circumvented the otherwise responsabilising conception of normativity to which the mentality’s particular act of prohibition might otherwise give rise.

The meaning given to ‘the future’ in *Governing Security* enlarges, however, beyond that of a context-dependant horizon as it had emerged within the particular experiences of Zwelethemba. For the authors it also indicates the presence of a future-oriented mentality-in-waiting that has the potential to displace the hegemony of retributive justice: ‘For another thing’, they note towards this point, ‘the model has a distinct family resemblance with the corporate mentality of governance’ (p. 153). This identification of a ‘resemblance’ depends upon, however, a questionable assumption that there exists an already-given logic to which the findings of the people of Zwelethemba correspond. The assumption represents a reduction on the part of the authors of the other to the terms of their academic interests.<sup>7</sup>

Apparently unaware of the reduction involved here, the authors note with some pride the manner in which the experiences of the people of Zwelethemba have thus become a programme, the ‘Zwelethemba Model’ (p. 152), a brand of decentred policing reform now being ‘rolled out’ to other poor communities (p. 153). The key to this success lies, however, not simply in the success of the project in Zwelethemba but in the reification of ‘the future’ as the

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<sup>7</sup> The authors’ position on this point returns us to an earlier observation regarding the quizzical ontological status of the ‘mentality’: mentalities only ever possess virtual form. Attempts to formalise and mobilise a mentality in the construction of a consistent programme of policing reform require, however, that the virtuality of a mentality be suspended and that the said mentality be imputed with a substantive quality.

locus of security and justice. That act of reification spuriously enables an individual programme (the Zwelethemba experience) to be defined as an instance of a pre-existing logic.

Such a reification of ‘the future’ departs, however, from the context-specific role that the idea played for the people of Zwelethemba, as a means of making shared space bearable in the context of socio-economic immobility. In terms of our interests here – regarding the capacity of *Governing Security* to successfully traverse the responsabilisation it risks imposing on those who become involved in propagating the concept of nodal governance – the narrative category of ‘the future’ as used by the people of Zwelethemba potentially enabled that very traversal: it expressed the purpose of localised policing in the clear and certain terms of that community’s shared embodiment.

In the reified form subsequently given to that category, however, ‘the future’, now as an abstracted concept, functions differently. The decontextualised manner that now characterises its appearance as the organising logic of ‘nodal governance’ buttresses the lack of content which characterises the text’s demand for ethical responsibility. Notwithstanding the authors’ attentiveness elsewhere in the text to the problem of responsabilisation within neo-liberal conditions (p. 157) they mistake the State as being the only possible source of such regulation. They appear to miss the point that the politically decentred environment for which they urge due recognition is equally able to insinuate this same condition of responsabilisation: nodal governance sponsors an incessant demand for ethical responsibility toward an unsymbolisable future. The opening which the text had appeared to offer within the otherwise rigid horizon to which policing works – in the guise of a condition of embodiment that has the potential to productively enlarge the meaning of policing’s purposes (which was reflected momentarily in the experiences of the people of Zwelethemba) – eviscerates as nodal governance becomes a regime that imposes its own decentred genre of responsabilisation upon those who take up its cause.

Ian Loader and Neil Walker’s text *Civilising Security* (2007) avoids this responsabilisation of the democratic subject, doing so by virtue of the particular manner in which it establishes the possibility for belief of its key underlying principle, that of a recursive conception of social order. In doing so, however, it inaugurates an alternative form of social regulation that also undercuts the moral autonomy of the democratic subject towards whose realisation the text otherwise operates.

The text’s construction of a ‘belief of’ recursive social ordering occurs against the backdrop of a relationship it identifies between security and individual liberty (the latter being couched in terms of ‘justice’). That relationship is itself recursive: a shared sense of security is the precondition for individual liberty, the enjoyment of which further reinforces attachment to

the security offered by the collective. Toward this point the authors assert that '*our capacity to reach some level of common understanding and recognition of the terms of our collective security is itself a contributory factor to that collective security*' (pp. 164-65. Original emphasis). Within this formula, security shows itself to be 'axiomatic', to be constitutive of shared social life itself (pp. 161-69).

The key element, here, is the *a priori* nature of the recursive condition, as a consequence of which the melding of personal and collective security shows itself to have been '*always already accomplished*' (p. 261. original emphasis). To rephrase the point in Jameson-like terms, the notion of recursiveness suggests a condition of subjectivity that exists as an absent cause, a formally empty space of the subject that only takes substantive form in its reiteration, as social experience lived under the terms of some discursive formation or another (see Jameson 2002). On the basis of this foundation the goal of progressive analysis shifts from attempts, now rendered redundant by the logic of recursiveness, to suture areas of incommensurability that threaten the coherence of social life – between individual and collective expressions for example – to one that 'concentrate[s] instead on avoiding the pathologies [that threaten the always already accomplished social subject] and [of] pursuing the promise of its self-reinforcement' (p. 261).

The notion of a subjective state that exists prior to any interpellation by power proves to be but a spectral apparition whose appearance is necessary for the articulation of the project and which must be eradicated in the very moment of its appearance. The reason is simple. The existence of such a state would validate a place which the subject can inhabit that the law, in whose service the reform project works, cannot regulate.

To belabour a central point here, the prohibition of that state in the very moment of its articulation has strategic effect for the reform project. Prohibition at the point of articulation enables the problems which will otherwise attend the reader's attempts to believe 'in' this reform project, problems that extend from the absent cause that sits at its core, to be substituted by a condition of 'belief of' the recursive condition that underpins the project. In conjunction with the emergence of this empty space of the recursive subject, the text establishes co-ordinates for that subject such that the otherwise indeterminate nature which it possesses comes to be firmly located within the reach of policing. The condition of radical exteriority to which the notion of a recursively constituted security gestures thereby disappears from analysis. In its place there emerges co-ordinates for the subject that revolve around the trope of social identity.

Social identity, for the project, emerges in, and only in, shared successes in common ventures between individuals – and between nations at the level of the globe – of shared experiences of 'instrumentally effective collective action' (p. 163). Such concrete experiences

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of success enable those involved to make ‘the commitment ... for *this* community’ to be their source of security (p. 165. original emphasis). As success breeds success, identities come to be anchored in the group within which that success is experienced. To expand the point: experiences of shared security inform relations between members with the effect that subsequently successful achievement of shared goals reproduces that shared sense of security as an unintended consequence. It is in this way that security proves itself to have always already been ‘constitutive’ of the social (p. 164).

To recap the point, in the process of identity and security being shown to be constitutive of one another, the empty space of subjectivity which comprises the pre-condition of that constituting recursive effect is relegated by the text to the condition of an unsymbolisable element whose existence only ever exists spectrally, as an uncanny double of the text’s productivity in its prescriptive fabrication of co-ordinates for identity. This demonstrates in perfect form Jameson’s formulation of the political unconscious: not only does the eradication of the repressed object get performed but so too the eradication of the very attempt to dispense with it.

The text seeks to address two implications for democratic subjectivity of this attempt to combine identity with security in a manner that eradicates all traces of exteriority (pp. 167-169). First, they indicate that the logic of security indeed possesses the potential to colonize ‘social consciousness’ to the extent that security becomes a pervasive touch-stone for popular demands upon authority, making of security a ‘recurrent trope of political discourse’ within which unappeasable demands for ever-increasingly levels of defence become the norm (p. 168). In the psychoanalytic terms of Jacques Lacan this comprises a condition of ‘hysteria’ (see Žižek 1999, p. 361). Second, they acknowledge that demands for security have the potential to produce an ‘unreflexive, parochial and anxious cleaving to a security-driven conception of a risk free society, such that when its seemingly fixed terms are threatened ... hostility to others [is] ... never very far away’ (p. 168). That is, a concept of security that has dispensed with the condition of exteriority finds the appearance of otherness – in the guise of the foreigner, the alien – being experienced in threatening, delusional ways (in Lacan’s terms, ‘psychosis’ – see p. 364).

What the discussion misses about its prescription for a security that is axiomatic to shared life is that it exhibits an additional and equally problematic psychical structure. In Lacanian terms this is perversion, an inexorable entwining of law and personal enjoyment characterised by the absence of an exteriority. The consequence of such a lack (in Lacan’s terms ‘the lack of a lack’) is that there exists no dimension of subjectivity that can effectively and perpetually resist subjectivisation by power structures (see Žižek, 2000, pp. 103-104). Within such a

universe the subject's enjoyment comes from being not only within the law but from being of the law itself. Notwithstanding the authors' intentions to avoid this kind of outcome, wherein they acknowledge that the notion of axiomatic security might all too easily get broadened into 'some kind of *eigen*-value embracing the whole of politics' and thereby become '*pervasive in new ways*' (Loader and Walker, 2007, p. 16. Original emphasis), the text has that very effect. The recursively constituted mode of subjectivity envisaged by the text proves to be inseparable from the logic of political order within which it emerges, at the same time being experienced as the fulfilment of individual subjects' own enjoyment. Indicating this, Loader and Walker identify that the quest for an axiomatic form of security seeks:

the accomplishment of a stable condition grounded in the tacit confidence individuals have that their diverse and common legitimate expectations and their diverse and common loyalties as members of a political community are acknowledged in ways that afford them the material and symbolic resources required to manage, and feel relatively at ease with, the threats that are or may be present in their environment (pp. 168-69).

Within such a scenario the arena of identity becomes indissoluble from the ordering function through which political community functions, in the sense that individuals are held to develop confidence in their political community – to belong – in the process of aligning their expectations and loyalties with the political rationality through which their lives are thus ordered. This indivisibility between subjectivity and law is the psychoanalytic formula for perversion, of enjoyment gained through overidentification with one's own regulation.

Like the responsabilisation that emerges from nodal governance, subjectivisation of this kind provides the subject with clear and ready means for addressing any shortfall it experiences around its security, but in a manner that locks them further within the horizon of political possibility implied by the reform project. Those means take the form of a genre of demand which the individual might well imagine themselves meeting: they must eradicate all sources of indeterminacy within themselves related to the unsymbolisable core of recursive subjectivity – passions and desires that resist pacification in the symbolic order – such that they can identify to whatever level is required of them in the process of 'belonging' to their political community.

## **Thus**

In the face of an apparently deepening hegemonic tilt within the practice of policing towards security – fuelled by the post 9/11 political environment and the increasing encroachment of market relations into the provision of policing services – various reforms are being mooted that seek to reformulate the relation between security and justice within policing practice such that justice by some calculation again becomes an intrinsic element in the normative purposes of police. Such reform programmes, as have been reviewed here, present new principles through

which that reordering of normative purpose might be accomplished and policing organisation reformed.

A key question to arise in conjunction with these principles concerns how the projects establish commitment to such while acknowledging that those same principles do not exist in an ontological manner that supports a condition of belief 'in' them. The reform programmes reviewed here share a similar paradoxical strategy for establishing the needed commitment, that of prohibiting an already repressed condition of indeterminate performativity which the texts present as being the subjective precondition for such commitment. The act of prohibiting the condition of performativity inaugurates new forms of social regulation upon the subject. The particular forms which these acts of prohibition take, moreover, reflect the political commitments within which the reforms are variously framed. In the case of *Governing Security* and *Civilizing Security* these respectively lead to injunctions that result in responsabilisation of the subject or their installation in a condition of perversion, both forms of injunction subverting the self-determining quality of the (democratic) subject towards whose enhancement the texts otherwise ostensibly work.

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